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UNDER PRESSURE



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85 SCENES FROM ROMAN LIFE

# UNDER PRESSURE

BY

THE MARCHESA THEODOLI

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TO

F. MARION CRAWFORD.

*THIS my first attempt to describe some of the customs, prejudices, and virtues still subsisting in a portion of Roman society to which I belong by marriage and earliest associations, I wish to dedicate to you.*

*May it be a grateful tribute to your friendly incitement to write, and to your assurances that my modest essay was not deprived of interest.*

LILY THEODOLI.

PALAZZO THEODOLI,

ROME, April 5, 1892.

## CHAPTER I

AT eight o'clock in the morning, the vast, cold, frescoed hall of the Palazzo Astalli was almost destitute of its usual occupants, consisting of two dignified butlers in black, and several body-servants, footmen and coachmen in green liveries.

Besides these, a whole swarm of elderly dependants of the princely family, who had retired after thirty years of faithful and active service, with their well-deserved pensions, retained the rightful and honourable privilege of returning daily to the field of their past exploits, there to enjoy in unmolested peace a few hours of rest and conversation with the younger servants who had superseded them.