"You are either paradoxical, or irreligious, or both," she said.

"Irreligious? I, who carried a rifle at Mentana? No, Madame, I am a good Catholic."

"What does that mean?"

"I believe in God, and I love my wife. I leave it to the Church to define my other articles of belief. I have only one head, as you see."

Gouache smiled, but there was a note of sincerity in the odd statement which did not escape his hearer.

"You are not of the type which belongs to the end of the century," she said.

"That type was not invented when I was forming myself."

"Perhaps you belong rather to the coming age—the age of simplification."

"As distinguished from the age of mystification—religious, political, scientific and artistic," suggested Gouache. "The people of that day will guess the Sphynx's riddle."

"Mine? You were comparing me to a sphynx the other day."

"Yours, perhaps, Madame. Who knows? Are you the typical woman of the ending century?"

"Why not?" asked Maria Consuelo with a sleepy look.

CHAPTER V.

There is something grand in any great assembly of animals belonging to the same race. The very idea of an immense number of living creatures conveys an impression not suggested by anything else. A compact herd of fifty or sixty thousand lions would be an appalling vision, beside which a like multitude of human beings would sink into insignificance. A drove of wild

cattle is, I think, a finer sight than a regiment of cavalry in motion, for the cavalry is composite, half man and half horse, whereas the cattle have the advantage of unity. But we can never see so many animals of any species driven together into one limited space as to be equal to a vast throng of men and women, and we conclude naturally enough that a crowd consisting solely of our own kind is the most imposing one conceivable.

It was scarcely light on the morning of New Year's Day when the Princess Sant' Ilario found herself seated in one of the low tribunes on the north side of the high altar in Saint Peter's. Her husband and her eldest son had accompanied her, and having placed her in a position from which they judged she could easily escape at the end of the ceremony, they remained standing in the narrow, winding passage between improvised barriers which led from the tribune to the door of the sacristy, and which had been so arranged as to prevent confusion. Here they waited, greeting their acquaintances when they could recognise them in the dim twilight of the church, and watching the ever-increasing crowd that surged slowly backward and forward outside the barrier. The old prince was entitled by an hereditary office to a place in the great procession of the day, and was not now with them.

Orsino felt as though the whole world were assembled about him within the huge cathedral, as though its heart were beating audibly and its muffled breathing rising and falling in his hearing. The unceasing sound that went up from the compact mass of living beings was soft in quality, but enormous in volume and sustained in tone, a great whispering which might have been heard a mile away. One hears in mammoth musical festivals the extraordinary effect of four or five thousand voices singing very softly; it is not to be compared to the unceasing whisper of fifty thousand men.

The young fellow was conscious of a strange, irregular thrill of enthusiasm which ran through him from time

to time and startled his imagination into life. It was only the instinct of a strong vitality unconsciously longing to be the central point of the vitalities around it. But he could not understand that. It seemed to him like a great opportunity brought within reach but slipping by untaken, not to return again. He felt a strange, almost uncontrollable longing to spring upon one of the tribunes, to raise his voice, to speak to the great multitude, to fire all those men to break out and carry everything before them. He laughed audibly at himself. Sant' Ilario looked at his son with some curiosity.

"What amuses you?" he asked.

"A dream," answered Orsino, still smiling. "Who knows?" he exclaimed after a pause. "What would happen, if at the right moment the right man could stir such a crowd as this?"

"Strange things," replied Sant' Ilario gravely. "A crowd is a terrible weapon."

"Then my dream was not so foolish after all. One might make history to-day."

Sant' Ilario made a gesture expressive of indifference.

"What is history?" he asked. "A comedy in which the actors have no written parts, but improvise their speeches and actions as best they can. That is the reason why history is so dull and so full of mistakes."

"And of surprises," suggested Orsino.

"The surprises in history are always disagreeable, my boy," answered Sant' Ilario.

Orsino felt the coldness in the answer and felt even more his father's readiness to damp any expression of enthusiasm. Of late he had encountered this chilling indifference at almost every turn, whenever he gave vent to his admiration for any sort of activity.

It was not that Giovanni Saracinesca had any intention of repressing his son's energetic instincts, and he assuredly had no idea of the effect his words often produced. He sometimes wondered at the sudden silence which came over the young man after such conversations,

but he did not understand it and on the whole paid little attention to it. He remembered that he himself had been different, and had been wont to argue hotly and not unfrequently to quarrel with his father about trifles. He himself had been headstrong, passionate, often intractable in his early youth, and his father had been no better at sixty and was little improved in that respect even at his present great age. But Orsino did not argue. He suggested, and if any one disagreed with him he became silent. He seemed to possess energy in action, and a number of rather fantastic aspirations, but in conversation he was easily silenced and in outward manner he would have seemed too yielding if he had not often seemed too cold.

Giovanni did not see that Orsino was most like his mother in character, while the contact with a new generation had given him something unfamiliar to the old, an affectation at first, but one which habit was amalgamating with the real nature beneath.

No doubt, it was wise and right to discourage ideas which would tend in any way to revolution. Giovanni had seen revolutions and had been the loser by them. It was not wise and was certainly not necessary to throw cold water on the young fellow's harmless aspirations. But Giovanni had lived for many years in his own way, rich, respected and supremely happy, and he believed that his way was good enough for Orsino. He had, in his youth, tried most things for himself, and had found them failures so far as happiness was concerned. Orsino might make the series of experiments in his turn if he pleased, but there was no adequate reason for such an expenditure of energy. The sooner the boy loved some girl who would make him a good wife, and the sooner he married her, the sooner he would find that calm, satisfactory existence which had not finally come to Giovanni until after thirty years of age.

As for the question of fortune, it was true that there were four sons, but there was Giovanni's mother's for-

tune, there was Çorona's fortune, and there was the great Saracinesca estate behind both. They were all so extremely rich that the deluge must be very distant.

Orsino understood none of these things. He only realised that his father had the faculty and apparently the intention of freezing any originality he chanced to show, and he inwardly resented the coldness, quietly, if foolishly, resolving to astonish those who misunderstood him by seizing the first opportunity of doing something out of the common way. For some time he stood in silence watching the people who came by and glancing from time to time at the dense crowd outside the barrier. He was suddenly aware that his father was observing intently a lady who advanced along the open way.

"There is Tullia Del Ferice!" exclaimed Sant' Ilario in surprise.

"I do not know her, except by sight," observed Orsino indifferently.

The countess was very imposing in her black veil and draperies. Her red face seemed to lose its colour in the dim church and she affected a slow and stately manner more becoming to her weight than was her natural restless vivacity. She had got what she desired and she swept proudly along to take her old place among the ladies of Rome. No one knew whose card she had delivered up at the entrance to the sacristy, and she enjoyed the triumph of showing that the wife of the revolutionary, the banker, the member of parliament, had not lost caste after all.

She looked Giovanni full in the face with her disagreeable blue eyes as she came up, apparently not meaning to recognise him. Then, just as she passed him, she deigned to make a very slight inclination of the head, just enough to compel Sant' Ilario to return the salutation. It was very well done. Orsino did not know all the details of the past events, but he knew that his father had once wounded Del Ferice in a duel and he

looked at Del Ferice's wife with some curiosity. He had seldom had an opportunity of being so near to her.

"It was certainly not about her that they fought," he reflected. "It must have been about some other woman, if there was a woman in the question at all."

A moment later he was aware that a pair of tawny eyes was fixed on him. Maria Consuelo was following Donna Tullia at a distance of a dozen yards. Orsino came forward and his new acquaintance held out her hand. They had not met since they had first seen each other.

"It was so kind of you," she said.

"What, Madame?"

"To suggest this to Gouache. I should have had no ticket—where shall I sit?"

Orsino did not understand, for though he had mentioned the subject, Gouache had not told him what he meant to do. But there was no time to be lost in conversation. Orsino led her to the nearest opening in the tribune and pointed to a seat.

"I called," he said quickly. "You did not receive——"

"Come again, I will be at home," she answered in a low voice, as she passed him.

She sat down in a vacant place beside Donna Tullia, and Orsino noticed that his mother was just behind them both. Corona had been watching him unconsciously, as she often did, and was somewhat surprised to see him conducting a lady whom she did not know. A glance told her that the lady was a foreigner; as such, if she were present at all, she should have been in the diplomatic tribune. There was nothing to think of, and Corona tried to solve the small social problem that presented itself. Orsino strolled back to his father's side.

"Who is she?" inquired Sant' Ilario with some curiosity.

"The lady who wanted the tiger's skin—Aranjuez—I told you of her."

"The portrait you gave me was not flattering. She is handsome, if not beautiful."

"Did I say she was not?" asked Orsino with a visible irritation most unlike him.

"I thought so. You said she had yellow eyes, red hair and a squint." Sant' Ilario laughed.

"Perhaps I did. But the effect seems to be harmonious."

"Decidedly so. You might have introduced me."

To this Orsino said nothing, but relapsed into a moody silence. He would have liked nothing better than to bring about the acquaintance, but he had only met Maria Consuelo once, though that interview had been a long one, and he remembered her rather short answer to his offer of service in the way of making acquaintances.

Maria Consuelo on her part was quite unconscious that she was sitting in front of the Princess Sant' Ilario, but she had seen the lady by her side bow to Orsino's companion in passing, and she guessed from a certain resemblance that the dark, middle-aged man might be young Saracinesca's father. Donna Tullia had seen Corona well enough, but as they had not spoken for nearly twenty years she decided not to risk a nod where she could not command an acknowledgment of it. So she pretended to be quite unconscious of her old enemy's presence.

Donna Tullia, however, had noticed as she turned her head in sitting down that Orsino was piloting a strange lady to the tribune, and when the latter sat down beside her, she determined to make her acquaintance, no matter upon what pretext. The time was approaching at which the procession was to make its appearance, and Donna Tullia looked about for something upon which to open the conversation, glancing from time to time at her neighbour. It was easy to see that the place and the surroundings were equally unfamiliar to the newcomer, who looked with evident interest at the twisted columns of the high altar, at the vast mosaics in the dome, at the red damask hangings of the nave, at the Swiss guards, the chamberlains in court dress and at all the mediæval-looking, motley figures that moved about within the space kept open for the coming function.

"It is a wonderful sight," said Donna Tullia in French, very softly, and almost as though speaking to herself.

"Wonderful indeed," answered Maria Consuelo, "especially to a stranger."

"Madame is a stranger, then," observed Donna Tullia with an agreeable smile.

She looked into her neighbour's face and for the first time realised that she was a striking person.

"Quite," replied the latter, briefly, and as though not wishing to press the conversation.

"I fancied so," said Donna Tullia, "though on seeing you in these seats, among us Romans——"

"I received a card through the kindness of a friend."

There was a short pause, during which Donna Tullia concluded that the friend must have been Orsino. But the next remark threw her off the scent.

"It was his wife's ticket, I believe," said Maria Consuelo. "She could not come. I am here on false pretences." She smiled carelessly.

Donna Tullia lost herself in speculation, but failed to solve the problem.

"You have chosen a most favourable moment for your first visit to Rome," she remarked at last.

"Yes. I am always fortunate. I believe I have seen everything worth seeing ever since I was a little girl."

"She is somebody," thought Donna Tullia. "Probably the wife of a diplomatist, though. Those people see everything, and talk of nothing but what they have seen."

"This is historic," she said aloud. "You will have a chance of contemplating the Romans in their glory. Colonna and Orsini marching side by side, and old Saracinesca in all his magnificence. He is eighty-two year old."

"Saracinesca?" repeated Maria Consuelo, turning her tawny eyes upon her neighbour.

"Yes. The father of Sant' Ilario—grandfather of that young fellow who showed you to your seat."

"Don Orsino? Yes, I know him slightly."

Corona, sitting immediately behind them heard her son's name. As the two ladies turned towards each other in conversation she heard distinctly what they said. Donna Tullia was of course aware of this.

"Do you?" she asked. "His father is a most estimable man—just a little too estimable, if you understand! As for the boy——"

Donna Tullia moved her broad shoulders expressively. It was a habit of which even the irreproachable Del Ferice could not cure her. Corona's face darkened.

"You can hardly call him a boy," observed Maria Consuelo with a smile.

"Ah well—I might have been his mother," Donna Tullia answered with a contempt for the affectation of youth which she rarely showed. But Corona began to understand that the conversation was meant for her ears, and grew angry by degrees. Donna Tullia had indeed been near to marrying Giovanni, and in that sense, too, she might have been Orsino's mother.

"I fancied you spoke rather disparagingly," said Maria Consuelo with a certain degree of interest.

"I? No indeed. On the contrary, Don Orsino is a very fine fellow—but thrown away, positively thrown away in his present surroundings. Of what use is all this English education—but you are a stranger, Madame, you cannot understand our Roman point of view."

"If you could explain it to me, I might, perhaps," suggested the other.

"Ah yes—if I could explain it! But I am far too ignorant myself—no, ignorant is not the word—too prejudiced, perhaps, to make you see it quite as it is. Perhaps I am a little too liberal, and the Saracinesca are certainly far too conservative. They mistake education for progress. Poor Don Orsino, I am sorry for him."

Donna Tullia found no other escape from the difficulty into which she had thrown herself.

"I did not know that he was to be pitied," said Maria Consuelo.

"Oh, not he in particular, perhaps," answered the stout countess, growing more and more vague. "They are all to be pitied, you know. What is to become of young men brought up in that way? The club, the turf, the card-table—to drink, to gamble, to bet, it is not an existence!"

"Do you mean that Don Orsino leads that sort of life?" inquired Maria Consuelo indifferently.

Again Donna Tullia's heavy shoulders moved contemptuously.

"What else is there for him to do?"

"And his father? Did he not do likewise in his youth?"

"His father? Ah, he was different—before he married—full of life, activity, originality!"

"And since his marriage?"

"He has become estimable, most estimable." The smile with which Donna Tullia accompanied the statement was intended to be fine, but was only spiteful. Maria Consuelo, who saw everything with her sleepy glance, noticed the fact.

Corona was disgusted, and leaned back in her seat, as far as possible, in order not to hear more. She could not help wondering who the strange lady might be to whom Donna Tullia was so freely expressing her opinions concerning the Saracinesca, and she determined to ask Orsino after the ceremony. But she wished to hear as little more as she could.

"When a married man becomes what you call estimable," said Donna Tullia's companion, "he either adores his wife or hates her."

"What a charming idea!" laughed the countess. It was tolerably evident that the remark was beyond her.

"She is stupid," thought Maria Consuelo. "I fancied so from the first. I will ask Don Orsino about her. He will say something amusing. It will be a subject of conversation at all events, in place of that endless tiger I invented the other day. I wonder whether this woman

expects me to tell her who I am? That will amount to an acquaintance. She is certainly somebody, or she would not be here. On the other hand, she seems to dislike the only man I know besides Gouache. That may lead to complications. Let us talk of Gouache first, and be guided by circumstances."

"Do you know Monsieur Gouache?" she inquired, abruptly.

"The painter? Yes—I have known him a long time. Is he perhaps painting your portrait?"

"Exactly. It is really for that purpose that I am in Rome. What a charming man!"

"Do you think so? Perhaps he is. He painted me some time ago. I was not very well satisfied. But he has talent."

Donna Tullia had never forgiven the artist for not putting enough soul into the picture he had painted of her when she was a very young widow.

"He has a great reputation," said Maria Consuelo, "and I think he will succeed very well with me. Besides, I am grateful to him. He and his painting have been a pleasant episode in my short stay here."

"Really, I should hardly have thought you could find it worth your while to come all the way to Rome to be painted by Gouache," observed Donna Tullia. "But of course, as I say, he has talent."

"This woman is rich," she said to herself. "The wives of diplomatists do not allow themselves such caprices, as a rule. I wonder who she is?"

"Great talent," assented Maria Consuelo. "And great charm, I think."

"Ah well—of course—I daresay. We Romans cannot help thinking that for an artist he is a little too much occupied in being a gentleman—and for a gentleman he is quite too much an artist."

The remark was not original with Donna Tullia, but had been reported to her as Spicca's, and Spicca had really said something similar about somebody else.

"I had not got that impression," said Maria Consuelo, quietly.

"She hates him, too," she thought. "She seems to hate everybody. That either means that she knows everybody, or is not received in society."

"But of course you know him better than I do," she added aloud, after a little pause.

At that moment a strain of music broke out above the great, soft, muffled whispering that filled the basilica. Some thirty chosen voices of the choir of Saint Peter's had begun the hymn "Tu es Petrus," as the procession began to defile from the south aisle into the nave, close by the great door, to traverse the whole distance thence to the high altar. The Pope's own choir, consisting solely of the singers of the Sixtine Chapel, waited silently behind the lattice under the statue of Saint Veronica.

The song rang out louder and louder, simple and grand. Those who have heard Italian singers at their best know that thirty young Roman throats can emit a volume of sound equal to that which a hundred men of any other nation could produce. The stillness around them increased, too, as the procession lengthened. The great, dark crowd stood shoulder to shoulder, breathless with expectation, each man and woman feeling for a few short moments that thrill of mysterious anxiety and impatience which Orsino had felt. No one who was there can ever forget what followed. More than forty cardinals filed out in front from the Chapel of the Pietà. Then the hereditary assistants of the Holy See, the heads of the Colonna and the Orsini houses, entered the nave, side by side for the first time, I believe, in history. Immediately after them, high above all the procession and the crowd, appeared the great chair of state, the huge white feathered fans moving slowly on each side, and upon the throne, the central figure of that vast display, sat the Pope, Leo the Thirteenth.

Then, without warning and without hesitation, a shout

went up such as has never been heard before in that dim cathedral, nor will, perhaps, be heard again.

"*Viva il Papa-Rè!* Long life to the Pope-King!"

At the same instant, as though at a preconcerted signal —utterly impossible in such a throng—in the twinkling of an eye, the dark crowd was as white as snow. In every hand a white handkerchief was raised, fluttering and waving above every head.

And the shout once taken up, drowned the strong voices of the singers as long-drawn thunder drowns the pattering of the raindrops and the sighing of the wind.

The wonderful face, that seemed to be carved out of transparent alabaster, smiled and slowly turned from side to side as it passed by. The thin, fragile hand moved unceasingly, blessing the people.

Orsino Saracinesca saw and heard, and his young face turned pale while his lips set themselves. By his side, a head shorter than he, stood his father, lost in thought as he gazed at the mighty spectacle of what had been, and of what might still have been, but for one day of history's surprises.

Orsino said nothing, but he glanced at Sant' Ilario's face as though to remind his father of what he had said half an hour earlier; and the elder man knew that there had been truth in the boy's words. There were soldiers in the church, and they were not Italian soldiers—some thousands of them in all, perhaps. They were armed, and there were at the very least computation thirty thousand strong, grown men in the crowd. And the crowd was on fire. Had there been a hundred, nay a score, of desperate, devoted leaders there, who knows what bloody work might not have been done in the city before the sun went down? Who knows what new surprises history might have found for her play? The thought must have crossed many minds at that moment. But no one stirred; the religious ceremony remained a religious ceremony and nothing more; holy peace reigned within the walls, and the hour of peril glided away undisturbed to take its place among memories of good.

"The world is worn out!" thought Orsino. "The days of great deeds are over. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die—they are right in teaching me their philosophy."

A gloomy, sullen melancholy took hold of the boy's young nature, a passing mood, perhaps, but one which left its mark upon him. For he was at that age when a very little thing will turn the balance of a character, when an older man's thoughtless words may direct half a lifetime in a good or evil channel, being recalled and repeated for a score of years. Who is it that does not remember that day when an impatient "I will," or a defiant "I will not," turned the whole current of his existence in the one direction or the other, towards good or evil, or towards success or failure? Who, that has fought his way against odds into the front rank, has forgotten the woman's look that gave him courage, or the man's sneer that braced nerve and muscle to strike the first of many hard blows?

The depression which fell upon Orsino was lasting, for that morning at least. The stupendous pageant went on before him, the choirs sang, the sweet boys' voices answered back, like an angel's song, out of the lofty dome, the incense rose in columns through the streaming sunlight as the high mass proceeded. Again the Pope was raised upon the chair and borne out into the nave, whence in the solemn silence the thin, clear, aged voice intoned the benediction three times, slowly rising and falling, pausing and beginning again. Once more the enormous shout broke out, louder and deeper than ever, as the procession moved away. Then all was over.

Orsino saw and heard, but the first impression was gone, and the thrill did not come back.

"It was a fine sight," he said to his father, as the shout died away.

"A fine sight? Have you no stronger expression than that?"

"No," answered Orsino, "I have not."

The ladies were already coming out of the tribunes, and Orsino saw his father give his arm to Corona to lead her through the crowd. Naturally enough, Maria Consuelo and Donna Tullia came out together very soon after her. Orsino offered to pilot the former through the confusion, and she accepted gratefully. Donna Tullia walked beside them.

"You do not know me, Don Orsino," said she with a gracious smile.

"I beg your pardon—you are the Countess Del Ferice—I have not been back from England long, and have not had an opportunity of being presented."

Whatever might be Orsino's weaknesses, shyness was certainly not one of them, and as he made the civil answer he calmly looked at Donna Tullia as though to inquire what in the world she wished to accomplish in making his acquaintance. He had been so situated during the ceremony as not to see that the two ladies had fallen into conversation.

"Will you introduce me?" said Maria Consuelo. "We have been talking together."

She spoke in a low voice, but the words could hardly have escaped Donna Tullia. Orsino was very much surprised and not by any means pleased, for he saw that the elder woman had forced the introduction by a rather vulgar trick. Nevertheless, he could not escape.

"Since you have been good enough to recognise me," he said rather stiffly to Donna Tullia, "permit me to make you acquainted with Madame d'Aranjuez d'Aragona."

Both ladies nodded and smiled the smile of the newly introduced. Donna Tullia at once began to wonder how it was that a person with such a name should have but a plain "Madame" to put before it. But her curiosity was not satisfied on this occasion.

"How absurd society is!" she exclaimed. "Madame d'Aranjuez and I have been talking all the morning, quite like old friends—and now we need an introduction!"

Maria Consuelo glanced at Orsino as though expecting him to make some remark. But he said nothing.

"What should we do without conventions!" she said, for the sake of saying something.

By this time they were threading the endless passages of the sacristy building, on their way to the Piazza Santa Marta. Sant' Ilario and Corona were not far in front of them. At a turn in the corridor Corona looked back.

"There is Orsino talking to Tullia Del Ferice!" she exclaimed in great surprise. "And he has given his arm to that other lady who was next to her in the tribune."

"What does it matter?" asked Sant' Ilario indifferently. "By the bye, the other lady is that Madame d'Aranjuez he talks about."

"Is she any relation of your mother's family, Giovanni?"

"Not that I am aware of. She may have married some younger son of whom I never heard."

"You do not seem to care whom Orsino knows," said Corona rather reproachfully.

"Orsino is grown up, dear. You must not forget that."

"Yes—I suppose he is," Corona answered with a little sigh. "But surely you will not encourage him to cultivate the Del Ferice!"

"I fancy it would take a deal of encouragement to drive him to that," said Sant' Ilario with a laugh. "He has better taste."

There was some confusion outside. People were waiting for their carriages, and as most of them knew each other intimately every one was talking at once. Donna Tullia nodded here and there, but Maria Consuelo noticed that her salutations were coldly returned. Orsino and his two companions stood a little aloof from the crowd. Just then the Saracinesca carriage drove up.

"Who is that magnificent woman?" asked Maria Consuelo, as Corona got in.

"My mother," said Orsino. "My father is getting in now."

"There comes my carriage! Please help me."

A modest hired brougham made its appearance. Orsino hoped that Madame d'Aranjuez would offer him a seat. But he was mistaken.

"I am afraid mine is miles away," said Donna Tullia. "Good-bye, I shall be so glad if you will come and see me." She held out her hand.

"May I not take you home?" asked Maria Consuelo. "There is just room—it will be better than waiting here."

Donna Tullia hesitated a moment, and then accepted, to Orsino's great annoyance. He helped the two ladies to get in, and shut the door.

"Come soon," said Maria Consuelo, giving him her hand out of the window.

He was inclined to be angry, but the look that accompanied the invitation did its work satisfactorily.

"He is very young," thought Maria Consuelo, as she drove away.

"She can be very amusing. It is worth while," said Orsino to himself as he passed in front of the next carriage, and walked out upon the small square.

He had not gone far, hindered as he was at every step, when some one touched his arm. It was Spicca, looking more cadaverous and exhausted than usual.

"Are you going home in a cab?" he asked. "Then let us go together."

They got out of the square, scarcely knowing how they had accomplished the feat. Spicca seemed nervous as well as tired, and he leaned on Orsino's arm.

"There was a chance lost this morning," said the latter when they were under the colonnade. He felt sure of a bitter answer from the keen old man.

"Why did you not seize it then?" asked Spicca. "Do you expect old men like me to stand up and yell for a republic, or a restoration, or a monarchy, or whichever of the other seven plagues of Egypt you desire? I have not voice enough left to call a cab, much less to howl down a kingdom."

"I wonder what would have happened, if I, or some one else, had tried."

"You would have spent the night in prison with a few kindred spirits. After all, that would have been better than making love to old Donna Tullia and her young friend."

Orsino laughed.

"You have good eyes," he said.

"So have you, Orsino. Use them. You will see something odd if you look where you were looking this morning. Do you know what sort of a place this world is?"

"It is a dull place. I have found that out already."

"You are mistaken. It is hell. Do you mind calling that cab?"

Orsino stared a moment at his companion, and then hailed the passing conveyance.

CHAPTER VI.

Orsino had shown less anxiety to see Madame d'Aranjuez than might perhaps have been expected. In the ten days which had elapsed between the sitting at Gouache's studio and the first of January he had only once made an attempt to find her at home, and that attempt had failed. He had not even seen her passing in the street, and he had not been conscious of any uncontrollable desire to catch a glimpse of her at any price.

But he had not forgotten her existence as he would certainly have forgotten that of a wholly indifferent person in the same time. On the contrary, he had thought of her frequently and had indulged in many speculations concerning her, wondering among other matters why he did not take more trouble to see her since she occupied his thoughts so much. He did not know