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# THE GRANT COUNTY NEWS.

*THE NEWS*

Is a newspaper for the people, laboring for the people and voicing the sentiments of the people of its own Grant County.

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## AVENGED AT LAST;

### Or, a World-Wide Chase.

A STORY OF RETRIBUTION.

BY "WABASH."

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CHAPTER III.

The morning after the murder Valasquez arose early, as was the 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.

After leaving the party of men who were escorting the dead body of Mario Delaro into the little town of San Paola, 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 hardly been carried in before a servant from Delaro's house came rushing along in eager haste on his way to the cellars. The man had gone up to the bedroom to call Delaro and found that the door was opened, the lamp still burning with a low, flickering light, but the bed had not been slept on.

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

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 Paola. It reached fever heat, however, at Delaro's late home and among the workmen at the cellars.

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

In the afternoon the coroner called a jury together and commenced his official investigation into the cause of the death.

The first witness called was Anton Reyman, who testified to having parted with Delaro on the previous night about ten o'clock, near the entrance to the cellars, also to finding him dead among the vines on the following morning.

From the surroundings of the murdered man he could imagine nothing which would indicate by whom the deed had been committed, but noticed that he had been stabbed in the back.

The other workmen were then called, but only corroborated Anton's statement. Then the men who were present at the cellars when Delaro called in on that fatal night were questioned as to what had transpired on that occasion.

They each told the same story, saying that Mr. Delaro was in a very bad temper over the fact that a large quantity of wine had been spoiled owing to carelessness on the part of the man who had charge of it and that he spoke rather sharply to all of them.

"Did he pass angry words with any one in particular?" asked the coroner of the last witness, a burly German.

The man hesitated before replying, then said: "Yes, he spoke quite sharply to Anton Reyman, almost keeping a sharper eye on the man."

"Were these the first cross words spoken that day between Mr. Delaro and Anton?" was the next question.

"No," replied the workman; "they had several noisy talks that day and Anton, who is himself rather hot-tempered at times, talked back and said some thing about understanding his business, but that he could not be responsible for the mistakes and carelessness of idle worthless fellows like those Mr. Delaro sometimes employed at a busy time."

Then the coroner inquired if Anton often showed signs of hot temper. "He gets in a rage sometimes, when things don't go quite right, but it soon passes off," was the response.

After this other witnesses were called who testified to several recent quarrels between Delaro and Anton, though all insisted that none of these hot-word passages were at all serious affairs.

Just about this time one of the officers approached Anton and bent down as though to examine his clothing.

"Where did you get this blood on your overalls?" he inquired of Anton.

Realizing the horrible purport of the question, Anton replied: "I got that as I knelt over the body of my dead employer this morning," was the reply.

"Some on your shirt, too," said the officer. "Is that the same shirt you wore last night?"

Anton's quick temper made the hot blood fly to his cheeks, and the veins in his neck distended as he angrily replied:

"Yes, it is; but why do you ask such insinuating questions? I must have got the blood on my shirt when I examined the body in my curiosity to see whether the wound was self-inflicted or not."

"A pretty thin story, ain't it, coroner?" asked the officer.

The coroner looked wise and said that that was for the jury to decide. There being no further witnesses to be examined the jury were called upon for a verdict.

It did not take them long to reach a decision, and in a very few moments they declared that the dead man came to his death at the hands of an unknown murderer.

Practically, however, the "unknown man" of their verdict was a farce, for they added: "We strongly advise that Anton Reyman be held in custody for further examination before a justice."

The same day Anton was taken before a justice—people in these parts lose no time in such matters—for examination.

It is not necessary to go over the ground covered by the witnesses again. The same witnesses who had been brought before the coroner once more appeared and repeated what they had already said. Many minor points were

"WHERE DID YOU GET THIS BLOOD ON YOUR OVERALLS?"

magnified, however, and the consequence was that almost before the full tenor of the situation had made itself felt in Anton's mind he stood charged with the murder of Mario Delaro.

The accused man's distracted wife had arrived on the scene by this time, and as soon as it was told to her that her husband would be tried for willful murder she swooned away.

But before the order for Anton's commitment to prison could be made out a man arrived on the scene for whom every body made way as if by instinct. This was none other than Mr. Joel Wilcox, the richest man in Sonoma County, an uncultured, good-natured, large-hearted, "grasp-my-hand-tight" down-Easter. Wilcox had made an immense fortune in California and spent his days in the valley at a large and luxuriously appointed house which he had built in the midst of a beautiful estate.

He knew everybody for miles around and hob-nobbed with rich and poor, great and small. All met him on equal terms and he had a good word or a hearty laugh for everybody.

His dress was untidy and ill-fitting, owing to the fact that he paid very little attention to outward appearances.

He liked a man of his own ilk, but he hated, as he said, "them as put on airs bekas they'd med a bit o' money."

Accompanying him was Velasquez, the man whom Wilcox despised above all the many despicable people he had met in the course of a long lifetime.

"Hello," said Wilcox, in his free and easy manner, to the justice, "what's up?"

He had like every one else heard all about the tragedy, but felt bound to give vent to the stereotyped inquiry.

The old gentleman walked across to the justice and sat down beside him while the administrator of law and order related to him the more recent developments of the case.

When Wilcox heard that Anton Reyman was charged with the murder he excitedly jumped from his seat and shouted:

"Why you thunderin' blockheads, you are not going to commit an honest man like Reyman for the murder of Mario Delaro, just because he had a few angry words with him and happened to be the first man to foller him out of the cellars last night?"

"There seems to be no alternative," said the justice, "but you may rest assured he will have a fair trial."

"Ah, by God, that he shall," said the bluff Yankee, "if it takes every cent of money I've got to secure it. Dammit, he's no more guilty of that crime than his poor little baby is."

As he spoke these words—whether intentionally or not—his glance wandered towards Velasquez, who was in the room, and it struck him that Velasquez winced.

Then he crossed over to Anton and said: "Cheer up old boy and keep a good heart. If there's any justice in these parts at all you shall get it."

Then turning to Velasquez, he said: "And as for you, I suppose now that Delaro is out of the way you are pleased at the bottom of your hard heart. You'll be trying next to turn the widow out of her house and home in order to get money to throw across the tables up to Frisco. I know more than you think I do about your goings on, and you can make your mind up right here that you're not going to have it all your own way. If Mrs. Delaro ever wants protection from such infamous blood-suckers as you she knows where to find one."

Velasquez listened apparently quietly, but inwardly full of interest, and said as politely as he could: "I fail to comprehend what I have ever done to merit this abuse, Mr. Wilcox."

"Then you can know now that I've got a mighty good reason for my words and you'd better be careful."

With this they both walked away. That night Anton spent behind the bars, charged with the dreadful crime of murder.

CHAPTER IV.

While Anton lay in jail wearily awaiting his trial, Velasquez arrived at the conclusion that about the best thing he could do was to move out of the valley.

So the lawyers were consulted in regard to Delaro's estate, and after several disputes a settlement was agreed upon.

Delaro's sorrowing wife, finding that the horrible associations of the district would be too much for her, resolved to sell every thing and move to Santa Rosa where her friends and parents had long resided.

In all her negotiations and other business matters, she was ably assisted and indeed guided by Joel Wilcox, and this proved a fortunate arrangement for her. For a woman with no more knowledge of law and business than Mrs. Delaro would have been a pliable tool in the hands of so unprincipled and crafty a man as Velasquez.

The estate, including the wine cellars and every thing else connected with it, was sold, and, after all the final details were settled, Velasquez received a check for very nearly the same amount he had agreed upon with Mario Delaro on the night of the murder.

He lost no time in bidding "Good-bye" to the Valley, bending his steps toward his old haunts in Frisco.

His stay there was not of long duration, for he became fearful that Anton Reyman might be acquitted of the charge of murder, following which event the impetuous Joel Wilcox would, undoubtedly, make matters rather unpleasant for him, if his whereabouts were known.

So he realised on all valuable papers in his possession and started East.

Nearly a month elapsed between the enactment of the vineyard tragedy and the time of Leon Velasquez's final disappearance from the Sonoma valley. With the assistance and advice of Joel Wilcox, Mrs. Delaro was preparing to dispose of her house and leave the district. Thanks to the old Yankee's business tact, she found that she had sufficient money left from the proceeds of the sale to keep her in comfort for a number of years. Still she was anxious to be rid of the house also.

In any case she would have been compelled to sell it shortly afterwards, for on the twentieth of the month, thirty days after Delaro's death, a notice was served on the executors of the estate to the effect that a note for $50,000, fifty thousand dollars, drawn in favor of Leon Velasquez and discounted by him in San Francisco, was due and must be paid in three days.

This threw a new light on affairs and Mrs. Delaro was amazed. Why had her husband given Velasquez a note at thirty days for such an amount of money? She was utterly unable to solve the riddle, and at once sought her old friend for aid.

This is what old Joel Wilcox, the millionaire, said about it: "You kin depend upon it, Mrs. Delaro, that there is more in this than you or I know at present. This note that's a lyin' to the bank for you to meet was drawn on the night that my friend Mario was murdered, and I'm as sure that it's got somethin' to do with that dirty work as I am that Anton Reyman is innocent of it all. The note'll hev to be met, but it'll knock a big hole in what you got out of the sale of the vineyard to do it. Now, if you're ready to sell your house down to anybody else, I'll buy it and give you a fair price for it."

Mrs. Delaro was much stirred by old Wilcox's words, and it was with a blanched face that she looked up at the big millionaire, and said: "Mr. Wilcox, do you think for one moment that Leon Velasquez had any thing to do with the death of my poor husband?"

"Yes I do," was the reply, "and what's more I'm going to find out just how much he did hev to do with it, or my name ain't Joel Wilcox."

"I don't like to think this without some good grounds for the belief," said the beautiful woman; "but I will arouse myself at once. I am unusually quiet and do not as a rule jump at conclusions; but when my husband was cruelly taken from me it seemed as though my heart had been forcibly torn from its place to be replaced by a spirit of revenge. Henceforth my duty shall be to find Mario's slayer. I, too, do not believe Anton Reyman guilty, but—" here her voice became choked with emotion and passion. The quiet, passive nature of the lady was fast fading before the hot southern blood of an aroused woman, and it was with flashing eyes and panting breath she earnestly exclaimed: "*I will* find his

"THERE IS MORE IN THIS THAN WE KNOW AT PRESENT."

murderer, and may the blessed Virgin have mercy on him when I do—for I will have none."

Joel Wilcox promised that he would leave no stone unturned, but as Reyman's trial was to come off in about ten days he must go to San Francisco and interview the brokers, so as to find out all he could about Velasquez's recent actions.

"That is the clew I must follow," he said to the widow. "In the meantime, you, of course, will keep your eyes and ears open to all that transpires in this immediate neighborhood."

Such was the compact which Joel Wilcox and the widow of Delaro entered into that night, and through many weary years of mingled hopes and disappointment, they kept the one aim in constant view.

The next morning Joel Wilcox started for San Francisco, to learn what he could about the money which Velasquez had raised on the note.

For this purpose he called at the office of Crandall & Co., investment brokers. Delaro had often told him that he was in the habit of doing a little speculating occasionally through this house, Velasquez invariably conducting the deals.

So Wilcox naturally thought this would be a good starting point.

On entering the office he inquired for Mr. Crandall, and was ushered into the gentleman's private room.

As soon as Mr. Crandall heard the name of his caller he pricked up his ears and was immediately prepared to act as obsequiously as an obsequious man possibly could, under such circumstances.

For Joel Wilcox was a well-known man in Frisco, his enormous wealth being a matter of public gossip, and the little lynx-eyed broker thought he was in for a good stroke of business, he of course surmising that the millionaire was on the lookout for an investment.

In this, as we know, he was doomed to disappointment. The broker foresaw what was coming when Mr. Wilcox asked:

"Do you know if Leon Velasquez is in town, Mr. Crandall?" Now, the broker and Velasquez were "broom cronies," having worked many quiet and sometimes shady deals together. Still, the broker was by far the shrewder of the two men, and while Velasquez brought the lambs to the slaughter Crandall managed to catch most of the blood. Therefore, when this question was suddenly sprung upon him he was decidedly surprised, but at the same time was too old in the business to betray any undue agitation.

"Mr. Velasquez. Ah, yes. I remember him now; the gentleman from San Paola? he said, with assumed indifference. "But why do you come here in search of that gentleman, Mr. Wilcox; it is hardly probable that I should be aware of the fact even if he did happen to be in town. His calls here are exceedingly few and far between, like angels' visits, as it were, if I may be permitted to make use of such an old and familiar expression."

"What a lie," thought his clerk, a young Englishman, who had without intention left the door ajar when he ushered Mr. Wilcox into the private room, and thus heard the remarks as he sat at his desk in the public office.

"Well," said Mr. Wilcox, "I have been informed that he had a good many business transactions with you and that this would be a likely place to find him."

"Yes," the little broker responded, "Mr. Velasquez certainly did have some business to transact with me but his visits here were always of the most formal nature, and we were not on such

"YOU WERE INQUIRING ABOUT SR. VELASQUEZ?"

terms that I could be supposed to know much of his movements while in this city." The clerk outside had become interested by this time and mentally ejaculated: "What a liar!"

"I am not the sort of man to beat around the bush, and I may as well be plain with you," said Mr. Wilcox. "You have of course, heard of my friend Mario Delaro's murder near his own wine cellars on the night of the twenty-first of last month?"

"Yes, I did hear of the sad occurrence," was the rejoinder. Joel Wilcox continued: "The week before that murder Mr. Delaro told me of a deal he made with you, though Velasquez, in some mining stock that paid big, and I'm here as a representative of Delaro's widow to know if the matter has ever been fixed up."

"Yes, I believe it has," replied Crandall; "but to make sure I will step around to the office of the broker who sold the stock for Velasquez and inquire if the money has been paid," saying which he rose to go and handed Mr. Wilcox a newspaper to read during his temporary absence.

As soon as Crandall had gone Joel Wilcox muttered to himself: "Well, I wonder how much more money the villian has scraped together. There is no account of that money being paid to Delaro on his books, at least I couldn't find it if there was. The yaller-skinned 'possum tried his best to clean out his best friend before he killed him."

He was not left to his thoughts very long, for, no sooner was Crandall's back turned than the clerk made an excuse to come into the room with a bundle of papers in his hand. As soon as this individual got close enough to Mr. Wilcox he whispered:

"You were inquiring about the transactions of Mr. Velasquez with this house?"

"Yes, I was," the astonished millionaire responded.

"Then appoint a meeting with me to-night and I will give you some information that will prove of value."

"What do you know about the business?" queried Mr. Wilcox.

"Mr. [illegible]

rejoinder, "but I'm getting tired of it and must tell somebody. What hotel are you stopping at?"

"The Palace," was the answer. "Room 21."

"Expect me there to-night at nine o'clock, then," said the clerk, who then left the room, not a moment too soon, for at that moment Crandall returned, his walk out to the other broker's office having been merely a "blind."

Without waiting until he was seated he informed Mr. Wilcox that the stock certificates had been sold and the money paid to Velasquez, who held a power of attorney for Mr. Delaro.

At this Mr. Wilcox rose to leave, for he felt that the interview with the clerk would serve his purpose far better than any quantity of talk with the unprincipled broker. With many polite farewells and expressions of hope for future interviews, as well as regrets at the shortness of the present visit (entirely upon the part of the broker, however), the two men parted.

Punctually at the hour of nine Crandall's clerk put in his appearance at the Palace Hotel and was shown up to Mr. Wilcox's room.

He introduced himself by means of a card bearing the legend: "Percy Beaufort Lovel."

"Now, Mr. Percy Beaufort Lovel," said the jovial host, "I guess you know a good cigar when you try one, so help yourself out of that box on the table, and I know you can drink a glass of wine, else you ain't English. Sit yer down and I'll call for some of the genuine article, then we'll have a talk. But suppose, instead of calling you Mr. Percy Beaufort Lovel, we drop part of that dime novel title and call you plain Percy?"

The Englishman made no demur to any of these suggestions; so the wine was brought in, and, under its steadily increasing influence, he told the millionaire all he knew about Velasquez.

"Do you say he was squeezed into a corner the day before the murder," asked Wilcox.

"Yes, and a pretty tight one, too," was the rejoinder. "But, as he left the office, I heard him tell Mr. Crandall that he would get the money in three days by fair means or by foul."

"Which" was the only reply.

Then Percy proceeded and told what had happened since, how Velasquez had bought up the mining stock certificates and sold them at a stock profit, and how he had held a note for fifty thousand dollars, given a him by Delaro, which Crandall managed by false representations to get discounted for him on the spot. Finally, Lovel told how only a week ago, Velasquez came into the office and went with Crandall to cash a check for a good part of forty thousand dollars which he said was the proceeds of his share in the sale of the Pesada vineyards. Lovel gave it as his opinion that Valasquez had started East with very little short of a hundred thousand dollars each money in his possession.

"Do you know which way he went" asked Mr. Wilcox.

"No, I do not, sir," was the reply.

"Now, come, Percy, we shall get along a good deal better without any of that kind of business. Don't 'sir' me any more," said the plain-spoken Yankee.

Lovel smiled and continued: "Velasquez said he might stop at Denver awhile, but he expected to be in Chicago inside of ten days."

This information woke up the millionaire and he said: "Then time is precious. Are you willing to go with me to San Paola to-morrow, Percy?"

"Well," said Lovel, "the question is rather sudden, Mr. Wilcox, and I might lose my place if I go without Mr. Crandall's permission."

"Curse your position!" ejaculated Wilcox. "Come with me and help to run that villain to earth and I'll see that you have a position as long as I live."

"That settles it," said Percy. "I've been drifting all over for the last seven years and I may as well keep it up."

The next day the millionaire and his new-found friend, the poor English clerk, started off to San Paola to try and forge links of friendship that were only snapped by death, while Crandall lost a good clerk who was too honest for his questionable services.

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For the doctor was a difficult man to find, and, when found, to impress with the idea that he was actually needed. Unless the case was represented as a matter of life and death, he was apt to delay his visit until the patient had recovered or died. Those who hunted for him, knowing his habits of going from one patient to another, without going home for a day or a night, used to go through the streets looking for "old Sal," his sorrel mare, and his familiar old buggy, standing before some house door.

But such was the public confidence in him, that in ordinary illnesses people would wait his tardy visit rather than send for another physician.

The author of "Sketches of Brookline" describes him as entering a house in the breezy way, stamping off the snow or the mud, throwing off his overcoat and letting down his black leather pouch, with noise enough for three men. His salutation, uttered in a deep, gruff voice, was likely to be, if the patient was an acquaintance:

"Well! well! what kind of a kick-up have you got now?"

He gave sobriquets to the children, and would say: "How's Nicodemus to-day?" or: "Well! is Ichabod's tooth ready for the lancet this morning?" A friend's child, whose name was Florence, he called "Rome," "Milan," or by several other Italian cities.

A member of his family, while making out the doctor's bills, was perplexed by a charge upon the books of a visit to "Don Sebastian." On inquiry it proved to be the nickname of a child of the Cabot family.

When the doctor had studied the case and given the patient his dose of medicine, he would, if there was cause for anxiety, settle himself for a social visit of two or three hours, during which he told droll stories, and acted them out to the amusement of the children, who were very fond of him. If the case was serious he was grave and silent, catching flies, if there were any to catch, or walking the room in deep thought.

The doctor was more than a physician, he was the counselor of his patients, who consulted him upon all sorts of matters, from choosing a wife or a husband to mending a hen-coop. His opinion was an authority that few disputed, for his good sense was seldom at fault.

Pleasant humor, on leaving a sick-room, would often express itself in some such salutation as this: "Now if you can't sleep well and don't know what to do, you can amuse yourself with taking an emetic." Youth's Companion.

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