



VENDETTA

MARIE CORELLI

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VENDETTA!

OR

THE STORY OF ONE FORGOTTEN

BY

MARIE CORELLI

AUTHOR OF

"THE SOUL OF LILITH," "A ROMANCE OF TWO WORLDS," "WORMWOOD,"
"THELMA," ETC.

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WILSON BARRETT,
WHOSE
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NEEDS NO FLATTERY.

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PREFACE.

LEST those who read the following pages should deem this story at all improbable, it is perhaps necessary to say that its chief incidents are founded on an actual occurrence which took place in Naples during the last scathing visitation of the cholera in 1884. We know well enough, by the chronicle of daily journalism, that the infidelity of wives is, most unhappily, becoming common—far too common for the peace and good repute of society. Not so common is an outraged husband's vengeance—not often dares he take the law into his own hands—for in England, at least, such boldness on his part would doubtless be deemed a worse crime than that by which he personally is doomed to suffer. But in Italy things are on a different footing—the verbosity and red-tape of the law, and the hesitating verdict of special juries, are not there considered sufficiently efficacious to soothe a man's damaged honor and ruined name. And thus—whether right or wrong—it often happens that strange and awful deeds are perpetrated—deeds of which the world in general hears nothing, and which, when brought to light at last, are received with surprise and incredulity. Yet the romances planned by the brain of the novelist or dramatist are poor in comparison with the romances of real life—life wrongly termed commonplace, but, which, in fact, teems with tragedies as great and dark and soul-torturing as any devised by Sophocles or Shakespeare. Nothing is more strange than truth—nothing, at times, more terrible!

MARIE CORELLI.

August, 1886.