VENDETTA;

The Story of One Forgotten.

CHAPTER XXX U .- Continued. Her eyes gustened with avarice and ex pectancy.

"Oh. let me see them!" she cried. "If they

are lovelier than those I already have, they must be indeed magnificent! And are they all for me?"

"All for you! I replied, drawing her closer, and playing with the small white hand on which the engagement ring I had placed there spackled so bravely. "All for my pride. A little hoard of bright treasures; red rubies, aye!—as red as blood,—diamonds as brilliant as the glittering of diamonds as briliant as the glittering of crossed daggers, sapphres as blue as the lightning, pearls as pure as the little folded bands of a dead child, spale as dazzlingly changeful as woman's love! Why do you start had moved restlessly in my embrace. start? use had similes? Ah, cara mia, I am no poet! I can but speak of things as they seem to my poor judgment. Yes, these precious things are for you, bellissima; you have nothing to do but to take them, and may they bring you much

A marintary pallor had stolen over her face while I was speaking, speaking in my customary hard, harsh voice, which I stove to render even harder and harsher than usual, but she soon recovered from whatever passing emotion she may have felt, and gave herself up to the joys of vanity and greed, the paramount passions of

her nature.
"I shall have the finest jewels in all Naples!" "I shall have the most jewers in an expire: she laughed delightedly. "How the women will envy me! But where are these treasures? May I see them now—immediately?"

"No, not quite immediately," I replied with a gentle derision that escaped her observation. "To-merrow night, our marriage wight you shall have them. And

marriage night, you shall have them. And I must also fulfil a promise I made to you. You wish to see me for once without these," and I touched my dark glasses,—"is it not so?" She raised her eyes, conveying into their lustrous depths an expression of melting tender-

"Yes," she murmured; "I want to see you as you are !" I fear you will be disappointed." I said with ome irony, " for my eyes are not pleasant

to look at." "hever mind," she returned gaily. "I shall be satisfied if I see them just once, and we need not have much light in the room, the light gives you pain. I would not be cause of suffering to you,—no, not for all you are very amiable," I answered, more so than I deserve. I hope I may

nore so than I deserve. I hope I may prove worthy of your tenderness! But to reto see them for yourself, and choose the best among them. Will you come with me to morrow night? and I will show you where

they are."
She laughed sweetly.
"Are you a miser, Cesare? and have you some secret hiding-place full of treasure like Aladdin?'

I smiled.
"Perhaps I have," I said. "There are exceptional cases in which one fears to trust even to a bank. Gems such as those I have to offer you are almost priceless, and it would be unyou are almost priceless, and it would be un-wise, almost cruel to place such tempting toys within the reach of even an honest man. At any rate, if I have been something of a miser, it is for your sake; for your sake I have personally guarded the treasure that is to be your bridal gift. You cannot blame me for this?"

In answer she shrew her fair arms round my neck and kissed me. Strive against it as I would I always shuddered at the the touch of her lips —a mingled sensation of loathing and longing possessed me that sickened, while it stung my

"Amor mio!" she murmured. "As if I could blame you! You have no faults in my estimation of you. You are good, brave and generous—the best of men: there is only one thing I wish sometimes—" Here she paused, and her brow knitted itself frowningly, while a puzzled, p sined expression came into her eyes, "And that one thing is?" I inquired.

his. Of course I know there is no actual resemblance, and vet..." She passed actual results wife and obij semblance, and yet-" She paused again, and again looked troubled.

again looked troubled.
"Really, carina mia," I remarked lightly and jestingly, "you embarrass me profoundly! This fancy of yours is a most awkward one for me. At the convent where I visited you, you became quite ill at the contemplation of my hand, which you declared was like the hand of your deceased husband; and now this same foolish idea is returning. when I hoped it had gone, with other morbinotions of an over-sensitive brain, for ever.
Perhaps you think I am your late husband?"
And I laughed aloud! She trembled a little,

but soon laughed also
"I know I am very absurd," she said, "perhaps I am a little nervous and unstrung; I have had too much excitement lately. Tell me more about the jewels. When will you take me to see them?

see them?"
"To-morrow night," I answered, "while the
ball is going on, you and I will slip away
together,—we shall return again before any of
our friends can miss us. You will come with

me?"

"Of course I will," she replied readily "only we must not be long absent, because my maid will have to pack my wedding dress, and then there will be the jewels also to put in my strong box. Let me see! We stay the night at the hotel, and leave for Rome and Paris the first thing in the morning, do we not?"
"That is the arrangement, certainly," I said

The little place where you have hidden your jewels, you droll Cesare, is quite near then? she saked,

with a cold smile.

"Quite near," I assented, watching her She laughed and clapped her hands. "Oh, I must have them," she exclaimed.
"It would be ridiculous to go to Paris without

them. But why will you not get them yourself, Cesare, and bring them here to me?"
"There are so many," I returned quietly, "and I do not know which you would prefer.
Some are more valuable than others. And it

will give me a special satisfaction,—one that I have long waited for,—to see you make your She smiled half shyly, half cunningly.

"Perhaps I will make no choice," she whis-pered, "perhaps I will take them all, Cesare. What will you say then?" That you are perfectly we come to them," I

She looked slightly surprised.

"You are really too good to me, caro mio," she said; "you spoil me."
"Can you be spoilt?" I asked half jestingly.
"Good women are like fine brilliants—the more

sichly they are set the more they shine."
She stroked my hand caressingly.
"'No one ever made such pretty speeches to me as you do!" she murmured.
"Not even Guido Ferrari?" I suggested ironically.

ironically.

She drew herself up with an inimitably wellacted gesture of lofty disdain.

"Gudo Ferrari?" she exclaimed. "He
dared not address me save with the greatest
respect! I was as a queen to him! It was only
lately that he began to presume on the trust

"It him he we harded and then he hereme too familiar, a mistake on his part, for which is a stated to and Andrea swore a good-

nature, unhappily, is an over-sensitive one, and is apt to be affected by trifles. But now, mia bella, farewell until to-morrow — happy tomorrow! - when I shall call you mine, in

A warm flush tinted her cheeks; she came to me where I stood and leaned against me. "Shall I not see you again till we meet in the church?" she enquired with a becoming bash-

"No; I will leave you this last day of your brief widowhood alone. It is not well that I should obtrude myself upon your thoughts or prayers. Stay!" and I caught her hand that toyed with the flower in my buttonhole. "I see you still wear your former wedding-ring. May take it off?

"Certainly." And she smiled while I deftly drew off the plain gold circlet I had placed there nearly four years since.
"Will you lee me keep it?"
"If you like. I would rather not see it

bands of again."

"You shall not," I answered, as I slipped it into my pocket. "It will be replaced by a "Do I new one to morrow—one that I hope may be

the symbol of more joy to you than this has

And as her eyes turned to my face in all their melting, perfidious languor, I conquered my hatred of her by a strong effort, and stooped and kissed her. Had I yielded to my real impulses, I would have crushed her cruelly in my a ms. and bruised her delicate flesh with the brutal ferocity of caresses born of bitterest loathing, not love. But no sign of my aversion escaped me, —all she saw was her elderly-looking admirer, with his calmly courteous demeaner, chill smile, and almost parental tenderness; and she judged him merely as an influential gentleman of good position and unlimited in-

come, who was about to make her ode of the most envied women in all Italy. The fugitive resemblance she traced in me to er "dead" husband was certainly attributed by her to a purely accidental likeness common to many persons in this world, where every man, they say, has his double, and for that matter every woman also. Who does not matter every woman also. Who does not remember the touching surprise of Heinrich Heine when, on visiting the picture gallery of the Palazzo Durazzo in Genoa, he was brought face to face with the portrait, as he thought, of a dead woman he had loved—
"Maria la morte." It mattered not to him that the picture was very old, that it had been painted by Giorgio Barbarelli centuries before his "Maria" could have lived; he simply deolares—"Il est praiment d'une resemblance ad mirable, resemblant jusqu'au silence de la mort.'

Such likenesses are common enough, and my wife, though my resemblance to myself (!) troubled her a little, was very far from imagining the real truth of the matter, as indeed how should she? What woman, believing and knowing, as far as anything can oe known, her husband to be dead and buried, is likely to accept even the idea of his possible escape from the tomb! Not one !— else the disconsolate widows would indeed have reason to be more inconsolable than they ap

When I left her that morning I found Andres Luziani waiting for me at my hotel. He was seated in the outer entrance hall; I hade him follow me into my private salon. He did so. Abashed at the magnificence of the apartment, he paused at the doorway, and stood, red cap in hand, hesitating, though with an amiabl

amile on his sunburnt merry countenance.
"Come in, antico," I said with an inviting gesture, "and sit down. All this tawdry show of velvet and gilding must seem common to your eyes, that have rested so long on the sparkling pomp of the foaming waves, the glorious blue curtain of the sky, and the sheeny white of the sais of the "Laura" glesming in the sold of the sun. Would I could live such a life as yours, Andrea!—there is nothing better under the width of heaven."

The poetical temperament of the Sicilian was caught and fired by my words. He at once forgot the splendid appurtenances of wealth and the costly luxuries that surrounded him; he advanced without embarrassment, and seated himself on a velvet and gold chair with as much ease as though it were a coil of rough rope on board the "Laura."

"You say truly, Eccellenzs," he said with a gleam of his white teeth through his jet-black puzzled, psined expression came into her eyes,
"And that one thing is?" I inquired.
"That you did not remind me so often of
Fabio," she said abruptly and half angrily.
"Not when you speak of him, I do not mean that. What I me in is, that you have ways like his. Of course I know there is no actual resemblance, and yeb..." She paused again, and thing to you than the caprice of the wind and waves.' But I—see you!—I know otherwise. The woman I wed must love the sea; she must have the fearless eyes that can look God's storms in the face—her tender words must ring out all the more clearly for the sound of the bubbling waves leaping against the 'Laura' when the wind is high! And as for our chil dren," he paused and laughed, "per la Santissima Madonna! if the salt and iron of the ocean be not in their blood, they will be no children of mine!"

I smiled at his enthusiasm, and pouring out some choice Montepuleiane, bade him taste it. He did so with a keen appreciation of its flavor, such as many a so called connoisseur of wines

does not possess.
"To your health, Eccellenza!" he said; "and may you long enjoy your life!"
I thanked him; but in my heart I was far

I thanked him; but in my heart I was far from schoing the kindly wish.

"And are you going to fulfil the prophecy of your friends, Andrea?" I asked. "Are you about to marry?"

He set down his glass only partly emptied, and smiled with an air of mystery.

"Ebbene! chi sa!" he replied, with a gay little shrug of his shoulders, yet with a sudden tenderness in his keen eyes that did not escape me. "There is a maiden,—my mother loves her well—she is little and fair as Carmelo Neri's Teress,—so high," and he laid his brown hand Teress,—so high," and he laid his brown hand lightly on his breast, "her head touches just here," and he laughed. "She looks as frail as a lily, but she is hardy as a sea-gull, and no one loves the wild waves more than she. Per-haus, in the month of the Madonna, when the white lilies bloom,—perhaps ! one can never tell,—the old song may be sung for us—

"Chi sa fervente amar Solo è felice l'

And humming the tune of the well-known love-ditty under his breath, he raised his glass of wine to his lips and drained it off with a relish, while his honestface beamed with gaiety and pleasure. Always the same story, I thought moodily. Love, the tempter,—Love, the destroyer,—Love, the curse! Was there no es cape possible from this bewildering snare that thus caught and slew the souls of men?

He soon roused himself from his pleasant reverie, and drawing his chair closer to mine,

assumed an sir of mystery.
"And for your friend who is in trouble," he said in a confidential tone, then paused and looked at me as though waiting permission to

proceed.
I nodded.
"Go on, amico. What have you arranged?"
"Everything!" he announced, with an air of triumph. "All is smooth sailing. At six o'clock on Friday morning the Rondinella, that is the brig I told you of, Eccellenza, will weigh anchor for Civita Vecchia. Her captain, old Antonio Bardi, will wait ten minutes or even a quarter of an hour if necessary for the—the—"

"Passenger," I supplemented. "Very amiable of him, but he will not need to delay his departure for a single instant beyond the the appointed hour. Is he satisfied with the

you punished him, as he deserved!"

I rose from my seat beside her. I could not answer for my own composure while sitting so close to the actual murderess of my friend and her lover. Had she forgotten her own "familiar" treatment of the dead man—the thousand nameless wiles and witcheries and tricks of her trade, by which she had beguled his soul and ruined his honor?

"I am glad you are satisfied with "Satisfied!" and Andrea swore a good-natured oath and la ghed aloud. "By San Pietre! if he were not, he would deserve to drown like a dog on the voyage! Though truly, it is always difficult to please him, he being old and cross and crusty. Yes; he is one of those men who have seen so much life that they are tired of it. Believe it! even the stormiest sea is a tame fish-pond to old Bardi. But he is satisfied this time, Eccellenza and his torminated.

"That is what I desire. Wait here, and I will bring it to you."
And leaving him for a moment or two I went

olesse you.'

more favor I would ask of you."

He saluted me with a light yet graceful ges-

me."
"It is a mere trifle," I returned. "It is mere-

ly to take a small valise belonging to my friend, and to place it on board the Rogdinella under the cars of the captain. Will you do this?"

"Most willingly. I will take it now if it so

"Eccelenza, anything I can do-command

into my bedroom and took from a cupboard I always kept locked, a common rough leather bag, which I had secretly packed myself, unhnown to Vincenzo, with such things as I judged to be useful and necessary. Chief among them was a bulky roll of bank notes. These amounted to nearly the whole of the remainer of the money I had placed in the bank notes. at Palermo. I had withdrawn it by gradual degrees, leaving behind only a couple of thousand francs, for which I had no special need. I locked and strapped the value; there was no name on it, and it was scarcely any weight to carry. I took it to Andrea, who swung it easily in his right hand and said smilingly, "Your friend is not wealthy. Eccellenza, if

this is all his luggage!"
"You are right," I answered with a slight sigh; "he is truly very poor—beggared of everything that should be his, through the treachery of those whom he has benefited." I paused; Andrea was listening sympathetically. That is why I have paid his passage-money, and have done my best to aid him.

"Ah! you have the good heart, Eccel-lenza," murmured the Sicilian thoughtfully. Would there were more like you! Often when fortune gives a kick to a man, nothing will suit but that all who see him must kick him also. And thus the povera diavolo dies of so many kicks, often! This friend of

yours is young, senza dubbio?"
"Yes, quite young, not yet thirty." "It is as if you were a father to him!" claimed Andrea enthusiastically.

claimed Andrea enthusiastically. "I hope he may be truly grateful to you, Eccellenza."
"I hope so too," I said, unable to resist a smile. "And now, amico, take this," and I pressed a small sealed packet into his band. "It is for yourself, Do not open it till you are at home with the mother you love so well, and the little maiden you spoke of, by your side. If its contents please you, as I believe they will, think that I am also rendered happier by your happiness.'

His dark eyes sparkled with gratitude as I spoke, and setting the value he held down on the ground, he stretched out his hand half timidly, half frankly. I shook it warmly and bade him farewell.
" Per Bacco!" he said, with a sert of shame-

facod eagerness, "the very devil must have caught my tongue in his fingers! There is something I ought to say to you, Eccellenza, but for my life I cannot find the right words. I must thank you better when I see you next "Yes," I answered dreamily and somewhat wearily, "when you see me next, Andrea, you shall thank me if you will; but believe me, I need no thanks."

And thus we parted, never to meet again, he to the strong glad life that is born of the wind and sea, and I to . . . But let me not anticipate. Step by step through the labyrinths of memory let me go over the old ground watered with blood and tears, not missing one sharp Stone of detail on the drear pathway leading to the bitterend.

That same evening I had an interview with Vincenzo. He was melancholy and tacitum—a mood which was the result of an announcement I had previously made to him-namely, that his services would not be r quired during my wedding trip. He had hoped to accompany me, and to occupy the position of courier, valet, major-domo, and generally confidential attend-ant—a hope which had partially soothed the vexation he had evidently felt at the notion of

my marrying at all. His plans were now frustrated, and if ever the good-natured fellow could be ill-tempered, he was assuredly so on this occasion. He stood before me with his usual respectful air, but he avoided my glance, and kept his eyes studiously fixed on the pattern of the carpet. I addressed him with an air of galety.
"Libene Vincenzo! Joy comes at last, yet

sec, even to me! To-morrow I shall wed the Countess Romani -the loveliest and perbaps the richest woman in Naples!"
"I know it, Eccellenza."

This with the same obstinately fixed countenance and downward look. "You are not very pleased, I think, at the prospect of my happiness?" I asked banter-

ingly. He glanced up for an instant, tnen as quickly down again.
"If one could be sure that the illustrissime

Eccelenza was indeed happy, that would be good tning," he answered dubiously. "And are you not sure?"
"No; the Eccellenza does not look happy. No, no, davvero! He has the air of being sor

rowful and ill, both together."

I shrugged my shoulders indifferently.

'You mistake me, Vincenzo. I am well—very well—and happy! Gran Dio! who could be happier? But what of my health or happiness?—they are nothing to me, and should be hear to you. Listen: I have something I wish

less to you. Listen; I have comething I wish you to do for me."

He gave me a sidelong and half-expectant glance. I went on—

"To-morrow evening I want you to go to

Avellino.

He was utterly astonished.

"To Avelline!" he murmured under his breath, "to Avelline!"

"Yes, to Avelline," I repeated somewhat impatiently. "Is there anything so surprising in that? You will take a letter from me to the Signora Monti. Look you, Vincenzo, you have been faithful and obedient so far, I expect implicit fidelity and obedience still. You will not be needed here to-morrow after the marriage ball has once begun; you can take the nine o'clock train to Avelline, and—understand me—you will remain there till you receive further news from me. You will not have to wait long. and in the meantime," here I smiled, "you can make love to Lilla.'

Vincenzo did not return the smile. But—but," he stammered, sorely perplexed -"if I go to Avellino I cannot weit upon the Eccellenza. There is the portmanteau to pack-and who will see to the luggage when you leave on Friday morning for Rome? And-and-I had thought to see you to the station-He stopped, his vexation was too great to allow

I laughed geatly.
"How many more trifles can you think of my friend, in opposition to my wishes? As for the portmanteau, you can pack it this very day if you so please—then it will be in readiness. The test of your duties can for once be performed by others. It is not only important, but imperative that you should go to Avellino on my errand. I want you should go
to Avellino on my errand. I want you to take
this with you," and I tapped a small, square
iron box, heavily made and strongly padlocked,
which stood on the table near me,
He glanced at the box, but still hesitated,
and the gloom on his countenance deepened. I

grew a little annoyed.
"What is the matter with you?" I said at

last with some stereness. "You have something on your mind—speak out!"

The fear of my wrath startled him. He looked up with a bewildered pain in his eyes, and, spoke, his mellow Tuscan voice vibrating with its own eloquent entreaty.
"Ecollenza!" he exclaimed eagerly, "you

must forgive me—yes, forgive your poor servant who seems too bold, and who yet is true to you, —yes, indeed, so true !—and who would go with you to death if there were need! I am not blind, I can see your sufferings, for you do suffer, 'lustricsimo, though you hide it well. Often have I watched you when you have not known it. I feel that you have what we call a wound in the heart, bleeding, bleeding always. Such a thing means death often, as much as a straight shot in battle. Let tricks of her trade, by which she had begunded is a tame fish-pond to old Bardi. But he is satisfied with my action in that affair," I said coldly and steadily. "I your friend found him to be both dumb and myseif regret the death of the unfortunate in the best of the unfortunate in the staps on board."

That is well," I said smiling. "I owe you shou! you?—the look that is in your face you all this while?"

many thanks, Andrea. And yet there is one sometimes, the look of one who is stunned by a hard blow. I have said to myself, "That look will kill me if I see it often." And your love for this great lady, whom you will wed to-morrow, has not lightened your soul as love should lighten it. Not seem to be seen to lighten it. No! you are even sadde: than before, and the look I speak of com: s ever again and again. Yes, I have watched you, and lately I have seen you writing, writing far into the night, when you should have slept. Ah, signor! you are angry, and I know I should not have spoken; but tell me, how can I look at Lilla and be happy when I feel that you are

al me and sad 9 Istopped the flood of his eloquence by a mute gesture, and withdrew my hand from his clasp.

"I am not angry," I said with quite steadiness, and yet with something of coldness, though my whole nature, always highly sensi tive, was deeply stirred by the rapid, un-atudied expressions of affection that melted so warmly from his lips in the liquid music of the mellow Tuscan tongue. "No, I am not angry, but I am sorry to have been the object of so much solicitude on your part. Your pity is misplaced, Vincenzo, it is indeed! Pity an emperor clad in purples and seated on a throne of pure gold, but do not pity me! I tell you, that to morrow, yes, to morrow, I shall obtain all that I have ever sought-my greatest desirwill be fulfilled. Believe it. No man has ever been so thoroughly satisted with . . . satisfac-

tion . . . as I shall be!"

Then seeing him look still and and incredu lous, I clapped my hand on his shoulder and

"Come, come, amico, wear a merrier face for my bridal day, or you will not deserve to wed Lilla. I thank you from my heart." and and kindness, but I assure you there is nothing wrong with me. I am well—perfectly well—and happy. It is understeed that you go to Avelling to morrow evening?"

Vincenzo sighed, but was passive.
"It must be as the Eccelienza pleases," he

murmured resignedly.

"That is well," I answered good-humoredly;

"and as you know my pleasure, take care that
nothing interferes with your departure. And, one word more, you must cease to watch me. Plainly speaking, I do not choese to be under surveillance. Nay, I am not offended, far from it, fidelity and devotion are excellent virtues, but in the present case I prefer obedience-strict, implicit obedience. Whatever I may do, whether I sleep or wake, walk or sit still,—at-tend to your duties, and pay no heed to my ac-So will you best serve me,-you understand?

"Si, Signor!" and the poor fellow sighed again and reddened with his own inward confusion "You will pardon me, Eccellenza, for my free dom of speech, I feel I have done wrong."
"I pardon you for what in this world is never pardoned excess of love," I answered gently. "Knowing you love me, I sak you to gently. "Knowing you love me, I ask you obey me in my present wishes, and thus shall always be friends."

His face brightened at these last words, and his thoughts turned in a new direction. He glanced at the iron box I had before pointed out

"That is to go to Avellino, Eccellenza?" he asked with more alacrity that he had yet shown.
"Yes," I answered, "You will place it in

the hands of the good Signora Monti, for whom I have a great respect. She will take care of it till I return."
"Your commands shall be obeyed, signore,

he said rapidly, as though eager to atone for his past hesitation. "After all," and he smiled, "it will be pleasant to see Lilla; she will be interested, too, to hear the account of the Excel lenza's marriage."

And somewhat consoled by the prospect of the entertainment his unlooked-for visit would give to the charming little maiden of his choice, he left me, and shortly afterwards I heard him humming a popular love-tong softly under his breath, while he busied himself in packing my portmanteau for the honeymoon-trip—a portmanteau destined never to be used or opened

by its owner.
That night, contrary to my usual habit, lingered long over my dinner; at its close I poured out a ful glass of fine Lacrima Cristi, and secretly mixing with it a dose of a tasteless but powerful opiate, I called my valet and bade but powerful opiate, I called my valet and bade him drink it and wish me joy. He did so readily, draining the contents to the last drop. It was a tempestuous night; there was a high wind, broken through by heavy sweeping gusts of rain. Vincenzo cleared the dinner table, yawning viribly as he did so, then taking my out-door paletot on his arm, he went to his ted room, a small one additional contents. joining mine, for the purpose of brushing it, according to his customary method. I opened a book, and prefending to be absorbed in its contents, I walted patiently for about half an

At the expiration of that time I stole softly to his d or and looked in. It was as I had expected: overcome by the sudden and heavy action of the op ate, he had thrown himself on his bed, and was slumbering profoundly, the unbrushed overcoat by his side. Poor fellow! I smiled as I watched him; the faithful dog was chained, and could not follow my steps for

that night at least.

I left him thus, and wrapping myself in a thick Almaviva that muffled me almost to the eyes, I hurried out, fortunat ly meeting no one on my way—out into the sto in and darkness, towards the Campo Sauto, the abode of the 1 wise though speechl as Dead. I had work to to there—with that must be done. I knew that if I had not taken the precaution of drugging my too devoted servitor, he might despise his protestations, have been tempted to track me whither I went. As it was, I felt myself safe, for four hours must pass, I knew, before Vincenzo could awake from his lethargy. And was absent for some time.

Though I performed my ta-k as quickly as might be, it took me longer than I thought, and filled me with more loathing and reluctance than I had deemed possible. It was a gruesome, ghastly piece of work—a work of preparation,—and when I had finished it entirely to my satisfaction I felt as though the longer to my satisfaction, I felt as though the bony fingers of death itself had been plunged deep into my very marrow. I shivered with cold. my limbs would scarce bear me upright, and my teeth chattered as though I were seized by strong ague. But the fixity of my purpos strengthened me till all was done—till the stage was set for the last scene of the tragedy. Or comedy? What you will! I know that in the vorld nowadays you make a husband's dishoner more of a whispered jest than anything else-you and your machinery of the law. But to you and your machinery of the law. But to me—I am so strangely constituted—dishonor is a bitterer evil than death. If a'l those who are deceived and betrayed felt thus, then justice would need to become more just. It is fortunate for the lawvers that we are not all incorable men When I returned from my dreary walk in the

driving storm I found Vincenzo still fast asleep.
I was glad of this, for had he seen me in th
plight I was, he would have had good reason to be alarmed concerning both my physical and mental condition. Perceiving myself in the mental condition. Perceiving myself in the glass, I recoiled as from an image of horror. I saw a man with haunted, hungry eyes gleaming out from under a mass of disordered white hair, his pale, haggard face set and stern as the face of a merciless inquisitor of old Spain, his dark cloak dripping with glattering rain drops, his hands and mails stained as though he had dug them into the black earth, his boots heavy with them into the black earth, his boots heavy with mire and clay, his whole aspect that of one who had been engaged in some abhorrent deed, too repulsive to be named. I stared at my own reflection thus and shuddered; then I laughed softly with a sort of fierce enjoyment. Quickly I threw off all my soiled habiliments and locked them out of sight, and, arraying myself in dressing gown and slippers, I glanced at the time. It was half-past one—already the morning of It was half-past one—already the morning of my bridal. I had been absent three hours and that. I went into my salon and remained there writing. A few minutes after 2 o'clock had struck the door opened noiselessly, and Vincenzo, looking still very sleepy, appeared with an expression of enquiring anxiety. He will an expression of enquiring anxiety. He will drowstly, and seemed relieved to see me attendance on a queen; they looked an attendance on a queen; they looked

Lacrima; I am not used to wine. I have been abler p. I have hed, pretended to stiffe a yawn on my own account, and rose from my easy chair.
"Veramente," said lightly, "so have I, very

"Veramente," said lightly, "so have I, very nearly. And if I would appear as a gay bridegroom, it is time I went to hed. Buona notte."
"Buona notte, signore."

And we severally retired to rest, he satisfied that I had been in my own room all the evening, and I, thinking with a savage joy at my heart of what I had prepared out there in the darkness, with no witnesses of my work save the whirling wind and rain.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

My marriage morning dawned bright and clear, though the high wind of the past night still prevailed and sent the white clouds scudding rapidly, like ships running a race, across the blue fairness of the sky. The air was strong, fresh, and exhibitanting, and the crowds that swarmed into the Piazza del Popolo and the swarmed into the Fiazza del Popolo and the Toledo, easier to begin the riot and fun of Giovadi Grasso, were one and all in the highest good humor. As the hours advanced many little knots of people hurried towards the Cathedral, anxious, if possible, to secure places in or near the chapel of San Gennaro, in order to see to advantage the brilliant costumes of the few distinguished persons who had been invited to witness my wedding. The ceremony was fixed to take place at eleven, and at a little before half past ten I entered my carriage, in company with the Duke di Marina as best man, and drove to the scene of action. Clad in gar ments of admirable cut and fit, with well brushed bair and beard, and wearing a de-meanor of skilfully mingled gravity and gaiety, I bore but little resemblance to the baggard, ferocious creature who had faced me in the mirror a few hours previously.

A strange and secret mirth too posessed me,

a sort of half-frenzied merriment that threat-ened every now and then to break through the mask of dignified composure it was necessary for me to wear. There were moments when I could have laughed, shricked and sung with the fury of a drunken madman. As it was, I talked incessantly; my conversation was flavored with bitter wit and pungent sarcsem, and once or twice my friend the Duke surveyed me with an air of wondering inquiry, as though he thought my manner forced or unnatural. My coachman was compelled to drive rather slowly, owing to the pressing throngs that awarmed at every corner ful bride, throng and through every thoroughfare, while the yells eager spectators. of the masqueraders, the gambols of street clowns, the firing of toy guns, and the sharp explosion of colored bladders, that were swung to and fro and tossed in the air by the merry populace, started my spirited horses frequently, and caused them to leap and prance to a somewhat dangerous extent, thus attracting more than the customary attention to my equipage, As it drew up at last at the door of the chapel, I was surprised to see what a number of spectators had collected there. There was a positive crowd of loungers, beggars, children and middle-class persons of all sorts, who beheld my arrival with the utmost interest and excitement.

the utmost interest and excitement.

In accordance with my instructions a rich crimson carpet had been laid down from the very edge of the pavement right into the church as far as the altar; a silken awning had also been erec ed, under which bloomed a miniature avenue of palms and tropical flowers. All eyes were turned upon me furiously as I stepped from my carriage and entered the chapel, side by side with the Duke, and murmurs of my vast wealth and generosity were audibly whispered as I passed along. One old crone hideusly ugly, but with large, dark, piercing eyes, the fading lamps of a lost beauty, chuckled and mumbled as she craned her skinny throat forward to observe me more closely. "Aye, aye! The saints know he need be rich and

generous—pover'uomo, to fill her mouth. A little red cruel mouth always open, that swallows money like macaroni, and laughs at the suffering poor! Ah! that is bad, bad! He need be rich to satisfy her!"

The Duke di Marina caught these words and claused swidth met to satisfy the poor. need be rich to satisfy her!"

The Duke di Marina caught these words and glanced quickly at me, but I affected not to have heard. Inside the chapel there were a the hotel, where the wedding breakfast awaited great number of people, but my own invited | we.
great number of people, but my own invited | we.
great number of people, but my own invited | we.
great number of people, but my own invited | we.
great number of people, but my own invited | we.
great number of people, but my own invited | we. guests, not numbering more than twenty; Inis is always a record to the pace apportioned and embarraisment everywhere, even in the to them near the altar, which was divided from sunny, pleasure-loving South; every one is glad the mere sight-seers by means of a silken rope when it is over, and when the flowery, uniform the sight-seers by means of a silken rope when it is over, and oversetted convincement. the mere sight-seers by means of a silken rope that crossed the aisle. I exchanged greatings that crossed the aisle. I exchanged greatings with most of these persons, and in return received their congratulations; then I walled with a firm deliberate step up to the high altar and there waited. The magnificent paintings on the wall round me seemed endowed with mysterious life,—the grand heads of saints and martyrs were turned upon me as though they demanded—"Must then do this thing. Hast

though no forgiveness!" And ever my stern soul answered, "Nay; if hereafter I am tortured in eternal flame for all ages, yet now,—now while I live, I will be avenged!"

A bleeding Christ suspended on his cross gazed at me reproachfully with long-enduring gazed at me reproachfully with long-enduling eyes of deathful anguish—eyes that seemed to They are apt to shake their neads, and to look say, "O erring man, that tormentest thyself upon it as a misfortune rather than a blessing, and the compact of the compact o say, "O erring man, that tormentest thyself upon it as a misfortune rather than a blessing with passing passions, shall not thine own end "L'altare è la tomba dell' amore," is a very comapproach spedily?—and what comfert will thou

bave lo thy last hour?" And inwardly I answered, "Noue! No shred of c asolation can ever again be mine, no joy, save fulfilled revenge! And this I will possess th ugh she heavens should crack and the earth split asunder! For once a woman's treachery shall meet with punishment-for once such strange uncommon justice shall be done!

strange uncommon judges snau oe cone:

And my spirit wrapped itself again in sombre
meditative silence. The sunlight fell gloriously through the stained windows;—blue, gold,
crimeon and violet shafts of dazzling radiance glittered in lustrous flickering patterns on the snowy whitene s of the marblealtar, and slowly softly, majestically, as though an angel stepped forward, the sound of musicstole on the incenseladen air. The unseen organist played a subline voluntary of Palestrina's, and the round, harmonious notes came falling gently on one another like drops from a fountain trick-

ling on flowers.

I thought of my last wedding day, when I had stoud in this very place, full of hope, intoxicated with love and joy, when Guido Ferrari had been by my side, and had drunk in for the first time the poisoned decrease of terrotation from the loveliness drought of temptation from the loveliness of my wife's face and form; when I, poor fool, would as soon have thought that God could lie, as that either of these whom I adord could play me false. I draw the wed-ding-ring from my pecket and looked at it—it was sparkingly bright and appeared new. Yet it was old -- it was the very same ring I had drawn off my wife's finger the day before; it drawn (it my wires anger the cay perore; it had only been burnished afresh by a skilled jeweller, and showed no more marks of wear than if it had been bought that n orang. The great bell of the Cathedral boomed out

eleven, and as the last stroke swung from the tower, the chapel doors were flung more widely open :- then came the gentle rustle of trailing robes, and turning, I beheld my wife. She approached, leaning lightly on the arm of the old Chevalier Manciel, who, true to his creeds of gallantry, had accepted with alacrity the post of paternal protector to the bride on this this occasion; and I could not well wonder at the universal admiration that broke in suppressed murmars from all assembled, as this most fair masterpiece of the devil's creation paced slowly and pracefully up the sisle. She were a dress of clinging white velvet made with the greatest simplicity,—a lace veil, priceless in value and fine as a gossamer, draped her from bead to foot,—the jewels I had given her flashed about her like little scintillating points of light, in her hair, at her waist, on her breast and un-

covered arms.

Being as she deemed herself, a widow, she had no bridesmaids; her train was held up by Vincenzo, locking still very sleepy, appeared with an expression of enquiring anxiety. He smiled drowsily, and seemed relieved to see me sitting quietly in my accustomed place at the writing table. I surveyed him with an air of like two faires who had slipped out of a strandard armsize. midnight dream, in their little loose gowing of Vincenzo! What has become of cold-colored plush, with wreaths of mandows while?"

Cold-colored plush, with wreaths of mandows deficient tumbled curly hair. They

"Eccellenza," he stammered, "if was the had been well trained by Nina herself, for on arrival at the attar they stood demurely, one on each side of her, the pretty page occupying his place behind, and still holding up the end of the velvet train with a charming air of hauteur and

velvet train with a charming air of hanteur and self complacency.

The whole cortege was a picture in its way, as Nina had meant it to be; she was fond of artistic effects. She smiled languishingly upon me as she reached, the altar, and sauk on her knees beside me in prayer. The music swelled torth with redoubled grandeur, the priests and acolytes, appeared, the marriage service commenced. As I placed, the ring on the book I glanced furtively at the bride; her fair head was bent demurely—she seemed on the book I glanced furtively at the bride; her fair head was bent demurely—she seemed absorbed in holy meditations. The priest having performed the cermony of sprinkling it with holy water, I took it back, and set it for the second time in my wile's soft white little thand—set it in accordance with the Catholic hand, set it in accordance with the Catholic Ritual, first on the thumb, then on the second finger, then on the third and lastly on the fourth, where I left it in its old place, wondering as I did so, and murmered, In Nominee Patris et Filii et Spiritlis Sancti, Amen!" whether she recognised it as the one she had worn so long! But it was evident she did not;—her calm was unbroken by to much as a start or tremor; she had the self possession of a perfect ly satisfied, beautiful, van, and utterly heartwoman. Absorbed in strange, half morese, half specu-

lative fancies, I scarcely heard the close of the solemn service. I was roused by a delicate touch from my wife, and I woke, as it were, with a start, to hear the sonorous, crashing chords of the Wedding-march in Lohengrin thundering through the air. All was over:—my wife was mine indeed—mile most thoroughly—mine by the exceptionally closested by the by the the exceptionally close-tied knot of marriage—mine to do as I would with "till death shall us part." How long, I gravely mused, how long before death could come to do us this great service. And straightway I began as one great service. And straightway I began counting, counting certain spaces of time that must clapse before; I was still absorbed in this mental arithmetic, even while I mechanically offered my arm to my wife as we entered the vestry to sign our names in the maraiave register. So occupied was I in my calculations that I nearly caught myself murmuring certain numbers aloud. I checked this, and recalling my thoughts by a strong effort, I strove to appear interested and de-lighted, as I walked the aisle with my beautiful bride, through the ranks of admiring and

On reaching the outer doors of the chapel several-girls emptied their full and fragrant baskets at our feet; and in return, I bade one of my servants distribute a bag of coins I had brought for the purpose, knowing from former experience that it would be needed. To tread across such a heap of flowers required some care, many of the blossoms clinging to Nina's velvet train,—we therefore moved forward Blowly.

Just as we had almost reached the carriage, a young girl, with large laughing eyes set like flashing jewels in her soft oval face, threw down in my path a cluster of red roses. A sudden fury of impotent passion possessed me, and I crushed my heel instantly and savegely upon the crimson blossoms, stamping upon them again and again so violently that my wife raised her delicate eyebrows in um zement, and the pressing people who sto d round us, shrugged their shoulders, and gazed at one another with looks of utter bewilderment—while the girl who had thrown them shrank back in terror, her face paling as she murmured, "Santissima Madonua! she murmured, "Santissima Madonua! ma fa paura!" I bit my lips with vexation, ma ja paura!" I bit my lips with vexation, inwardly cursing the weakness of my own behavior. I laughed lightly in answer to Nina's unsp ken, half-alarmed inquiry.
"It is nothing—a mere fancy of mire. I hate red roses! They look to me like human blood in flower!"
She shuddened alartic

n nower:
She shuddered elightly.
"What a horrible idea! How can you think of such a thing?"

mosphere of undoubted chilliness; the women were dull, being rendered jealous of the bride's beauty, and the richness of her white velvets and jewels; the men were constrained, and could acarcely force tremselves into even the appearance of cordiality, they evidently thought that, with such wealth as mine, I would have done much better to remain a bachelor. In truth, Italians, and especially Neapolitans, are by no means an illustratio concerning the suppositions.

It was a relief to us all when we rose from the splindidly appointed table, and separated for a few hour. We were to meet again at the ball, which was fixed to commence at nine o'clock in the evening. The cream of the event was to be tasted thin,—the final toasting of the bride was to take place then,—then there would be music, mirth and dencing, and all the splendour of almost royal revelry. I escorted my wife with formal courtsey to a splendid apartm nt which had been pre-pared for her, for she had, as she t ld me, many things to do,—as, for instance, to take off her bridal robes, to study every detail of her wondrous ball costume for the night, and to super-intend her maid in the packing of her trunks for the next day's journey. The next day! I smiled grimly. I wondered how she would en-joy her trip! Then I kissed her hand with the most profound respect and lefe her to reporeto refresh and prepare herself for the brilliant festivity of the evening.
(To be Conttinued).

Amy, speaking of the responsibilities of matrimony: "Would you be afraid to merry on a thousand a year, Iom?" a bit, if I could only find a girl with an itcome of that amount. 11



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