

familiarity; that, finally and on the whole, he was a nuisance, to be borne with a good grace and a sufficient show of cordiality.

San Giacinto, for his part, was deeply engaged in maintaining the exact standard of manners which he knew to be necessary for the occasion, and his thoughts concerning his relatives were not yet altogether defined. It was his intention to take his place among them, and he was doing his best to accomplish this object as speedily and quietly as possible. He had not supposed that princes and princesses were in any way different from other human beings except by the accidents of wealth and social position. Master of these two requisites there was no reason why he should not feel as much at home with the Saracinesca as he had felt in the society of the mayor and municipal council of Aquila, who possessed those qualifications also, though in a less degree. The Saracinesca probably thought about most questions very much as he himself did, or if there were any difference in their mode of thinking it was due to Roman prejudice and tradition rather than to any peculiarity inherent in the organisation of the members of the higher aristocracy. If he should find himself in any dilemma owing to his ignorance of social details he would not hesitate to apply to the prince for information, since it was by no means his fault if he had been brought up an innkeeper and was now to be a nobleman. His immediate object was to place himself among his equals, and his next purpose was to marry again, in his new rank, a woman of good position and fortune. Of this matter he intended to speak to the prince in due time, when he should have secured the first requisite to his marriage by establishing himself firmly in society. He meant to apply to the prince, ostensibly as to the head of the family, thereby showing a deference to that dignity, which he supposed would be pleasing to the old gentleman; but he had not forgotten in his calculations the pride which old Saracinesca must naturally feel in his race, and which would probably induce him to take very great pains in finding a suitable wife for San Giacinto rather than permit the latter to contract a discreditable alliance.

San Giacinto left the house at half-past nine o'clock, under the pretext of another engagement, for he did not mean to weary his relations with too much of his company in the first instance. When he was gone the three looked at each other in silence for some moments.

"He has surprisingly good manners, for an innkeeper," said Corona at last. "No one will ever suspect his former life. But I do not like him."

"Nor I," said the prince.

"He wants something," said Sant' Ilario. "And he will probably get it," he added, after a short pause. "He has a determined face."

CHAPTER IV.

Anastase Gouache recovered rapidly from his injuries, but not so quickly as he wished. There was trouble in the air, and many of his comrades were already gone to the frontier where the skirmishing with the irregular volunteers of Garibaldi's guerilla force had now begun in earnest. To be confined to the city at such a time was inexpressibly irksome to the gallant young Frenchman, who had a genuine love of fighting in him, and longed for the first sensation of danger and the first shower of whistling bullets. But his inactivity was inevitable, and he was obliged to submit with the best grace he could, hoping only that all might not be over before he was well enough to tramp out and see some service with his companions-in-arms.

The situation was indeed urgent. The first article of the famous convention between France and Italy, ratified in September, 1864, read as follows:—

"Italy engages not to attack the actual territory of the Holy Father, and to prevent, even by force, all attack coming from outside against such territory."

Relying upon the observance of this chief clause, France had conscientiously executed the condition imposed by the second article, which provided that all

French troops should be withdrawn from the States of the Church. The promise of Italy to prevent invasion by force applied to Garibaldi and his volunteers. Accordingly, on the 24th of September, 1867, the Italian Government issued a proclamation against the band and its proceedings, and arrested Garibaldi at Sinalunga, in the neighbourhood of Arezzo. This was the only force employed, and it may be believed that the Italian Government firmly expected that the volunteers would disperse as soon as they found themselves without a leader; and had proper measures been taken for keeping the general in custody this would in all probability have followed very shortly, as his sons, who were left at large, did not possess any of their father's qualifications for leadership. Garibaldi, however, escaped eighteen days later, and again joined his band, which had meanwhile been defeated by the Pope's troops in a few small engagements, and had gained one or two equally insignificant advantages over the latter. As soon as it was known that Garibaldi was again at large, a simultaneous movement began, the numerous Garibaldian emissaries who had arrived in Rome stirring up an attempt at insurrection within the city, while Garibaldi himself made a bold dash and seized Monte Rotondo, another force at the same time striking at Sutbiaco, which, by a strange ignorance of the mountains, Garibaldi appears to have believed to be the southern key to the Campagna. In consequence of the protestations of the French minister to the court of Italy, and perhaps, too, in consequence of the approach of a large body of French troops by sea, the Italian Government again issued a proclamation against Garibaldi, who, however, remained in his strong position at Monte Rotondo. Finally, on the 30th of October, the day on which the French troops re-entered Rome, the Italians made a show of interfering in the Pope's favour, General Menatiera authorising the Italian forces to enter the Papal States in order to maintain order. They did not, however, do more than make a short advance, and no active measures were taken, but Garibaldi was routed on the 3d and 4th of November by the Papal forces, and his band being dispersed the incident was at an end. But for the armed intervention of

France the result would have been that which actually came about in 1870, when, the same Convention being still valid, the French were prevented by their own disasters from sending a force to the assistance of the Pope.

It is not yet time to discuss the question of the annexation of the States of the Church to the kingdom of Italy. It is sufficient to have shown that the movement of 1867 took place without any actual violation of the letter of the Convention. The spirit in which the Italian Government acted might be criticised at length. It is sufficient however to notice that the Italian Government was, as it still is, a parliamentary one; and to add that parliamentary government, in general, exhibits its weakest side in the emergency of war, as its greatest advantages are best appreciated in times of peace. In the Italian Parliament of that day, as in that of the present time, there was a preponderance of representatives who considered Rome to be the natural capital of the country, and who were as ready to trample upon treaties for the accomplishment of what they believed a righteous end, as most parliaments have everywhere shown themselves in similar circumstances. That majority differed widely, indeed, in opinion from Garibaldi and Mazzini, but they conceived that they had a right to take full advantage of any revolution the latter chanced to bring about, and that it was their duty to their country to direct the stream of disorder into a channel which should lead to the aggrandisement of Italy, by making use of Italy's standing army.

The defenders of the Papal States found themselves face to face, not with any organised and disciplined force, but with a horde of brutal ruffians and half-grown lads, desperate in that delight of unbridled license which has such attractions for the mob in all countries; and all alike, Zouaves, native troops and Frenchmen, were incensed to the highest degree by the conduct of their enemies. It would be absurd to make the Italian Government responsible for the atrocious defiling of churches, the pillage and the shocking crimes of all sorts, which marked the advance or retreat of the Garibaldians; but it is equally absurd to deny that a majority of the Ital-

ians regarded these doings as a means to a very desirable end, and, if they had not been hindered by the French, would have marched a couple of army corps in excellent order to the gates of Rome through the channel opened by a mob of lawless insurgents.

Anastase Gouache was disgusted with his state of forced inaction as he paced the crowded pavement of the Corso every afternoon for three weeks after his accident, smoking endless cigarettes, and cursing the fate which kept him an invalid at home when his fellow-soldiers were enjoying themselves amidst the smell of gunpowder and the adventures of frontier skirmishing. It was indeed bad luck, he thought, to have worn the uniform during nearly two years of perfect health and then to be disabled just when the fighting began. He had one consolation, however, in the midst of his annoyance, and he made the most of it. He had been fascinated by Donna Faustina Montevarchi's brown eyes, and for lack of any other interest upon which to expend his energy he had so well employed his time that he was now very seriously in love with that young lady. Among her numerous attractions was one which had a powerful influence on the young artist, namely, the fact that she was, according to all human calculations, absolutely beyond his reach. Nothing had more charm for Gouache, as for many gifted and energetic young men, than that which it must require a desperate effort to get, if it could be got at all. Frenchmen, as well as Italians, consider marriage so much in the light of a mere contract which must be settled between notaries and ratified by parental assent, that to love a young girl seems to them like an episode out of a fairy tale, enchantingly novel and altogether delightful. To us, who consider love as a usual if not an absolutely necessary preliminary to marriage, this point of view is hardly conceivable; but it is enough to tell a Frenchman that you have married your wife because you loved her, and not because your parents or your circumstances arranged the match for you, to hear him utter the loudest exclamations of genuine surprise and admiration, declaring that his ideal of happiness, which he considers of course as quite unattainable, would be to marry the woman of his affections. The

immediate result of a state in which that sort of bliss is considered to be generally beyond the grasp of humanity has been to produce the moral peculiarities of the French novel, of the French play, and of the French household, as it is usually exhibited in books and on the stage.

The artist-Zouave was made of determined stuff. It was not for nothing that he had won the great prize which brought him to the Academy in Rome, nor was it out of mere romantic idleness that he had thrown over the feeble conspiracies of Madame Mayer and her set in order to wear a uniform. He had profound convictions, though he was not troubled with any great number of them. Each new one which took hold of him marked an epoch in his young life, and generally proved tenacious in proportion as he had formerly regarded it as absurd; and it was a proof of the sound balance of his mind that the three or four real convictions which he had accumulated during his short life were in no way contradictory to each other. On the contrary, each one seemed closely bound up with the rest, and appeared to bring a fresh energy to that direct action which, with Anastase, was the only possible result of any belief whatsoever.

There was therefore a goodly store of logic in his madness, and though, like Childe Harold, he had sighed to many, and at present loved but one, yet he was determined, if it were possible, that this loved one should be his; seeing that to sigh for anything, and not to take it if it could be taken, was the part of a boy and not of a strong man. Moreover, although the social difficulties which lay in his way were an obstacle which would have seemed insurmountable to many, there were two considerations which gave Anastase some hope of ultimate success. In the first place Donna Faustina herself was not indifferent; and, secondly, Anastase was no longer the humble student who had come to Rome some years earlier with nothing but his pension in his pocket and his talent in his fingers. He was certainly not of ancient lineage, but since he had attained that position which enabled him to be received as an equal in the great world, and had by his skill accumulated a portion of that filthy lucre which is the platform whereon society moves and has its

exclusive being, he had the advantage of talking to Donna Faustina, wherever he met her, in spite of her father's sixty-four quarterings. Nor did those meetings take place only under the auspices of so much heraldry and blazon, as will presently appear.

At that period of the year, and especially during such a time of disturbance, there was no such thing as gaiety possible in Rome. People met quietly in little knots at each other's houses and talked over the state of the country, or walked and drove as usual in the villas and on the Pincio. When society cannot be gay it is very much inclined to grow confidential, to pull a long face, and to say things which, if uttered above a whisper, would be considered extremely shocking, but which, being communicated, augmented, criticised, and passed about quickly without much noise, are considered exceedingly interesting. When every one is supposed to be talking of politics it is very easy for every one to talk scandal, and to construct neighbourly biography of an imaginary character which shall presently become a part of contemporary history. On the whole, society would almost as gladly do this as dance. In those days of which I am speaking, therefore, there were many places where two or three, and sometimes as many as ten, were gathered together in council, ostensibly for the purpose of devising means whereby the Holy Father might overcome his enemies, though they were very often engaged in criticising the indecent haste exhibited by their best friends in yielding to the wiles of Satan.

There were several of these rallying points, among which may be chiefly noticed the Palazzo Valdarno, the Palazzo Saracinesca, and the Palazzo Montevarchi. In the first of these three it may be observed in passing that there was a division of opinion, the old people being the most rigid of conservatives, while the children declared as loudly as they dared that they were for Victor Emmanuel and United Italy. The Saracinesca, on the other hand, were firmly united and determined to stand by the existing order of things. Lastly, the Montevarchi all took their opinions from the head of the house, and knew very well that they would submit like sheep to be led whichever way was most agreeable to the old prince.

The friends who frequented those various gatherings were of course careful to say whatever was most sure to please their hosts, and after the set speeches were made most of them fell to their usual occupation of talking about each other.

Gouache was an old friend of the Saracinesca, and came whenever he pleased; since his accident, too, he had become better acquainted with the Montevarchi, and was always a welcome guest, as he generally brought the latest news of the fighting, as well as the last accounts from France, which he easily got through his friendship with the young attachés of his embassy. It is not surprising therefore that he should have found so many opportunities of meeting Donna Faustina, especially as Corona di Sant' Ilario had taken a great fancy to the young girl and invited her constantly to the house.

On the very first occasion when Gouache called upon the Princess Montevarchi in order to express again his thanks for the kindness he had received, he found the room half full of people. Faustina was sitting alone, turning over the pages of a book, and no one seemed to pay any attention to her. After the usual speeches to the hostess Gouache sat down beside her. She raised her brown eyes, recognised him, and smiled faintly.

"What a wonderful contrast you are enjoying, Donna Faustina," said the Zouave.

"How so? I confess it seems monotonous enough."

"I mean that it is a great change for you, from the choir of the Sacro Cuore, from the peace of a convent, to this atmosphere of war."

"Yes; I wish I were back again."

"You do not like what you have seen of the world, Mademoiselle? It is very natural. If the world were always like this its attraction would not be dangerous. It is the pomps and vanities that are delightful."

"I wish they would begin then," answered Donna Faustina with more natural frankness than is generally found in young girls of her education.

"But were you not taught by the good sisters that those things are of the devil?" asked Gouache with a smile.

"Of course. But Flavia says they are very nice."

Gouache imagined that Flavia ought to know, but he thought fit to conceal his conviction.

"You mean Donna Flavia, your sister, Mademoiselle?"

"Yes."

"I suppose you are very fond of her, are you not? It must be very pleasant to have a sister so nearly of one's own age in the world."

"She is much older than I, but I think we shall be very good friends."

"Your family must be almost as much strangers to you as the rest of the world," observed Gouache. "Of course you have only seen them occasionally for a long time past. You are fond of reading, I see."

He made this remark to change the subject, and glanced at the book the young girl still held in her hand.

"It is a new book," she said, opening the volume at the title-page. "It is *Manon Lescaut*. Flavia has read it—it is by the Abbé Prévost. Do you know him?"

Gouache did not know whether to laugh or to look grave.

"Did your mother give it to you?" he asked.

"No, but she says that as it is by an abbé, she supposes it must be very moral. It is true that it has not the *imprimatur*, but being by a priest it cannot possibly be on the Index."

"I do not know," replied Gouache, "Prévost was certainly in holy orders, but I do not know him, as he died rather more than a hundred years ago. You see the book is not new."

"Oh!" exclaimed Donna Faustina, "I thought it was. Why do you laugh? Am I very ignorant not to know all about it?"

"No, indeed. Only, you will pardon me, Mademoiselle, if I offer a suggestion. You see I am French and know a little about these matters. You will permit me?"

Faustina opened her brown eyes very wide, and nodded gravely.

"If I were you, I would not read that book yet. You are too young."

"You seem to forget that I am eighteen years old, Monsieur Gouache."

"No, not at all. But five and twenty is a better age to read such books. Believe me," he added seriously, "that story is not meant for you."

Faustina looked at him for a few seconds and then laid the volume on the table, pushing it away from her with a puzzled air. Gouache was inwardly much amused at the idea of finding himself the moral preceptor of a young girl he scarcely knew, in the house of her parents, who passed for the most strait-laced of their kind. A feeling of deep resentment against Flavia, however, began to rise beneath his first sensation of surprise.

"What are books for?" asked Donna Faustina, with a little sigh. "The good ones are dreadfully dull, and it is wrong to read the amusing ones—until one is married. I wonder why?"

Gouache did not find any immediate answer and might have been seriously embarrassed had not Giovanni Sant' Ilario come up just then. Gouache rose to relinquish his seat to the newcomer, and as he passed before the table deftly turned over the book with his finger so that the title should not be visible. It jarred disagreeably on his sensibilities to think that Giovanni might see a copy of *Manon Lescaut* lying by the elbow of Donna Faustina Montevarchi. Sant' Ilario did not see the action and probably would not have noticed it if he had.

Anastase pondered all that afternoon and part of the next morning over his short conversation, and the only conclusion at which he arrived was that Faustina was the most fascinating girl he had ever met. When he compared the result produced in his mind with his accurate recollection of what had passed between them, he laughed at his haste and called himself a fool for yielding to such nonsensical ideas. The conversation of a young girl, he argued, could only be amusing for a short time. He wondered what he should say at their next meeting, since all such talk, according to his notions, must inevitably consist of commonplaces. And yet at the end of a quarter of an hour of such meditation he found that he was constructing an interview which was anything but dull, at least in his own anticipatory opinion.

Meanwhile the first ten days of October passed in

comparative quiet. The news of Garibaldi's arrest produced temporary lull in the excitement felt in Rome, although the real struggle was yet to come. People observed to each other that strange faces were to be seen in the streets, but as no one could enter without a proper passport, very little anxiety gained the public mind.

Gouache saw Faustina very often during the month that followed his accident. Such good fortune would have been impossible under any other circumstances, but, as has been explained, there were numerous little social confabulations on foot, for people were drawn together by a vague sense of common danger, and the frequent meetings of the handsome Zouave with the youngest of the Montevarchi passed unnoticed in the general stir. The old princess indeed often saw the two together, but partly owing to her English breeding, and partly because Gouache was not in the least eligible or possible as a husband for her daughter, she attached no importance to the acquaintance. The news that Garibaldi was again at large caused great excitement, and every day brought fresh news of small engagements along the frontier. Gouache was not yet quite recovered, though he felt as strong as ever, and applied every day for leave to go to the front. At last, on the 22d of October, the surgeon pronounced him to be completely recovered, and Anastase was ordered to leave the city on the following morning at daybreak.

As he mounted the sombre staircase of the Palazzo Saracinesca on the afternoon previous to his departure, the predominant feeling in his breast was great satisfaction and joy at being on the eve of seeing active service, and he himself was surprised at the sharp pang he suffered in the anticipation of bidding farewell to his friends. He knew what friend it was whom he dreaded to leave, and how bitter that parting would be, for which three weeks earlier he could have summoned a neat speech expressing just so much of feeling as should be calculated to raise an interest in the hearer, and prompted by just so much delicate regret as should impart a savour of romance to his march on the next day. It was different now.

Donna Faustina was in the room, as he had reason to

expect, but it was several minutes before Anastase could summon the determination necessary to go to her side. She was standing near the piano, which faced outwards towards the body of the room, but was screened by a semicircular arrangement of plants, a novel idea lately introduced by Corona, who was weary of the stiff old-fashioned way of setting all the furniture against the wall. Faustina was standing at this point therefore, when Gouache made towards her, having done homage to Corona and to the other ladies in the room. His attention was arrested for a moment by the sight of San Giacinto's gigantic figure. The cousin of the house was standing before Flavia Montevarchi, bending slightly towards her and talking in low tones. His magnificent proportions made him by far the most noticeable person in the room, and it is no wonder that Gouache paused and looked at him, mentally observing that the two would make a fine couple.

As he stood still he became aware that Corona herself was at his side. He glanced at her with something of inquiry in his eyes, and was about to speak when she made him a sign to follow her. They sat down together in a deserted corner at the opposite end of the room.

"I have something to say to you, Monsieur Gouaché," she said, in a low voice, as she settled herself against the cushions. "I do not know that I have any right to speak, except that of a good friend — and of a woman."

"I am at your orders, princess."

"No, I have no orders to give you. I have only a suggestion to make. I have watched you often during the last month. My advice begins with a question. Do you love her?"

Gouache's first instinct was to express the annoyance he felt at this interrogation. He moved quickly and glanced sharply at Corona's velvet eyes. Before the words that were on his lips could be spoken he remembered all the secret reverence and respect he had felt for this woman since he had first known her, he remembered how he had always regarded her as a sort of goddess, a superior being, at once woman and angel, placed far beyond the reach of mortals like himself. His irritation vanished as quickly as it had arisen. But Corona had seen it.

"Are you angry?" she asked.

"If you knew how I worship you, you would know that I am not," answered Gouache with a strange simplicity.

For an instant the princess's deep eyes flashed and a dark blush mounted through her olive skin. She drew back, rather proudly. A delicate, gentle smile played round the soldier's mouth.

"Perhaps it is your turn to be angry, Madame," he said, quietly. "But you need not be. I would say it to your husband, as I would say it to you in his presence. I worship you. You are the most beautiful woman in the world, the most nobly good. Everybody knows it, why should I not say it? I wish I were a little child, and that you were my mother. Are you angry still?"

Corona was silent, and her eyes grew soft again as she looked kindly at the man beside her. She did not understand him, but she knew that he meant to express something which was not bad. Gouache waited for her to speak.

"It was not for that I asked you to come with me," she said at last.

"I am glad I said it," replied Gouache. "I am going away to-morrow, and it might never have been said. You asked me if I loved her. I trust you. I say, yes, I do. I am going to say good-bye this afternoon."

"I am sorry you love her. Is it serious?"

"Absolutely, on my part. Why are you sorry? Is there anything unnatural in it?"

"No, on the contrary, it is too natural. Our lives are unnatural. You cannot marry her. It seems brutal to tell you so, but you must know it already."

"There was once a little boy in Paris, Madame, who did not have enough to eat every day, nor enough clothes when the north wind blew. But he had a good heart. His name was Anastase Gouache."

"My dear friend," said Corona, kindly, "the atmosphere of Casa Montevarchi is colder than the north wind. A man may overcome almost anything more easily than the old-fashioned prejudices of a Roman prince."

"You do not forbid me to try?"

"Would the prohibition make any difference?"

"I am not sure." Gouache paused and looked long at the princess. "No," he said at last, "I am afraid not."

"In that case I can only say one thing. You are a man of honour. Do your best not to make her uselessly unhappy. Win her if you can, by any fair means. But she has a heart, and I am very fond of the child. If any harm comes to her I shall hold you responsible. If you love her, think what it would be should she love you and be married to another man."

A shade of sadness darkened Corona's brow, as she remembered those terrible months of her own life. Gouache knew what she meant and was silent for a few moments.

"I trust you," said she, at last. "And since you are going to-morrow, God bless you. You are going in a good cause."

She held out her hand as she rose to leave him, and he bent over it and touched it with his lips, as he would have kissed the hand of his mother. Then, skirting the little assembly of people, Anastase went back towards the piano, in search of Donna Faustina. He found her alone, as young girls are generally to be found in Roman drawing-rooms, unless there are two of them present to sit together.

"What have you been talking about with the princess?" asked Donna Faustina when Gouache was seated beside her.

"Could you see from here?" asked Gouache instead of answering. "I thought the plants would have hindered you."

"I saw you kiss her hand when you got up, and so I supposed that the conversation had been serious."

"Less serious than ours must be," replied Anastase, sadly. "I was saying good-bye to her, and now —"

"Good-bye? Why —?" Faustina checked herself and looked away to hide her pallor. She felt cold, and a slight shiver passed over her slender figure.

"I am going to the front to-morrow morning."

There was a long silence, during which the two looked at each other from time to time, neither finding courage to speak. Since Gouache had been in the room it had grown dark, and as yet but one lamp had been brought.

The young man's eyes sought those he loved in the dusk, and as his hand stole out it met another, a tender, nervous hand, trembling with emotion. They did not heed what was passing near them.

As though their silence were contagious, the conversation died away, and there was a general lull, such as sometimes falls upon an assemblage of people who have been talking for some time. Then, through the deep windows there came up a sound of distant uproar, mingled with occasional sharp detonations, few indeed, but the more noticeable for their rarity. Suddenly the door of the drawing-room burst open, and a servant's voice was heard speaking in a loud key, the coarse accents and terrified tone contrasting strangely with the sounds generally heard in such a place.

"Excellency! Excellency! The revolution! Garibaldi is at the gates! The Italians are coming! Madonna! Madonna! The revolution, *Eccellenza mia!*"

The man was mad with fear. Every one spoke at once. Some laughed, thinking the man crazy. Others, who had heard the distant noise from the streets, drew back and looked nervously towards the door. Then Sant' Ilario's clear, strong voice, rang like a clarion through the room.

"Bar the gates. Shut the blinds all over the house — it is of no use to let them break good windows. Don't stand there shivering like a fool. It is only a mob."

Before he had finished speaking, San Giacinto was calmly bolting the blinds of the drawing-room windows, fastening each one as steadily and securely as he had been wont to put up the shutters of his inn at Aquila in the old days.

In the dusky corner by the piano Gouache and Faustina were overlooked in the general confusion. There was no time for reflection, for at the first words of the servant Anastase knew that he must go instantly to his post. Faustina's little hand was still clasped in his, as they both sprang to their feet. Then with a sudden movement he clasped her in his arms and kissed her passionately.

"Good-bye — my beloved!"

The girl's arms were twined closely about him, and her eyes looked up to his with a wild entreaty.

"You are safe here, my darling — good-bye!"

"Where are you going?"

"To the Serristori barracks. God keep you safe till I come back — good-bye!"

"I will go with you," said Faustina, with a strange look of determination in her angelic face.

Gouache smiled, even then, at the mad thought which presented itself to the girl's mind. Once more he kissed her, and then, she knew not how, he was gone. Other persons had come near them, shutting the windows rapidly, one after the other, in anticipation of danger from without. With instinctive modesty Faustina withdrew her arms from the young man's neck and shrank back. In that moment he disappeared in the crowd.

Faustina stared wildly about her for a few seconds, confused and stunned by the suddenness of what had passed, above all by the thought that the man she loved was gone from her side to meet his death. Then without hesitation she left the room. No one hindered her, for the Saracinesca men were gone to see to the defences of the house, and Corona was already by the cradle of her child. No one noticed the slight figure as it slipped through the door and was gone in the darkness of the unlighted halls. All was confusion and noise and flashing of passing lights as the servants hurried about, trying to obey orders in spite of their terror. Faustina glided like a shadow down the vast staircase, slipped through one of the gates just as the bewildered porter was about to close it, and in a moment was out in the midst of the multitude that thronged the dim streets — a mere child and alone, facing a revolution in the dark.

CHAPTER V.

Gouache made his way as fast as he could to the bridge of Sant' Angelo, but his progress was constantly impeded by moving crowds — bodies of men, women, and children rushing frantically together at the corners of the streets