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HOME, AND A SISTER.

BY F. SCARLETT POTTER.

The same bright uplands, and the same dark trees,
The same grey turrets breaking the still blue
The same long windings of the stream he sees
With all he know

In boyhood; the same playmate at his side,
Who eyes him greedily, as one above
All that a rich world boasts of, in her pride
And sister's love.

She pours her simple babble in his ear,
No grace of subtle fantasies she brings,
But homely gossip of the country near,
Familiar things.

On his tired heart, sick from hot life among
The crush of men, and revel in the halls
Of Venice, soothingly from her mild tongue
Each accent falls.

He takes delight of beauty that can bring
No touch of after-sorrow to the heart;
Of kisses that no burning leave, no sting,
No after-smart.

He will go forth, not less a man with men,
Will be for having known of this cause
Nor stand in battle with the Turk again
Less firm than this.

Not less but more. As one through the hoary
Journeying, comes where deep-shaded waters
lie,
And resting for a while, takes his way
Refresh'd thereby,

So he, for this cool resting-place of home,
Of whose pure fountain he has paused to taste,
With stronger footsteps shall pace forth to roam
Through life's wide waste.

FEUDAL TIMES;

OR,

TWO SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE.

A Romance of Daring and Adventure.

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

SUMMARY OF THE EARLIER CHAPTERS.

The date of the story is 1581, during the reign of Henry III. of France.

A cloud of mystery hangs over the birth of the Chevalier Sforzi, who, stabbed and deserted in his infancy, has been discovered by a band of free-lances passing through Auvergne, and carried into Italy, where he has been reared by an accomplished and charitable gentleman, whose name he bears in default of one more legitimately his own. On the death of his benefactor, he has returned to Auvergne in the hope of being able to trace his parentage, having reason to believe that he is the offspring of a noble house.

Almost on the day of his arrival in Auvergne, under strikingly romantic and picturesque circumstances, he makes acquaintance with an adventurer of noble lineage, singularly marked character, and bearing the sounding name of Captain Roland de Maurevert. Happily succeeding in vanquishing the captain, in a duel, the adventures of a moment before become fast friends, and enter into an engagement or companionship in arms which is to last for twelve months, during which time each binds himself to set in behalf of the other's interest at the sole dictation of honor, and absolutely without selfish regard to consequences.

The village in which this compact is made is within the jurisdiction of the Marquis de la Tremblais, who represents the type of a feudal tyrant—the scourge and terror of all coming within the range of his lawless power. Espousing the cause of a noble lady infamously oppressed by the marquis, the chevalier incurs the deadly



"MARIE."

CHAPTER XXIX.

A MYSTERIOUS RENDEZ-VOUS.

This time the captain was not content to wait for him on the threshold of the hostelry, but came forward to meet him.

"My dear friend," he cried, embracing him warmly, "I bring you excellent news. By the memory of that discreet and pleasant rascal, Diogenes—the proverb, 'to the innocent good comes by handfuls,' is coming to the proof in your case."

"Have you received news of Diane?" cried Sforzi.

"Mademoiselle d'Erianges!—what the devil!—there's a time for everything! If you find her again, you can love her again, but you have something else to think of now. During your absence, a valet, disguised as a citizen, has been here inquiring about you. I instantly saw through the stratagem, and set to work to get on his blind side. I treated him, and I will do him the justice to say that the rascal behaved himself most gallantly. He was proof against all my pumping, and he drank all the wine I plied him without getting the least tipsy. However, I gathered from one or two words he let slip, that his mistress is one of the most exalted and most virtuous ladies in the kingdom. She must be extremely rich, besides, for the discretion of a valet has to be paid for at an exorbitant price, and this rascal of hers would have stoically allowed his brains to be knocked out without blabbing a word of his secret. Here is a note left by the said rascal for you. Will you please to inform me as to its contents?—for, knowing so little of love affairs as you do, you will now

require more experience and tact than you have at command to save you from committing some egregious blunder."

"Captain," replied Raoul, severely, "if you attach the least value to my friendship, never again, I beg, allow yourself to speak with irreverence on the subject of Mademoiselle d'Erianges! As to this letter, you are welcome to read its entire contents."

"Just as you wish," said De Maurevert. "I am far from disputing the merit of Mademoiselle d'Erianges. I remember, indeed, having once, for a moment, felt an affection for her myself."

After making this concession to the chevalier's love, the captain hastened to unseal the letter brought by the disguised valet. The miscellany ran as follows:

"Monsieur le Chevalier, at nine o'clock to-night, a man will present himself at the door of your hostelry, and accost you with the words 'Guiso and Italy.' If—which I do not doubt—you have courage, you will allow this man to blindfold and conduct you. I admired your pride this morning; I shall this evening be happy to do justice to your courage."

"Well, chevalier," demanded De Maurevert, after reading this letter, "what do you think of it? It is either the declaration of a snare. It comes either from the beautiful blonde, or from D'Epéron. What do you intend to do?"

"I shall go, for it concerns the happiness of Diane," replied Raoul, somewhat embarrassed.

"Nothing ventured nothing won, that is certain," replied De Maurevert; "and then, as you so judiciously observe, it concerns the happiness of Diane. Besides—I shall be there."

De Maurevert's eyes at that moment rested on the gold chain of the reliquary given to the chevalier by Mademoiselle d'Assy.

"Ah, ha!" he muttered, in a gay tone, "my dear companion, so rigid this morning, has very quickly changed his way of looking at things. *Tudieu!*—a pretty chain—worth from one hundred and ten to one hundred and twenty crowns! Ah, ha, ha!—Master Raoul, where Joseph left his cloak, you carry off a chain of gold! *Pardieu!*—I think the comparison is not in favor of Joseph!"

The strangest and most tragic adventures were so frequent in the sixteenth century as not even in the least to arouse public curiosity. The innumerable Italian intriguers, who, seeking to employ to their advantage the power of Catherine de Medici, their countrywoman, had fallen like a shower of locusts on France, had metamorphosed old Paris into a new Venice. The alleys were filled with terrible mysteries.

The contents of the letter received by Sforzi, therefore, astonished neither the young man nor De Maurevert.

At eight o'clock precisely the captain, having finished his supper, moved from the table the stool on which he was seated, and addressing himself to Raoul, said:

"My dear friend, the more I reflect on your rendez-vous, the less uneasy I become. D'Epéron is too cunning to try to trap you on the very day you handled him so roughly. What is infinitely more likely, is that you have captivated the heart of the unknown with the golden locks. Now, trust to my experience in such affairs, Raoul. If you let her see at once that you are too much taken with her!"

"Captain," interrupted Sforzi, "you strangely mistake my intentions. If I have accepted the rendez-vous, it is solely for the purpose of obtaining powerful protection, and in the hope of being enabled to come to the aid of Diane. When one's sole fortune and inheritance is one's honour, one should at least preserve that with care."

De Maurevert received this decisive profession of faith with an impatient shrug. He was about to reply, when his eyes once more rested on the gold chain which mademoiselle had hung about the chevalier's neck. His features expanded, and a mocking smile played about his lips.

"Dear Raoul," he said to himself, "is discretion personified! I will not put him out of temper; one is bound to deal gently with the little failings of one's friends. The important point is that this evening's rendez-vous should result in some substantial gain."

"My dear companion," he went on, addressing Raoul, "since my advice is displeasing to you, I will leave you to your own inspirations. I have myself a certain affair of some importance to attend to this evening. I will only wish you good luck."

De Maurevert rose, put on his sword, placed a pair of pistols in his pockets, threw his cloak over his shoulders, and then went out.