

able excitement. Doubtless she would hate a sinner if she saw one, as the nuns had taught her, although the sinner of her imagination was not a very repulsive personage. Flavia probably knew a great many, and Flavia said that society was very amusing. Faustina wished that the autumn months would pass a little more quickly, so that the carnival season might begin.

Prince Montevarchi, for his part, intended his youngest daughter to be a model of prim propriety. He attributed to Flavia's frivolity of behaviour the difficulty he experienced in finding her a husband, and he had no intention of exposing himself to a second failure in the case of Faustina. She should marry in her first season, and if she chose to be gay after that, the responsibility thereof might fall upon her husband, or her father-in-law, or upon whomsoever it should most concern; he himself would have fulfilled his duty so soon as the nuptial benediction was pronounced. He knew the fortune and reputation of every marriageable young man in society, and was therefore eminently fitted for the task he undertook. To tell the truth, Faustina herself expected to be married before Easter, for it was eminently fitting that a young girl should lose no time in such matters. But she meant to choose a man after her own heart, if she found one; at all events, she would not submit too readily to the paternal choice nor appear satisfied with the first tolerable suitor who should be presented to her.

Under these circumstances it seemed probable that Donna Faustina's first season, which had begun with the unexpected adventure at the corner of the old Orso, would not come to a close without some passage of arms between herself and her father, even though the ultimate conclusion should lead to the steps of the altar.

The men carried the wounded Zouave away to a distant room, and Faustina entered the main apartments by the side of the old prince. She sighed a little as she went.

"I hope the poor man will get well!" she exclaimed.

"Do not disturb your mind about the young man," answered her father. "He will be attended by the proper persons, and the doctor will bleed him and the will of Heaven will be done. It is not the duty of a

well-conducted young woman to be thinking of such things, and you may dismiss the subject at once."

"Yes, papa," said Faustina submissively. But in spite of the dutiful tone of voice in which she spoke, the dim light of the tall lamps in the antechambers showed a strange expression of mingled amusement and contrariety in the girl's ethereal face.

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## CHAPTER II.

"You know Gouache?" asked old Prince Saracinesca, in a tone which implied that he had news to tell. He looked from his daughter-in-law to his son as he put the question, and then went on with his breakfast.

"Very well," answered Giovanni. "What about him?"

"He was knocked down by a carriage last night. The carriage belonged to Montevarchi, and Gouache is at his house, in danger of his life."

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Corona in ready sympathy. "I am so sorry! I am very fond of Gouache."

Giovanni Saracinesca, known to the world since his marriage as Prince of Sant' Ilario, glanced quickly at his wife, so quickly that neither she nor the old gentleman noticed the fact.

The three persons sat at their midday breakfast in the dining-room of the Palazzo Saracinesca. After much planning and many discussions the young couple had determined to take up their abode with Giovanni's father. There were several reasons which had led them to this decision, but the two chief ones were that they were both devotedly attached to the old man; and secondly, that such a proceeding was strictly fitting and in accordance with the customs of Romans. It was true that Corona, while her old husband, the Duca d'Astrardente, was alive, had grown used to having an establishment exclusively her own, and both the Saracinesca had at first feared that she would be unwilling to live in her father-in-law's house. Then, too, there was the Astrardente

palace, which could not be shut up and allowed to go to ruin; but this matter was compromised advantageously by Corona's letting it to an American millionaire who wished to spend the winter in Rome. The rent paid was large, and Corona never could have too much money for her improvements out at Astrardente. Old Saracinesca wished that the tenant might have been at least a diplomatist, and cursed the American by his gods, but Giovanni said that his wife had shown good sense in getting as much as she could for the palace.

"We shall not need it till Orsino grows up — unless you marry again," said Sant' Ilario to his father, with a laugh.

Now, Orsino was Giovanni's son and heir, aged, at the time of this tale, six months and a few days. In spite of his extreme youth, however, Orsino played a great and important part in the doings of the Saracinesca household. In the first place, he was the heir, and the old prince had been found sitting by his cradle with an expression never seen in his face since Giovanni had been a baby. Secondly, Orsino was a very fine child, swarthy of skin, and hard as a tiger cub, yet having already his mother's eyes, large, coal-black and bright, but deep and soft withal. Thirdly, Orsino had a will of his own, admirably seconded by an enormous lung power. Not that he cried, when he wanted anything. His baby eyes had not yet been seen to shed tears. He merely shouted, loud and long, and thumped the sides of his cradle with his little clenched fists, or struck out straight at anybody who chanced to be within reach. Corona rejoiced in the child, and used to say that he was like his grandfather, his father and his mother all put together. The old prince thought that if this were true the boy would do very well; Corona was the most beautiful dark woman of her time; he himself was a sturdy, tough old man, though his hair and beard were white as snow, and Giovanni was his father's ideal of what a man of his race should be. The arrival of the baby Orsino had been an additional argument in favour of living together, for the child's grandfather could not have been separated from him even by the quarter of a mile which lay between the two palaces.

And so it came to pass that they all dwelt under the same roof, and were sitting together at breakfast on the morning of the 24th of September, when the old prince told them of the accident which had happened to Gouache.

"How did you hear the news?" asked Giovanni.

"Montevarchi told me this morning. He was very much disturbed at the idea of having an interesting young man in his house, with Flavia and Faustina at home." Old Saracinesca smiled grimly.

"Why should that trouble him?" inquired Corona.

"He has the ancient ideas," replied her father-in-law.

"After all — Flavia —"

"Yes. Flavia, after all —"

"I shall be curious to see how the other one turns out," remarked Giovanni. "There seems to be a certain unanimity in our opinion of Flavia. However, I dare say it is mere gossip, and Casa Montevarchi is not a gay place for a girl of her age."

"Not gay? How do you know?" asked the old prince. "Does the girl want Carnival to last till All Souls' Day? Did you ever dine there, Giovannino?"

"No — nor any one else who is not a member of the most Excellent Casa Montevarchi."

"Then how do you know whether it is gay or not?"

"You should hear Ascanio Bellegra describe their life," retorted Giovanni.

"And I suppose you describe your life to him, in exchange?" Prince Saracinesca was beginning to lose his temper, as he invariably did whenever he could induce his son to argue any question with him. "I suppose you deplore each other's miserable condition. I tell you what I think, Giovanni. You had better go and live in Corona's house if you are not happy here."

"It is let," replied Giovanni with imperturbable calm, but his wife bit her lip to control her rising laughter.

"You might travel," growled the old gentleman.

"But I am very happy here."

"Then what do you mean by talking like that about Casa Montevarchi?"

"I fail to see the connection between the two ideas," observed Giovanni.

"You live in precisely the same circumstances as

Ascanio Bellegra. I think the connection is clear enough. If his life is sad, so is yours."

"For downright good logic commend me to my beloved father!" cried Giovanni, breaking into a laugh at last.

"A laughing-stock for my children! I have come to this!" exclaimed his father gruffly. But his features relaxed into a good-humoured smile, that was pleasant to see upon his strong dark face.

"But, really, I am very sorry to hear this of poor Gouache," said Corona at last, returning to the original subject of their conversation. "I hope it is nothing really dangerous."

"It is always dangerous to be run over by a carriage," answered Giovanni. "I will go and see him, if they will let me in."

At this juncture Orsino was brought in by his nurse, a splendid creature from Saracinesca, with bright blue eyes and hair as fair as any Goth's, a contrast to the swarthy child she carried in her arms. Immediately the daily ovation began, and each of the three persons began to worship the baby in an especial way. There was no more conversation, after that, for some time. The youngest of the Saracinesca absorbed the attention of the family. Whether he clenched his little fists, or opened his small fat fingers, whether he laughed and crowed at his grandfather's attempts to amuse him, or struck his nurse's rosy cheeks with his chubby hands, the result was always applause and merriment from those who looked on. The scene recalled Joseph's dream, in which the sheaves of his brethren bowed down to his sheaf.

After a while, however, Orsino grew sleepy and had to be taken away. Then the little party broke up and separated. The old prince went to his rooms to read and doze for an hour. Corona was called away to see one of the numberless dressmakers whose shadows darken the beginning of a season in town, and Giovanni took his hat and went out.

In those days young men of society had very little to do. The other day a German diplomatist was heard to say that Italian gentlemen seemed to do nothing but smoke, spit, and criticise. Twenty years ago their man-

ners might have been described less coarsely, but there was even more truth in the gist of the saying. Not only they did nothing. There was nothing for them to do. They floated about in a peaceful millpool, whose placid surface reflected nothing but their own idle selves, little guessing that the dam whereby their mimic sea was confined, would shortly break with a thundering crash and empty them all into the stream of real life that flowed below. For the few who disliked idleness there was no occupation but literature, and literature, to the Roman mind of 1867, and in the Roman meaning of the word, was scholarship. The introduction to a literary career was supposed to be obtained only by a profound study of the classics, with a view to avoiding everything classical, both in language and ideas, except Cicero, the apostle of the ancient Roman Philistines; and the tendency to clothe stale truisms and feeble sentiments in high-sounding language is still found in Italian prose and is indirectly traceable to the same source. As for the literature of the country since the Latins, it consisted, and still consists, in the works of the four poets, Dante, Tasso, Ariosto, and Petrarch. Leopardi is more read now than then, but is too unhealthily melancholy to be read long by any one. There used to be Roman princes who spent years in committing to memory the verses of those four poets, just as the young Brahman of to-day learns to recite the Rig Veda. That was called the pursuit of literature.

The Saracinesca were thought very original and different from other men, because they gave some attention to their estates. It seemed very like business to try and improve the possessions one had inherited or acquired by marriage, and business was degradation. Nevertheless, the Saracinesca were strong enough to laugh at other people's scruples, and did what seemed best in their own eyes without troubling themselves to ask what the world thought. But the care of such matters was not enough to occupy Giovanni all day. He had much time on his hands, for he was an active man, who slept little and rarely needed rest. Formerly he had been used to disappear from Rome periodically, making long journeys, generally ending in shooting expeditions in

some half-explored country. That was in the days before his marriage, and his wanderings had assuredly done him no harm. He had seen much of the world not usually seen by men of his class and prejudices, and the acquaintance he had thus got with things and people was a source of great satisfaction to him. But the time had come to give up all this. He was now not only married and settled in his own home, but moreover he loved his wife with his whole heart, and these facts were serious obstacles against roughing it in Norway, Canada, or Transylvania. To travel with Corona and little Orsino seemed a very different matter from travelling with Corona alone. Then there was his father's growing affection for the child, which had to be taken into account in all things. The four had become inseparable, old Saracinesca, Giovanni, Corona, and the baby.

Now Giovanni did not regret his old liberty. He knew that he was far happier than he had ever been in his life before. But there were days when the time hung heavily on his hands and his restless nature craved some kind of action which should bring with it a generous excitement. This was precisely what he could not find during the months spent in Rome, and so it fell out that he did very much what most young men of his birth found quite sufficient as an employment; he spent a deal of time in strolling where others strolled, in lounging at the club, and in making visits which filled the hours between sunset and dinner. To him this life was new, and not altogether tasteful; but his friends did not fail to say that Giovanni had been civilised by his marriage with the Astrardente, and was much less reserved than he had formerly been.

When Corona went to see the dressmaker, Giovanni very naturally took his hat and went out of the house. The September day was warm and bright, and in such weather it was a satisfaction merely to pace the old Roman streets in the autumn sun. It was too early to meet any of his acquaintance, and too soon in the season for any regular visiting. He did not know what to do, but allowed himself to enjoy the sunshine and the sweet air. Presently, the sight of a couple of Zouaves, talking together at the corner of a street, recalled to his mind

the accident which had happened to Gouache. It would be kind to go and see the poor fellow, or, at least, to ask after him. He had known him for some time and had gradually learned to like him, as most people did who met the gifted artist day after day throughout the gaiety of the winter.

At the Palazzo Montevarechi Giovanni learned that the princess had just finished breakfast. He could hardly ask for Gouache without making a short visit in the drawing-room, and he accordingly submitted, regretting after all that he had come. The old princess bored him, he did not know Faustina, who was just out of the convent, and Flavia, who amused many people, did not amuse him in the least. He inwardly rejoiced that he was married, and that his visit could not be interpreted as a preliminary step towards asking for Flavia's hand.

The princess looked up with an expression of inquiry in her prominent blue eyes, as Sant' Ilario entered. She was stout, florid, and not well dressed. Her yellow hair, already half gray, for she was more than fifty years old, was of the unruly kind, and had never looked neat even in her best days. Her bright, clear complexion saved her, however, as it saves hundreds of middle-aged Englishwomen, from that look of peculiar untidiness which belongs to dark-skinned persons who take no trouble about their appearance or personal adornment. In spite of thirty-three years of residence in Rome, she spoke Italian with a foreign accent, though otherwise correctly enough. But she was nevertheless a great lady, and no one would have thought of doubting the fact. Fat, awkwardly dressed, of no imposing stature, with unmanageable hair and prominent teeth, she was not a person to be laughed at. She had what many a beautiful woman lacks and envies — natural dignity of character and manner, combined with a self-possession which is not always found in exalted personages. That repose of manner which is commonly believed to be the heirloom of noble birth is seen quite as often in the low-born adventurer, who regards it as part of his stock-in-trade; and there are many women, and men too, whose position might be expected to place them beyond the reach of what we call shyness, but who nevertheless suffer daily agonies of

social timidity and would rather face alone a charge of cavalry than make a new acquaintance. The Princess Montevarchi was made of braver stuff, however, and if her daughters had not inherited all her unaffected dignity they had at least received their fair share of self-possession. When Sant' Ilario entered, these two young ladies, Donna Flavia and Donna Faustina, were seated one on each side of their mother. The princess extended her hand, the two daughters held theirs demurely crossed upon their knees. Faustina looked at the carpet, as she had been taught to do in the convent. Flavia looked up boldly at Giovanni, knowing by experience that her mother could not see her while greeting the visitor. Sant' Ilario muttered some sort of civil inquiry, bowed to the two young ladies and sat down.

"How is Monsieur Gouache?" he asked, going straight to the point. He had seen the look of surprise on the princess's face as he entered, and thought it best to explain himself at once.

"Ah, you have heard? Poor man! He is badly hurt, I fear. Would you like to see him?"

"Presently, if I may," answered Giovanni. "We are all fond of Gouache. How did the accident happen?"

"Faustina ran over him," said Flavia, fixing her dark eyes on Giovanni and allowing her pretty face to assume an expression of sympathy — for the sufferer. "Faustina and papa," she added.

"Flavia! How can you say such things!" exclaimed the princess, who spent a great part of her life in repressing her daughter's manner of speech.

"Well, mamma — it was the carriage of course. But papa and Faustina were in it. It is the same thing."

Giovanni looked at Faustina, but her thin fresh face expressed nothing, nor did she show any intention of commenting on her sister's explanation. It was the first time he had seen her near enough to notice her, and his attention was arrested by something in her looks which surprised and interested him. It was something almost impossible to describe, and yet so really present that it struck Sant' Ilario at once, and found a place in his memory. In the superstitions of the far north, as in the half material spiritualism of Polynesia, that look has a

meaning and an interpretation. With us, the interpretation is lost, but the instinctive persuasion that the thing itself is not wholly meaningless remains ineradicable. We say, with a smile at our own credulity, "That man looks as though he had a story," or, "That woman looks as though something odd might happen to her." It is an expression in the eyes, a delicate shade in the features, which speak of many things which we do not understand; things which, if they exist at all, we feel must be inevitable, fatal, and beyond human control. Giovanni looked and was surprised, but Faustina said nothing.

"It was very good of the prince to bring him here," remarked Sant' Ilario.

"It was very unlike papa," exclaimed Flavia, before her mother could answer. "But very kind, of course, as you say," she added, with a little smile. Flavia had a habit of making rather startling remarks, and of then adding something in explanation or comment, before her hearers had recovered breath. The addition did not always mend matters very much.

"Do not interrupt me, Flavia," said her mother, severely.

"I beg your pardon, were you speaking, mamma?" asked the young girl, innocently.

Giovanni was not amused by Flavia's manners, and waited calmly for the princess to speak.

"Indeed," said she, "there was nothing else to be done. As we had run over the poor man —"

"The carriage —" suggested Flavia. But her mother took no notice of her.

"The least we could do, of course, was to bring him here. My husband would not have allowed him to be taken to the hospital."

Flavia again fixed her eyes on Giovanni with a look of sympathy, which, however, did not convey any very profound belief in her father's charitable intentions.

"I quite understand," said Giovanni. "And how has he been since you brought him here? Is he in any danger?"

"You shall see him at once," answered the princess, who rose and rang the bell, and then, as the servant's

footsteps were heard outside, crossed the room to meet him at the door.

"Mamma likes to run about," said Flavia, sweetly, in explanation. Giovanni had risen and made as though he would have been of some assistance.

The action was characteristic of the Princess Montevarchi. An Italian woman would neither have rung the bell herself, nor have committed such an imprudence as to turn her back upon her two daughters when there was a man in the room. But she was English, and a whole lifetime spent among Italians could not extinguish her activity; so she went to the door herself. Faustina's deep eyes followed her mother as though she were interested to know the news of Gouache.

"I hope he is better," she said, quietly.

"Of course," echoed Flavia. "So do I. But mamma amuses me so much! She is always in a hurry."

Faustina made no answer, but she looked at Sant' Ilario, as though she wondered what he thought of her sister. He returned her gaze, trying to explain to himself the strange attraction of her expression, watching her critically as he would have watched any new person or sight. She did not blush nor avoid his bold eyes, as he would have expected had he realised that he was staring at her.

A few minutes later Giovanni found himself in a narrow, high room, lighted by one window, which showed the enormous thickness of the walls in the deep embrasure. The vaulted ceiling was painted in fresco with a representation of Apollo in the act of drawing his bow, arrayed for the time being in his quiver, while his other garments, of yellow and blue, floated everywhere save over his body. The floor of the room was of red bricks, which had once been waxed, and the furniture was scanty, massive and very old. Anastase Gouache lay in one corner in a queer-looking bed covered with a yellow damask quilt the worse for a century or two of wear, upon which faded embroideries showed the Montevarchi arms surmounted by a cardinal's hat. Upon a chair beside the patient lay the little heap of small belongings he had carried in his pocket when hurt, his watch and purse, his cigarettes, his handkerchief and a few other

trifles, among which, half concealed by the rest, was the gold pin he had picked up by the bridge on the previous evening. There was a mingled smell of dampness and of stale tobacco in the comfortless room, for the windows were closely shut, in spite of the bright sunshine that flooded the opposite side of the street.

Gouache lay on his back, his head tied up in a bandage and supported by a white pillow, which somehow conveyed the impression of one of those marble cushions upon which in old-fashioned monuments the effigies of the dead are made to lean in eternal prayer, if not in eternal ease. He moved impatiently as the door opened, and then recognising Giovanni, he hailed him in a voice much more lively and sonorous than might have been expected.

"You, prince!" he cried, in evident delight. "What saint has brought you?"

"I heard of your accident, and so I came to see if I could do anything for you. How are you?"

"As you see," replied Gouache. "In a hospitable tomb, with my head tied up like an imperfectly-resurrected Lazarus. For the rest there is nothing the matter with me, except that they have taken away my clothes, which is something of an obstacle to my leaving the house at once. I feel as if I had been in a revolution and had found myself on the wrong side of the barricade—nothing worse than that."

"You are in good spirits, at all events. But are you not seriously hurt?"

"Oh, nothing—a broken collar-bone somewhere, I believe, and some part of my head gone—I am not quite sure which, and a bad headache, and nothing to eat, and a general sensation as though somebody had made an ineffectual effort to turn me into a sausage."

"What does the doctor say?"

"Nothing. He is a man of action. He bled me because I had not the strength to strangle him, and poured decoctions of boiled grass down my throat because I could not speak. He has fantastic ideas about the human body."

"But you will have to stay here several days," said Giovanni, considerably amused by Gouache's view of his own case.

"Several days! Not even several hours, if I can help it."

"Things do not go so quickly in Rome. You must be patient."

"In order to starve, when there is food as near as the Corso?" inquired the artist. "To be butchered by a Roman phlebotomist, and drenched with infusions of hay by the Principessa Montevarchi, when I might be devising means of being presented to her daughter? What do you take me for? I suppose the young lady with the divine eyes is her daughter, is she not?"

"You mean Donna Faustina, I suppose. Yes. She is the youngest, just out of the Sacro Cuore. She was in the drawing-room when I called just now. How did you see her?"

"Last night, as they brought me upstairs, I was lucky enough to wake up just as she was looking at me. What eyes! I can think of nothing else. Seriously, can you not help me to get out of here?"

"So that you may fall in love with Donna Faustina as soon as possible, I suppose," answered Giovanni with a laugh. "It seems to me that there is but one thing to do, if you are really strong enough. Send for your clothes, get up, go into the drawing-room and thank the princess for her hospitality."

"That is easily said. Nothing is done in this house without the written permission of the old prince, unless I am much mistaken. Besides, there is no bell. I might as well be under arrest in the guard-room of the barracks. Presently the doctor will come and bleed me again and the princess will send me some more boiled grass. I am not very fat, as it is, but another day of this diet will make me diaphanous—I shall cast no shadow. A nice thing, to be caught without a shadow on parade!"

"I will see what I can do," said Giovanni, rising. "Probably, the best thing would be to send your military surgeon. He will not be so tender as the other leech, but he will get you away at once. My wife wished me to say that she sympathised, and hoped you might soon be well."

"My homage and best thanks to the princess," an-

swered Gouache, with a slight change of tone, presumably to be referred to his sense of courtesy in speaking of the absent lady.

So Giovanni went away, promising to send the surgeon at once. The latter soon arrived, saw Gouache, and was easily persuaded to order him home without further delay. The artist-soldier would not leave the house without thanking his hostess. His uniform had been cleansed from the stains it had got in the accident, and his left arm was in a sling. The wound on his head was more of a bruise than a cut, and was concealed by his thick black hair. Considering the circumstances he presented a very good appearance. The princess received him in the drawing-room, and Flavia and Faustina were with her, but all three were now dressed to go out, so that the interview was necessarily a short one.

Gouache made a little speech of thanks and tried to forget the decoction of mallows he had swallowed, fearing lest the recollection should impart a tone of insincerity to his expression of gratitude. He succeeded very well, and afterwards attributed the fact to Donna Faustina's brown eyes, which were not cast down as they had been when Sant' Ilario had called, but appeared on the contrary to contemplate the new visitor with singular interest.

"I am sure my husband will not approve of your going so soon," said the princess in somewhat anxious tones. It was almost the first time she had ever known any step of importance to be taken in her house without her husband's express authority.

"Madame," answered Gouache, glancing from Donna Faustina to his hostess, "I am in despair at having thus unwillingly trespassed upon your hospitality, although I need not tell you that I would gladly prolong so charming an experience, provided I were not confined to solitude in a distant chamber. However, since our regimental surgeon pronounces me fit to go home, I have no choice but to obey orders. Believe me, Madame, I am deeply grateful to yourself as well as to the Principe Montevarchi for your manifold kindnesses, and shall cherish a remembrance of your goodness so long as I live."

With these words Gouache bowed as though he would

be gone and stood waiting for the princess's last word. But before her mother could speak, Faustina's voice was heard.

"I cannot tell you how dreadfully we feel — papa and I — at having been the cause of such a horrible accident! Is there nothing we can do to make you forget it?"

The princess stared at her daughter in the utmost astonishment at her forwardness. She would not have been surprised if Flavia had been guilty of such imprudence, but that Faustina should thus boldly address a young man who had not spoken to her, was such a shock to her belief in the girl's manners that she did not recover for several seconds. Anastase appreciated the situation, for as he answered, he looked steadily at the mother, although his words were plainly addressed to the brown-eyed beauty.

"Mademoiselle is too kind. She exaggerates. And yet, since she has put the question, I will say that I should forget my broken bones very soon if I might be permitted to paint Mademoiselle's portrait. I am a painter," he added, in modest explanation.

"Yes," said the princess, "I know. But, really — this is a matter which would require great consideration — and my husband's consent — and, for the present —"

She paused significantly, intending to convey a polite refusal, but Gouache completed the sentence.

"For the present, until my bones are mended, we will not speak of it. When I am well again I will do myself the honour of asking the prince's consent myself."

Flavia leaned towards her mother and whispered into her ear. The words were quite audible, and the girl's dark eyes turned to Gouache with a wicked laugh in them while she was speaking.

"Oh, mamma, if you tell papa it is for nothing he will be quite delighted!"

Gouache's lip trembled as he suppressed a smile, and the elderly princess's florid cheeks flushed with annoyance.

"For the present," she said, holding out her hand rather coldly, "we will not speak of it. Pray let us know of your speedy recovery, Monsieur Gouache."

As the artist took his leave he glanced once more at

Donna Faustina. Her face was pale and her eyes flashed angrily. She, too, had heard Flavia's stage whisper and was even more annoyed than her mother. Gouache went his way toward his lodging in the company of the surgeon, pondering on the inscrutable mysteries of the Roman household of which he had been vouchsafed a glimpse. He was in pain from his head and shoulder, but insisted that the walk would do him good and refused the cab which his companion had brought. A broken collar-bone is not a dangerous matter, but it can be very troublesome for a while, and the artist was glad to get back to his lodgings and to find himself comfortably installed in an easy chair with something to eat before him, of a more substantial nature than the Principessa Montevarchi's infusions of camomile and mallows.

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### CHAPTER III.

While Giovanni was at the Palazzo Montevarchi, and while Corona was busy with her dressmakers, Prince Saracinesca was dozing over the *Osservatore Romano* in his study. To tell the truth the paper was less dull than usual, for there was war and rumour of war in its columns. Garibaldi had raised a force of volunteers and was in the neighbourhood of Arezzo, beginning to skirmish with the outlying posts of the pontifical army along the frontier. The old gentleman did not know, of course, that on that very day the Italian Government was issuing its proclamation against the great agitator, and possibly if he had been aware of the incident it would not have produced any very strong impression upon his convictions. Garibaldi was a fact, and Saracinesca did not believe that any proclamations would interfere with his march unless backed by some more tangible force. Even had he known that the guerilla general had been arrested at Sinalunga and put in confinement as soon as the proclamation had appeared, the prince would have foreseen clearly enough that the prisoner's escape would be only