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VENDETTA.
BY MARGUERITE THIERY.

The door was torn open and an old, bent woman burst into the drinking room at a rate of speed surprising in any one of her age. The men who had been drinking around one of the tables jumped to their feet, but a glance from the woman made them sit down again.

Once inside the door, she sat down near the fireplace and called out in her shrill voice, "Christina!"

A young woman who waited on the customers came toward her slowly and unwillingly.

"Throw some fresh wood on the fire, I am cold."

The old woman was the owner of the osteria, and Christina was her step-daughter. A poor, miserable osteria it was, located in a tumble down cottage at the foot of Monte Clinto, which throws its shadow across the valley of Nisio, into which the Corsican bandits flee when they have become outlawed.

The osteria had been opened about twenty years before, when Lucia, the old woman, was still young, and married Christina's father, who was then a widower.

Christina grew up between these two people, who abused and ill-treated her all the time, and who worked her from early dawn until long after midnight.

When the old woman had somewhat recovered and strengthened herself with a large glass of brandy, she looked at the new customers as if to discover if there was a traitor among them, and then said: "The carabinieri are in the woods, and there is a prize on Angelo's head."

If she had thrown a bomb among these men the effect could not have been more startling. Only Christina did not move, though her face had turned pale.

"How big is the prize?" she whispered. But the old woman, afraid she had already said too much, remained silent. The next day was the Sunday of the

dead, and while the bells pealed and everybody was kneeling on the grave of some relative, Christina sneaked out of the church and ran towards the woods.

She did not stop until she came to a little shanty far away up the side of the mountain. Hesitatingly she knocked at the door, which was immediately opened.

Three men were sitting in the room around a table playing cards. She looked at them for a moment and quietly said:

"I will deliver Angelo into your hands," and told them how they might easily catch him.

Her tale came clear and plain, but never once dared to meet their glances of contempt.

How could she know that, even if she was fond of gold, she did not betray the life of this man for love of money, but because she had no other way of carrying out her vendetta. Was it not perfectly right of her to take revenge upon her enemies?

Evening had come. The clouds which had concealed the sun from view all day had disappeared, and the moon was shining brightly, illuminating every nook and corner of the cemetery of the village.

A young splendidly built man is kneeling down alongside a grave. His hands are folded as if in prayer, but he is not praying. He is thinking of the past. He sees himself once more, a happy boy in the house of his mother, who loved him better than her life. He sees his mother as she looked when his father had been laid to rest, all in black and crying while clasping him to her bosom. "I thank you, Lord, that I have still my boy left to live for." And he thought of the happy years when she had given her love in full measure to him and his little friend, Christina.

Then he shudders when he remembers the day when his playmate had answered him:

"You are too poor—there is somebody else who wants to marry me, and who is rich and can give me anything I wish. Forget your love of me, Angelo. I am going to marry Pedro."

The same evening Pedro was killed by a bullet which hit him squarely between the eyes, and Angelo had fled to the mountains.

When Angelo's mother heard of her son's crime, she dropped dead without a sound. Also for her death Angelo blamed the girl. He hated her, hated her as much as he had loved her before, and swore that as long as he lived she should have no man to protect her. Another man wooed her, but was found shot between the eyes as was Pedro, and since then no man had dared to go near her.

Angelo's conscience did not trouble him because of these murders; his only sorrow was that his crime had killed his mother, and every year on the Sunday of the dead he risks his life to kneel down at his mother's grave and ask her forgiveness.

He is so absorbed in his thoughts that he does not hear a noise in the bushes near the wall behind him. It is Christina, who is sneaking ahead of the carabinieri, who must soon come to arrest him. And then she will have her gold, heaps of glittering gold, enough to gratify all her wishes for life.

She rejoices in the expectation of soon being able to leave the osteria, but when she sees the figure of her childhood's friend kneeling at the grave of his mother, she feels that she is playing the part of Judas against a man whose only early crime is that he loved her too much and who must now live the life of a hunted beast.

And the thought of the blood money nearly choked her. She jumps to her feet. This time Angelo has heard and he stands there rifle in hand ready to shoot. His eye, however, recognizes her as a woman and he lets her come nearer.

"Angelo," she cries, "for God's sake Angelo flee. Run away as fast as you can. They are coming."

"Who?"

"The carabinieri."

"How do you know?"

He seizes her hands in a grip of iron which nearly crushes every bone it it.

"Run Angelo, run," she gasps.

"You miserable creature," he hisses between his teeth, and draws his stiletto.

"Angelo, Angelo!" is all she can say, as she sinks down on the grave at his feet. He raises the weapon to thrust it into her heart.

"Angelo, on your mother's grave!"—His hand sinks down.

"You are right, you contemptible creature. I will not shed your blood to desecrate this holy spot, but I will get revenge—you shall see."

She falls to the ground in a swoon as his experienced ear hears the sound of approaching steps and in one bound he is on the other side of the wall.

A few seconds later the carabinieri are in the graveyard. Clouds are again hiding the moon, but in the dim light they are still able to see the figure prostrated on the grave.

How is it possible that he has not heard them. No, he must have heard them long ago, and must have decided to surrender, or maybe he was watching his chance to shoot them down.

"Angelo," the officer in command of the carabinieri shouts, "surrender or we will shoot."

No sound. The figure does not stir.

"Surrender! there is no escape, my men are all around you!"

He does not move.

For the third time the officer shouts his warning, and when he gets no answer he orders his men to fire.

A cry pierces the air, and Christina has paid the penalty of her crime.

While the landlady of the Bell Inn at Totwell, England, was at dinner the other day an aerolite crashed through the room and exploded. Though the house was considerably damaged, the landlady escaped.



Naturally.
Tommy—Papa, who wrote the poem entitled "Down in the Coal Mine?"
Papa—Some one of the minor poets, I suppose.



"Is it so that he's head over heels in debt?"
"Yes. He keeps his clothes in his desk, and his unpaid bills in his wardrobe."



Footpad—What did you say was your business?
Mr. Trusty—Why, I am a coal dealer.
Footpad—Here, take back your watch. I don't rob the profession.

Having wagered \$40 that he would steal five medals from a policeman's chest, a young man in Paris secured two, says the Petit Parisien, but was caught at the third attempt, and will be prosecuted.