

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

and then surging onward in the direction of the resultant produced by their combined forces in the shock. There was loud and incoherent screaming of women and shouting of men, out of which occasionally a few words could be distinguished, more often "Viva Pio Nono!" or "Viva la Repubblica!" than anything else. The scene of confusion baffled description. A company of infantry was filing out of the castle of Sant' Angelo on to the bridge, where it was met by a dense multitude of people coming from the opposite direction. A squadron of mounted gendarmes came up from the Borgo Nuovo at the same moment, and half a dozen cabs were jammed in between the opposing masses of the soldiers and the people. The officer at the head of the column of foot-soldiers loudly urged the crowd to make way, and the latter, consisting chiefly of peaceable but terrified citizens, attempted to draw back, while the weight of those behind pushed them on. Gouache, who was in the front of the throng, was allowed to enter the file of infantry, in virtue of his uniform, and attempted to get through and make his way to the opposite bank. But with the best efforts he soon found himself unable to move, the soldiers being wedged together as tightly as the people. Presently the crowd in the piazza seemed to give way and the column began to advance again, bearing Gouache backwards in the direction he had come. He managed to get to the parapet, however, by edging sideways through the packed ranks.

"Give me your shoulder, comrade!" he shouted to the man next to him. The fellow braced himself, and in an instant the agile Zouave was on the narrow parapet, running along as nimbly as a cat, and winding himself past the huge statues at every half-dozen steps. He jumped down at the other end and ran for the Borgo Santo Spirito at the top of his speed. The broad space was almost deserted and in three minutes he was before the gates of the barracks, which were situated on the right-hand side of the street, just beyond the College of the Penitentiaries and opposite the church of San Spirito in Sassia.

Meanwhile Donna Faustina Monteverchi was alone in the streets. In desperate emergencies young and ner-

vously-organised people most commonly act in accordance with the dictates of the predominant passion by which they are influenced. Very generally that passion is terror, but when it is not, it is almost impossible to calculate the consequences which may follow. When the whole being is dominated by love and by the greatest anxiety for the safety of the person loved, the weakest woman will do deeds which might make a brave man blush for his courage. This was precisely Faustina's case.

If any man says that he understands women he is convicted of folly by his own speech, seeing that they are altogether incomprehensible. Of men, it may be sufficient for general purposes to say with David that they are all liars, even though we allow that they may be all curable of the vice of falsehood. Of women, however, there is no general statement which is true. The one is brave to heroism, the next cowardly in a degree fantastically comic. The one is honest, the other faithless; the one contemptible in her narrowness of soul, the next supremely noble in broad truth as the angels in heaven; the one trustful, the other suspicious; this one gentle as a dove, that one grasping and venomous as a strong serpent. The hearts of women are as the streets of a great town—some broad and straight and clean; some dim and narrow and winding; or as the edifices and buildings of that same city, wherein there are holy temples, at which men worship in calm and peace, and dens where men gamble away the souls given them by God against the living death they call pleasure, which is doled out to them by the devil; in which there are quiet dwellings, and noisy places of public gathering, fair palaces and loathsome charnel-houses, where the dead are heaped together, even as our dead sins lie ghastly and unburied in that dark chamber of the soul, whose gates open of their own selves and shall not be sealed while there is life in us to suffer. Dost thou boast that thou knowest the heart of woman? Go to, thou more than fool! The heart of woman containeth all things, good and evil; and knowest thou then all that is?

Donna Faustina was no angel. She had not that lofty

calmness which we attribute to the angelic character. She was very young, utterly inexperienced and ignorant of the world. The idea which over-towers all other ideas was the first which had taken hold upon her, and under its strength she was like a flower before the wind. She was not naturally of the heroic type either, as Corona d'Astrardente had been, and perhaps was still, capable of sacrifice for the ideal of duty, able to suffer torment rather than debase herself by yielding, strong to stem the torrent of a great passion until she had the right to abandon herself to its mighty flood. Faustina was a younger and a gentler woman, not knowing what she did from the moment her heart began to dictate her actions, willing, above all, to take the suggestion of her soul as a command, and, because she knew no evil, rejoicing in an abandonment which might well have terrified one who knew the world.

She already loved Anastase intensely. Under the circumstances of his farewell, the startling effect of the announcement of a revolution, the necessity under which, as a soldier, he found himself of leaving her instantly in order to face a real danger, with his first kiss warm upon her lips, and with the frightful conviction that if he left her it might be the last—under all the emotions brought about by these things, half mad with love and anxiety, it was not altogether wonderful that she acted as she did. She could not have explained it, for the impulse was so instinctive that she did not comprehend it, and the deed followed so quickly upon the thought that there was no time for reflection. She fled from the room and from the palace, out into the street, wholly unconscious of danger, like a creature in a dream.

The crowd which had impeded Gouache's progress was already thinning when Faustina reached the pavement. She was born and bred in Rome, and as a child, before the convent days, had been taken to walk many a time in the neighbourhood of Saint Peter's. She knew well enough where the Serristori barracks were situated, and turned at once towards Sant' Angelo. There were still many people about, most of them either hurrying in the direction whence the departing uproar still proceeded,

or running homewards to get out of danger. Few noticed her, and for some time no one hindered her progress, though it was a strange sight to see a fair young girl, dressed in the fashion of the time which so completely distinguished her from Roman women of lower station, running at breathless speed through the dusky streets.

Suddenly she lost her way. Coming down the Via de' Coronari she turned too soon to the right and found herself in the confusing byways which form a small labyrinth around the church of San Salvatore in Lauro. She had entered a blind alley on the left when she ran against two men, who unexpectedly emerged from one of those underground wine-shops which are numerous in that neighbourhood. They were talking in low and earnest tones, and one of them staggered backward as the young girl rushed upon him in the dark. Instinctively the man grasped her and held her tightly by the arms.

"Where are you running to, my beauty?" he asked, as she struggled to get away.

"Oh, let me go! let me go!" she cried in agonised tones, twisting her slender wrists in his firm grip. The other man stood by, watching the scene.

"Better let her go, Peppino," he said. "Don't you see she is a lady?"

"A lady, eh?" echoed the other. "Where are you going to, with that angel's face?"

"To the Serristori barrack," answered Faustina, still struggling with all her might.

At this announcement both men laughed loudly and glanced quickly at each other. They seemed to think the answer a very good joke.

"If that is all, you may go, and the devil accompany you. What say you, Gaetano?" Then they laughed again.

"Take that chain and brooch as a *ricordo*—just for a souvenir," said Gaetano, who then himself tore off the ornaments while the other held Faustina's hands.

"You are a pretty girl indeed!" he cried, looking at her pale face in the light of the filthy little red lamp that hung over the low door of the wine-shop. "I never kissed a lady in my life."

With that he grasped her delicate chin in his foul hand and bent down, bringing his grimy face close to hers. But this was too much. Though Faustina had hitherto fought with all her natural strength against the ruffians, there was a reserved force, almost superhuman, in her slight frame, which was suddenly roused by the threatened outrage. With a piercing shriek she sprang backwards and dashed herself free, sending the two blackguards reeling into the darkness. Then, like a flash she was gone. By chance she took the right turning and in a moment more found herself in the Via di Tordinona, just opposite the entrance of the Apollo theatre. The torn white handbills on the wall, and the projecting shed over the doors told her where she was.

By this time the soldiers who had intercepted Gouache's passage across the bridge, as well as the dense crowd, had disappeared, and Faustina ran like the wind along the pavement it had taken the soldier so long to traverse. Like a flitting bird she sped over the broad space beyond and up the Borgo Nuovo, past the long low hospital, wherein the sick and dying lay in their silence, tended by the patient Sisters of Mercy, while all was in excitement without. The young girl ran past the corner. A Zouave was running before her towards the gate of the barrack where a sentinel stood motionless under the lamp, his gray hood drawn over his head and his rifle erect by his shoulder.

At that instant a terrific explosion rent the air, followed a moment later by the dull crash of falling fragments of masonry, and then by a long thundering, rumbling sound, dreadful to hear, which lasted several minutes, as the ruins continued to fall in, heaps upon heaps, sending immense clouds of thick dust up into the night air. Then all was still.

The little piazza before San Spirito in Sassia was half filled with masses of stone and brickwork and crumbling mortar. A young girl lay motionless upon her face at the corner of the hospital, her white hands stretched out towards the man who lay dead but a few feet before her, crushed under a great irregular mound of stones and rubbish. Beneath the central heap where the barracks had stood lay the bodies of the poor Zouaves, deep

buried in wreck of the main building, the greater part of which had fallen across the side street that passes between the Penitenziери and the Serristori. All was still for many minutes, while the soft light streamed from the high windows of the hospital and faintly illuminated some portion of the hideous scene.

Very slowly a few stragglers came in sight, then more, and then by degrees a great dark crowd of awestruck people were collected together and stood afar off, fearing to come near, lest the ruins should still continue falling. Presently the door of the hospital opened and a party of men in gray blouses, headed by three or four gentlemen in black coats — one indeed was in his shirt sleeves — emerged into the silent street and went straight towards the scene of the disaster. They carried lanterns and a couple of stretchers such as are used for bearing the wounded. It chanced that the straight line they followed from the door did not lead them to where the girl was lying, and it was not until after a long and nearly fruitless search that they turned back. Two soldiers only, and both dead, could they find to bring back. The rest were buried far beneath, and it would be the work of many hours to extricate the bodies, even with a large force of men.

As the little procession turned sadly back, they found that the crowd had advanced cautiously forward and now filled the street. In the foremost rank a little circle stood about a dark object that lay on the ground, curious, but too timid to touch it.

"Signor Professore," said one man in a low voice, "there is a dead woman."

The physicians came forward and bent over the body. One of them shook his head, as the bright light of the lantern fell on her face while he raised the girl from the ground.

"She is a lady," said one of the others in a low voice.

The men brought a stretcher and lifted the girl's body gently from the ground, scarcely daring to touch her, and gazing anxiously but yet in wonder at the white face.

When she was laid upon the coarse canvas there was a moment's pause. The crowd pressed closely about the hospital men, and the yellow light of the lanterns was

reflected on many strange faces, all bent eagerly forward and down to get a last sight of the dead girl's features.

"Andiamo," said one of the physicians in a quiet sad voice. The bearers took up the dead Zouaves again, the procession of death entered the gates of the hospital, and the heavy doors closed behind like the portals of a tomb.

The crowd closed again and pressed forward to the ruins. A few gendarmes had come up, and very soon a party of labourers was at work clearing away the lighter rubbish under the lurid glare of pitch torches stuck into the crevices and cracks of the rent walls. The devilish deed was done, but by a providential accident its consequences had been less awful than might have been anticipated. Only one-third of the mine had actually exploded, and only thirty Zouaves were at the time within the building.

"Did you see her face, Gaetano?" asked a rough fellow of his companion. They stood together in a dark corner a little aloof from the throng of people.

"No, but it must have been she. I am glad I have not that sin on my soul."

"You are a fool, Gaetano. What is a girl to a couple of hundred soldiers? Besides, if you had held her tight she would not have got here in time to be killed."

"Eh—but a girl! The other vagabonds at least, we have despatched in a good cause. Viva la libertà!"

"Hush! There are the gendarmes! This way!"

So they disappeared into the darkness whence they had come.

It was not only in the Borgo Nuovo that there was confusion and consternation. The first signal for the outbreak had been given in the Piazza Colonna, where bombs had been exploded. Attacks were made upon the prisons by bands of those sinister-looking, unknown men, who for several days had been noticed in various parts of the city. A compact mob invaded the capitol, armed with better weapons than mobs generally find ready to their hands. At the Porta San Paolo, which was rightly judged to be one of the weakest points of the city, a furious attack was made from without by a band of Garibaldians who had crept up near the walls in various dis-

guises during the last two days. More than one of the barracks within the city were assaulted simultaneously, and for a short time companies of men paraded the streets, shouting their cries of "Viva Garibaldi, Viva la libertà!" A few cried "Viva Vittorio!" and "Viva l'Italia!" But a calm observer—and there were many such in Rome that night—could easily see that the demonstration was rather in favour of an anarchic republic than of the Italian monarchy. On the whole, the population showed no sympathy with the insurrection. It is enough to say that this tiny revolution broke out at dusk and was entirely quelled before nine o'clock of the same evening. The attempts made were bold and desperate in many cases, but were supported by a small body of men only, the populace taking no active part in what was done. Had a real sympathy existed between the lower classes of Romans and the Garibaldians the result could not have been doubtful, for the vigour and energy displayed by the rioters would inevitably have attracted any similarly disposed crowd to join in a fray, when the weight of a few hundreds more would have turned the scale at any point. There was not a French soldier in the city at the time, and of the Zouaves and native troops a very large part were employed upon the frontier. Rome was saved and restored to order by a handful of soldiers, who were obliged to act at many points simultaneously, and the insignificance of the original movement may be determined from this fact.

It is true that of the two infernal schemes, plotted at once to destroy the troops in a body and to strike terror into the inhabitants, one failed in part and the other altogether. If the whole of the gunpowder which Giuseppe Monti and Gaetano Tognetti had placed in the mine under the Serristori barracks had exploded, instead of only one-third of the quantity, a considerable part of the Borgo Nuovo would have been destroyed; and even the disaster which actually occurred would have killed many hundreds of Zouaves if these had chanced to be indoors at the time. But it is impossible to calculate the damage and loss of life which would have been recorded had the castle of Sant' Angelo and the adjacent fortifications been blown into the air. A huge mine had