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THIODOLF THE ICELANDER.

BY BARON DE LA MOTTE POUQUE. CHAPTER XXXVI.

In the meanwhile all the Væringers had assembled, and kindly grasping of hands, and touching of shields and swords, had passed again and again between them and the followers of Thiodolf.

How is it called, that royal tree. With verdant, glittering boughs, That steers the path of victory. And wreathes the conqueror's brows?

O linden-tree, thou shinest fair, The first of noble trees; Thy branches court the summer air, And wave before the breeze.

High words, bold youth, of sounding breath, The linden wand from thee; And yet thou standest here beneath A far more noble tree.

These groves, with princely canopy. Shut out the noontide rays; But, ah! their name is strange to me, And strange to northern lays.

Fair laurel! ever fresh and green, Whose bright leaves never fall— Hero Helmfrid's glittering spear was seen: Hail to the laurel! hail!

And thou, my shield! well proved to stand The stroke of foeman's blade— A hero gave thee to my hand Beneath the laurel-shade.

I loosed that golden shield so true From off a linden-tree; Then hail unto the linden tree; And, laurel, hail to thee!

Ye children of our home beloved! Ye noble trees, so high and strong, Whose grateful shade we oft have proved, For ever live in minstrel-song!

Ye lofty stems that court the breeze, And spread abroad your leafy boughs; Ye joyous, brilliant laurel-trees, For ever wreath our victor-brow!

Verdant laurel—linden fair— Both together twine our hair; Both together shower down A never-fading hero-crown!

North? They have now known us Væringers for many and eventful years; I will answer for it they will receive thee as becometh a hero.

"Is he not one of the mightiest warriors in all the world?" asked Thiodolf. "No," answered Helmfrid, "I cannot boast that of him. He has, indeed, seen few other fights than such as are held before him for his entertainment on great occasions.

"In truth," said Thiodolf, "such a lord must be a very mighty giant; and I think so to be- seem myself towards him that he will be satisfied with me."

"Thou shalt also throw many a spear for him and give many a sword-thrust for him," said Helmfrid. The youth shook joyfully Throng-piercer's silver hilt, and the old man asked him, with a smile:

"Dost thou yet wish to turn back from that bright capital?" "Turn back?" replied Thiodolf with displeasure; "that never has been, and never will be, my way.

The old hero looked at his pupil with great delight. The ships drew to land amidst the loud cries of joy of the people. Helmfrid, quickly springing to the shore, ordered a letter to be brought for Malgerita; and the sorrowing mother, sadly veiling her eyes at the laughing faces of the children, was carried, by her own desire, under Pietro's care, away from the tumult into a quiet, retired dwelling.

But Helmfrid caused to be brought to him a fiery coal-black Arab horse, who joyfully reared up beneath the youth, and seemed to take pleasure in having a rider who could so strongly master him.

As they now rode through the streets to the sound of joyous trumpets, many flowers and wreaths flew down from the balconies out of the hands of fair women.

On one side was seen the church of St. Sophia, on the other the Hippodrome. Now to this, now to that, would Thiodolf turn his horse, alternately attracted by the noble and dazzling richness of both the brilliant buildings.

Having dismounted from their horses, they entered the court, which was perfumed with sweet-smelling shrubs, and cooled with fountains, and went up stairs of colored marble, with gilt balustrades.

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the tall unknown youth who walked beside him Thiodolf might have taken many of them for the emperor, but the calm, noble pride of his disposition made him not over hasty with his salutations, and he reached at length the chamber where the emperor awaited his renowned general, in great wonder, it is true, but with the loftiest and most befitting demeanor.

Around the brilliant throne there stood a train of many attendants and officers, all in such dazzling attire that Thiodolf at first could understand nothing clearly, and he imitated the greetings of his leader without seeing him who received it.

"But afterwards?" asked Thiodolf, still commanding his gestures and voice. "You need not be wrath with me," answered Glykomedon, "but I have lured her from out your hands.

In the midst of these and like thoughts he hardly heard what Helmfrid said in praise and commendation of him. But when the emperor signed to him to come nearer, he went forward with pleased alacrity, and answered to the question of whether he would serve the emperor among the Væringers:

"Mighty lord and emperor, that is a gigantic chariot which you have to manage, and I wonder where you can find as many noble and obedient horses as you must need.

The emperor bent his head with a kind smile, and desired the Væringier chief to receive the young hero and his troop into his company. But Thiodolf had neither eye nor ear for what was further arranged either with Helmfrid or with other noble state-officers, for his look was fixed on a youth who had caught his eye as he stood near the emperor, arrayed in a brilliant dress, and treated by many with reverent attention.

That very Glykomedon, whom he had seen in the chestnut-forest between Marseilles and the great baron's castle, stood assuredly before him, shining in all the light of court-favor, and of the respect ever paid by courtiers to favourites.

The emperor had left the presenco-chamber; princes, knights, and courtiers, walked through the ornamented halls, exchanging courteous words; many of them were drawn by the fragrant air from the garden, and a cool breeze, into an open gallery, which, from almost a dizzy height, gave a view over grottoes and fish-ponds, woods and meadows, far beyond the city, out upon the glittering sea.

Thiodolf was reminded of the vaulted way which led from the great baron's castle to the park, and although everything here was infinitely more splendid and magnificent, yet a longing for that beloved spot arose in his bosom.

"We have met before!" said Thiodolf; and the dainty merchant-prince was forced to close his eyes for an instant at the angry glow which shone in the blue eyes of the North.

"Ay, truly, worthy Sir, we have met before; but alas, for too short a time. At first you were seated rather too high up in the chestnut-tree for me to treat you with becoming courtesy, and afterwards you ran off rather too rapidly in an opposite direction, while I passed on with a certain fair lady to the port of Marseilles."

"You have probably taken her back to her father?" asked Thiodolf, calmly. "That have I done as little as you would have done, had she chosen to go with you rather than me."

Thiodolf's eyes flashed more wildly, but otherwise he appeared perfectly calm. "Good Sir," he went on to Glykomedon, "how did you take her to your ship? For I should think violence would not be suffered in the port of Marseilles, at least not from you."

"That was as it pleased me!" answered Glykomedon, haughtily. "But, young Sir, you make my task an easy one. What had I more to do than to tell her that the angry Iclander had levelled her father's castle to the ground, and was already destroying and burning a part of Marseilles in pursuit of his lost and beautiful prey?

"You need not—in truth you know not!" muttered Thiodolf, through his fast-shut teeth. "Now, then, thou miserable, empty man, I believe thee in this, for it is like the rest of thee, but so much less is it needful that the joys of heaven should be longer polluted by the breath of one like thee."

A long death-like stillness and horror followed the daring and fearful deed. Thiodolf, certain that this would be succeeded by a storm all the more wild, and that the crowd—win now, as if spell-bound, fixed their eyes on him—would in a few minutes break loose to take revenge, drew his helmet more firmly on, grasped his spear more tightly, and held his shield before his breast with cautious strength.

The emperor himself said that to me," answered the youth, thoughtfully, "it might be that I would give them up, and it might also be that I would not. But now it is very different; for you, my good, sir-messenger, although you may be a very brave man, have ventured much too far in this business.

"Then it must be done," answered the captain. "Forward, soldiers! and, if it be possible, bring him alive to the emperor!"

A hollow laugh from Thiodolf appeared to make the troop shudder, but on all sides the half-circle drew closer in. The Berserker rage flashed from the youth's eyes. He brandished his spear.

Then suddenly Helmfrid appeared in the midst. "I will take him to the emperor," he said, turning to the captain; adding, with a voice of command, "Lower your spears! march!"

"As I said," replied Helmfrid, "to the emperor; perchance to a judgment of death." "I shall keep my arms?" "Yes, if thou give thy word to injure no servant of the emperor with them."

In one of the halls they passed the bloody, crushed body of Glykomedon, which had been brought from the palace-garden, and lay there previous to its interment. It seemed as though even Helmfrid had his eyes with horror from the disfigured corpse; but Thiodolf looked firmly at it, saying, "The fellow has had his just due."

mixture of displeasure and astonishment. But soon he turned away from him, made a sign to the Væringier chief to approach, and spoke with him and the other counsellors apart in an opposite corner of the room, but earnestly, and often warmly.

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They entered the innermost chamber; the emperor was standing with a few of his counsellors and he looked at the young Iclander with a