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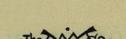


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# DON ORSINO

BY

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"SARACINESCA," ETC.

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## DON ORSINO.

#### CHAPTER I.

Don Orsino Saracinesca is of the younger age and lives in the younger Rome, with his father and mother, under the roof of the vast old palace which has sheltered so many hundreds of Saracinesca in peace and war, but which has rarely in the course of the centuries been the home of three generations at once during one and twenty years.

The lover of romance may lie in the sun, caring not for the time of day and content to watch the butterflies that cross his blue sky on the way from one flower to another. But the historian is an entomologist who must be stirring. He must catch the moths, which are his facts, in the net which is his memory, and he must fasten them upon his paper with sharp pins, which are dates.

By far the greater number of old Prince Saracinesca's contemporaries are dead, and more or less justly forgotten. Old Valdarno died long ago in his bed, surrounded by sons and daughters. The famous dandy of other days, the Duke of Astrardente, died at his young wife's feet some three and twenty years before this chapter of family history opens. Then the primeval Prince Montevarchi came to a violent end at the hands of his librarian, leaving his English princess consolable but unconsoled, leaving also his daughter Flavia married to that other Giovanni Saracinesca who still bears the name of Marchese di San Giacinto; while the younger girl, the fair,

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