

RETRIBUTION;

Or, the Avenger's World Wide Chase.

BY "WARREN."

CHAPTER I.

If I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth,--even there will I find mine enemy.



HEN a revolving light meets the gaze amid surrounding darkness where the heads of industrious men are bent, it is a strange sight to see a man in a top hat and coat, looking towards the right.

Such an experience was that of Anton Reyman on a bright day morning, as far back as 1874.

Anton was the foreman of the Poesia vineyards. Three years before he had left his home on the Rhine, and had come to tempt fortune in the land of the setting sun.

From that day until the one in the early morning of which we find him reading his way to the by and giving his master faithful advice and had been rewarded accordingly.

Anton was in a gay mood this morning. He had breakfasted well and had kissed his young wife and several little when he started from them with such bright smiles as he had not worn for many a day.

Anton had been born in the midst of beautiful scenery, but nature had not left it as such for him. He was never weary of gazing admiringly at the beautiful landscape which lay stretched before him.

He followed the trail a few feet and found that it turned towards the vines. A few steps further and he saw the body of a man lying face down, lying flat on his back.

He was not a man of great strength, but he was not a man of great weakness either. He was a man of average build, with a fair complexion and a pair of eyes that were not very bright.

Who has not at one time or another experienced the awful, inexplicable sensation which comes over one when he is suddenly seized by a hand which he does not expect to feel?

Yesterday, Mario Deloro, in the warm glow of morning, healthy manhood; to-day, a feeble corpse, ghastly and livid.

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the beloved of all who knew him, the man who never feared to face his enemy, had been struck from behind.

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

At last, however, he awakened to the necessity of the hour and arose to look around. There was not a being in sight, so without stopping from further reflection he hastened in the direction of the cellar, the entrance to which was scarcely a stone's throw from where he stood.

There he expected he would find some one. He was not disappointed, for two of the cellar-men soon appeared and in a short time he had told them the dreadful news, as well as his exact location in the vineyard.

Neither of the three could advance any reasonable theories. The old man knew everything for miles around, but could not remember that Mario had an enemy.

He had known the dead man for more than two years, and had never heard a single word of ill-will from him, while the youngest man of the three only knew that during the short time he had been there he had received his pay regularly, and had heard his employer speak of as a good fellow.

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

It seemed as though neither of them would ever tire of talking about him, and when they ceased for a moment to eulogize his character they would endeavor to speculate on the probable cause of the murder.

The first of the officers to approach the body was the marshal. He took a careful survey of the surroundings, but found nothing that aroused his curiosity in an unusual degree.

He took off his hat and looked at the body with a keen eye. He saw that the man was lying on his back, with his arms and legs extended.

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you kindly undertake to see that the news is duly broken to his wife--poor soul! said the officer.

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

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

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

Young Mario, full of pluck and spirit, determined not to become in any way dependent on his father in his straitened circumstances, so with a few dollars he resolved to try his luck in California.

He first tried the mining districts, but there met with indifferent success. Still, by hard work he managed to get a little money ahead and drifted to San Francisco, where he opened a fruit store.

There he was successful, and soon saved several thousand dollars. Growing tired of the busy yet humdrum life of the city, he resolved on trying his hand in the wine-growing districts, and bought a few acres of land in the fertile Sonoma valley.

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

He invested in other mines and lost heavily; then he gave his notes for large sums, and a day or two before settling time with Deloro he had made money, so much so that he had fifty thousand dollars in debt, with no immediate prospect of being able to meet his obligations.

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

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

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

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

The conversation was quiet enough at first, but Deloro calmly signed the transfer of the mining stock so that Velasquez might complete the negotiations on his return to San Francisco.

After this Velasquez told Deloro that he had been speculating further and had lost considerable money, and that in order to square himself, he must borrow at least twenty thousand dollars.

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

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

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



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

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

Being somewhat scared, and fearing lest his phenomenal luck should desert him and leave him at last in the hands of justice, he concluded to try a few years' seclusion in the remote mountains of the Sierras.

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

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

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where he had left Velasquez sitting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER III.

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

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

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

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

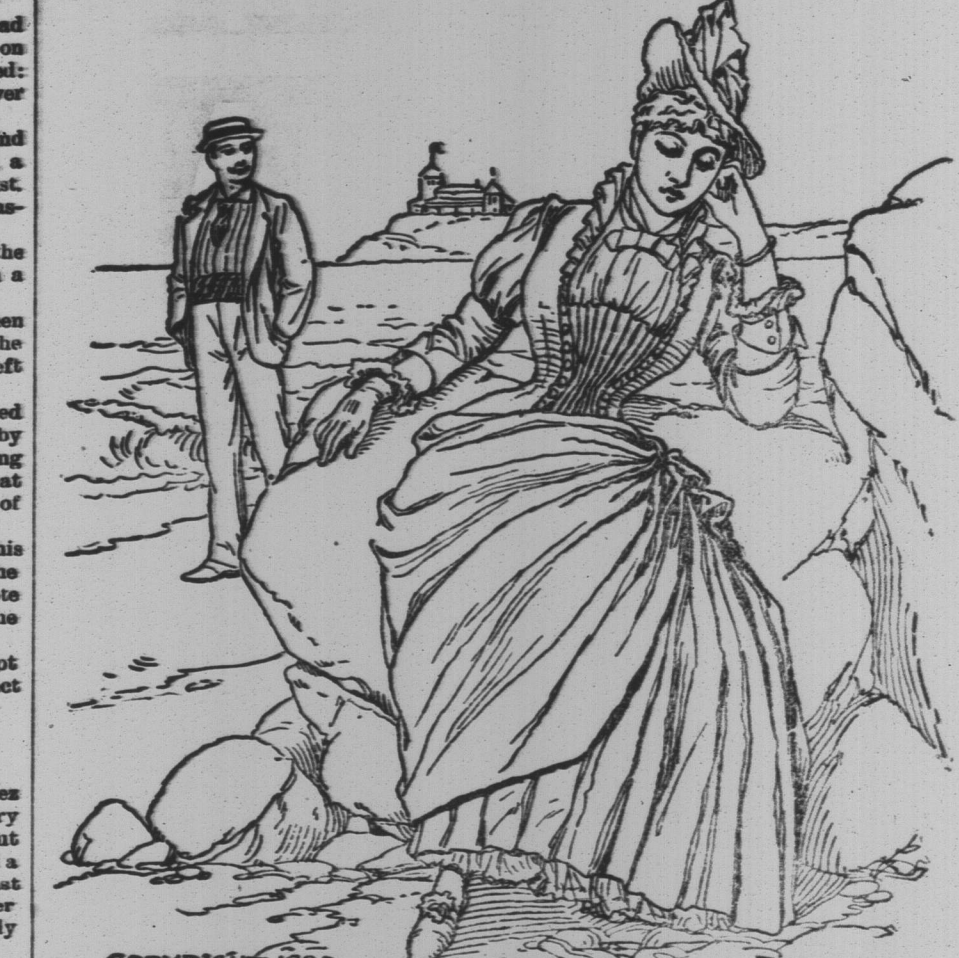
The body had barely been taken in before a crowd of men from Deloro's home came rushing along in eager haste on their way to the cellars. The man had gone up to the bedroom to call Deloro and found that the door was open, the lam still burning with a low, flickering light, but the bed had not been touched.

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

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

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

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



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