THE FAVORITE

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POOR AND RICH.

In a shattered old garret scarce roofed from the sky,
Near a window that shakes as the wind hurries by,
Without curtain to hinder the golden sunshine,
Which reminds me of riches that never were mine—
I recline on a chair that is broken and old,
And enwrap my chill'd limbs—now so aged and cold,
'Neath the shabby old coat; with the buttons all torn,
While I think of my youth that Time's footprints have worn,
And the dreams and the hopes that are dead with the dead.

But the cracked plastered walls are emblazoned and bright
With the dear, blessed beams of the day's welcome light.
My old coat's a king's robe, my old chair a throne,
And my thoughts are my courtiers that no king could own;
For the truths that they tell as they whisper to me,
Are the echoes of pleasure that once used to be,
The glad throbbing of hearts that have now ceased to feel,
And the treasures of passions that time cannot steal;
So, although I know well that my life is near spent,
Though I'll die without sorrow, I live with content.

Though my children's soft voices no music now lend;
Without wife's sweet embraces, or glance of a friend;
Yet my soul sees them still as it peoples the air
With the spirits that crowd round my old broken chair.
If no wealth I have hoarded to trouble mine ease,
I admit that I doted on gems rich as these;
And when death snatched the casket that held each fair prize,
It flew to my heart where it happily lies;
So, 'tis there that the utt'rings of love now are said
By those dear ones, whom all but myself fancy dead.

So, though fetid the air of my poor room may be,
It has still all the odors of Eden for me,
For my Eve wanders here, and my cherubs here sing,
As though tempting my spirit like theirs to take wing,
Though my pillow be hard, where so well could I rest
As on that on which Amy's fair head has been pressed?
So let riches and honors feed Mammon's vain heart;
From my shattered old lodging I'll not wish to part,
And no coat shall I need save the one I've long worn,
Till the last thread be snapped, and the last rent be torn.

—*Chambers' Journal.*

FEUDAL TIMES;

OR,

TWO SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE.

A Romance of Daring and Adventure.

(Translated especially for the FAVORITE from the French of Paul Duplessis.)

CHAPTER XVII.

IN PRESENCE OF THE TIGER.

Captain de Maurevert was endowed with a character much too positive to attach the least importance to the exceptionally glorious reception given him. He gravely returned the military salute of the soldiers sent to meet him, and silently and thoughtfully continued to advance at a slow trot.

WHILE DE MAUREVERT WAS STILL SPEAKING, RAOUL SPRANG TO HIS FEET, AND THREW HIS ARMS ABOUT THE CAPTAIN'S NECK.

"It is incontestable," he said to himself, "that I am in all respects worthy of the honors rendered to me. Ah!—now there is a flourish of trumpets! Very good!—but, taking the marquis's character into account, I should prefer my arrival to be a little less noisily celebrated. From all these elegant civilities there exhales a perfume of treason, or of irony, that does not in the least please me. He is going to play fast and loose, I see. Very well, that is a game at which two can play."

After traversing the outer works, of which we have given a description, the captain, still followed by his temporary squire, the faithful Lehardy, entered the château. He first passed over a narrow bridge, the arches of which were surmounted by two gates, each defended by a drawbridge; then he passed through a long vaulted passage, into which opened two guard-rooms, and divided by five doors. At length he entered the interior courtyard.

In this courtyard, bounded on one side by the massive tower of which we have spoken, and on the other by buildings serving for the habitation of the marquis and the servants specially attached to his person, a large flight of stone steps were noticeable. It was at the foot of these stairs that the captain and Lehardy dismounted.

"My friend," he said to Lehardy, in the tone of a protector, "I authorize you during my absence to get yourself served with the best wine in the château." This said, he threw his bridle to one of the men-at-arms, and mounted the stairs to the first floor, where, preceded by a guard of honor, he entered the reception-hall.

This hall, about forty-five feet long by twenty-three, was remarkable on more than one account. It was furnished with almost inconceivable luxury—such richness, indeed, as was rarely seen in the seigneurial mansions of the province at that period.

Ten enormous windows gave admission to a flood of light. Two immense chimnies, ornamented with admirably-carved mantelpieces, were built in the thickness of the wall; on either side were recesses with consoles, and raised dais containing finely-sculptured mythological statues.

In the middle of the hall stood a kind of throne, or chair of state, on which the marquis seated himself when he dispensed justice or received the homage of his vassals. Massive benches of skillfully-carved oak occupied the spaces between the embrasures of the windows, and stools were placed without order throughout the vast room for the use of visitors of rank.

Between the two chimnies already mentioned there was a small door, hidden in the wainscoat, opening into a room contrived in the thickness of the wall; this was the marquis's private room, or *boudoir*. A narrow spiral staircase, by the help of secret mechanism, permitted communication from the room to all parts of the château.

Soon after De Maurevert had been introduced into the reception-hall, the Marquis de la Tremblais entered. On a sign from him the men-at-arms retired, and left him alone with De Maurevert.

The marquis was dressed in black velvet. A dagger hung from his girdle; his look was haughty and severe. It was he who opened the conversation. De Maurevert, quite prepared for the encounter, was not sorry to see his adversary begin the action.

"Captain," the marquis said, "under pretext of having important communications to make to me, you have appealed to my kindness for an interview. I am quite ready to hear what you have to say."

"Monsieur le Marquis," replied De Maurevert slowly, taking great precaution not to risk any expression from which his adversary could draw an advantage, "it will grieve me inexpressibly to hurt your susceptibility, but it is impossible for me to accept a discussion on the footing on which you now placed me. I have not begged an audience but simply demanded an interview; this distinction, which I feel bound to establish, is of extreme importance. Audience implies superiority or power on the one side—obedience and inferiority on the other. Now we are both gentlemen—equals. I should be also justified in taking exception to the word 'pretext,' which seems to me to have, somehow, got out of its place in your first sentence; but, there!—I am not captious, and detest hair-splitting. I let the word 'pretext' pass, therefore."

"Let it be 'interview,' then," said the marquis, coldly; "and come, I beg, to the grave communications promised."

"Permit me, marquis, beforehand, to call your attention to the fact that, in the Captain de Maurevert here present, you are to see, not the Generalissimo of the League of Equity, but the servant of Messeigneurs de Guise."

"The distinction is of small consequence, monsieur."

"On the contrary, it is of much importance. If the inclination should come upon you—which, knowing the amenity of your character, I can hardly conceive—of maligning the Generalissimo of the Army of the League of Equity, it is unquestionable that your violence would go unpunished. The peasants under my command, deprived of my guidance, would be incapable of avenging me; while Messeigneurs de Guise,"—

"Well—what would Messeigneurs de Guise do?" interrupted the marquis, with contemptuous *hauteur*.

"Messeigneurs de Guise, Monsieur le Marquis—perhaps I am wrong to commit this indiscretion—strongly desire, for reasons known to me, to possess a strong fortress in the province of Auvergne. The Château de la Tremblais, for example, would suit their purpose in all respects. They would exhibit the most extreme anger at any violence done to their servant. They would immediately commence the campaign, and without hesitation besiege—with the assent and authorization of the king—your Château de la Tremblais. Now, Monsieur le Marquis, as Messeigneurs de Guise are invincibly headstrong, be sure of it, they would end by carrying your fortress by assault. I confess—for it grieves me to hurt your self-love—that this undertaking would be extremely unpleasant to them; but, nevertheless, they would assuredly carry it through to a successful and glorious conclusion. That, Monsieur le Marquis, is what Messeigneurs de Guise would do."

De Maurevert paused for a second, then went on:

"Let me beg of you, Monsieur le Marquis," he said, with an appearance of embarrassment, "not for a moment to suspect that Messeigneurs de Guise have sent me to you for the secret purpose of seeking a quarrel—of compromising you with them; in short, of furnishing them with a plausible pretext for attacking you. Such an office would not consort with either the straightforwardness or loyalty of my character."

At these words, spoken with an air of constraint, the marquis started, and fixed a searching look on De Maurevert. The captain appeared greatly distressed at this examination, and cast his eyes down.

"Ah," thought the marquis, "this rascal is wanting both in address and prudence. In trying to put my suspicions to sleep by a false semblance of frankness, he has allowed me to see his game. Messieurs de Guise have chosen a clumsy emissary."

"*Parbleu!*" said De Maurevert to himself, "my *ruse* has succeeded. The devil wring my neck if De la Tremblais will not now show the greatest regard for me! By Plutus! there may be something to be made out of his error. We will see."

"Captain," replied the marquis presently, with an affable air, "your conversation gives me infinite pleasure. But is it not time to come to the subject which has given me the honor of your presence?"

"I am at your disposal, marquis. To plunge into the matter at once, I come to demand of you the liberation of the Chevalier Raoul Sforzi, unjustly imprisoned in the dungeons of la Tremblais."

On hearing this audacious speech, the marquis turned pale, and replied, in a voice trembling with rage:

"Death!—captain, take care! You must be mad out of benevolence to place your head between the axe and the block! Keep clear of that subject!"

"That is as much as to say, Monsieur le Marquis," replied De Maurevert, nonchalantly