

**A MODERN
PURGATORY,
PP. 1-177**

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A Modern Purgatory, pp. 1-177 by Carlo de Fornaro

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BY
CARLO DE FORNARO



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1917

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TO
M. L. R.

"It is believed in this country that a poor man has less chance to get justice administered to him than a rich man."

*—Woodrow Wilson, in a speech in
Chicago, January 11, 1913.*

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is a record of the prison experiences of Carlo de Fornaro, artist, writer, editor, revolutionary. It is a record of experiences in the famous Tombs Prison, in New York City, and in the New York City penitentiary on Blackwell's Island—a record of the daily happenings of life in a prison, of brutalities and stupidities and abominations; a sordid record, from the pages of which gleam many fine human things, the sympathies and kindnesses and sacrifices of men thrust by society into the dark of prison because society was afraid of them.

The book begins with the author's imprisonment, and ends with his release or discharge from prison. It is the tale of his punishment, but it tells nothing of the "crime" that brought the punishment upon him.

It is a strange story, that of the circumstances that brought him to prison and an unprecedented proceeding in the United States, a prosecution for libelling an official of a foreign government.

Carlo de Fornaro came to America when he

was a young man. He was born in Calcutta, British India, in 1871, of Swiss-Italian parents; and, determined to be an artist, he studied, first architecture in Zurich, then painting in Munich. But when he came to America he found a dearth of art, and when his talent for caricature was recognized, he turned to a newspaper career.

He began in Chicago, with the old *Times-Herald*, but the greatest part of his work was done in New York, on the *Herald*, the *Telegraph*, the *World* and the *Evening Sun*. In 1906 he went to Mexico to visit a friend—and he stayed three years.

Mexico first interested him—the people, the problems, the smouldering fire of revolution—and then absorbed him. Porfirio Diaz was President of Mexico, and approaching the end of his long reign of power. Fornaro, always a revolutionary, became interested in politics—a dangerous interest, especially for a radical opposed to the Diaz régime. Assassination and murder and life imprisonment in dungeons immured from the world were commonplace methods used in that day to defeat the purposes of the opposition to the undermined Diaz dynasty.

But Fornaro, undeterred, went into politics.