

"No. It is absolutely certain. The original documents are in this house."

"I am glad then, for you, dear," answered Corona. "It would have been very hard for you to bear——"

"After this morning? After the other day in Holy Office?" asked Giovanni, looking deep into her splendid eyes. "Can anything be hard to bear if you love me, darling?"

"Oh my beloved! I wanted to hear you say it!" Her head sank upon his shoulder, as though she had found that perfect rest for which she had once so longed.

Here ends the second act in the history of the Saracinesca. To trace their story further would be to enter upon an entirely different series of events, less unusual perhaps in themselves, but possibly worthy of description as embracing that period during which Rome and the Romans began to be transformed and modernised. In the occurrences that followed, both political and social, the Saracinesca bore a part, in that blaze of gaiety which for many reasons developed during the winter of the Œcumenical Council, in the fall of the temporal power, in the social confusion that succeeded that long-expected catastrophe, and which led by rapid degrees to the present state of things. If there are any left who still feel an interest in Giovanni and Corona, the historian may once more resume his task and set forth in succession the circumstances through which they have passed since that memorable morning they spent at the Palazzo Montevarchi. They themselves are facts, and, as such, are a part of the century in which we live; whether they are interesting facts or not, is for others to judge, and if the verdict denounces them as flat, unprofitable and altogether dull, it is not their fault; the blame must be imputed to him who, knowing them well, has failed in an honest attempt to show them as they are.

THE END.

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