

MADAME MAUREVERT

VOL. II.—No. 3.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, JULY 26, 1873.

PRICE { FIVE CENTS,
OR SIX CENTS, U. S. C.

REST.

BY CHRISTIAN G. ROSSETTI.

O earth, lie heavily upon her eyes;
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching,
Earth;
Lie close around her; leave no room for
mirth
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs,
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
Hushed in and curtained with a blessed death
Of all that irked her from the hour of birth;
With stillness that is almost Paradise,
Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her,
Silence more musical than any song;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir;
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
And when she wakes she will not think it long.

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 XXXVIII.

ESCAPE FROM THRALDOM.

While de Maurevert was acquitting himself in a manner so brilliant, and, above all, so proactively, in the commission to Marie, confided to him by Raoul, the chevalier paced the floor of his chamber with irregular steps, endeavoring to reduce his feverish state of mind to order. "Is it possible," he asked himself, "that I can have suffered myself to be captivated by the seduction of Marie? This woman is beautiful, admirably beautiful, it is true; but why have I not sooner seen that this seductive envelope hides a vitiated soul, a guileful heart? Ah! if Diane should ever know to what an extent I have outraged her memory, how she will despise me! By what explanation shall I ever be able to obliterate from my own mind the enormity of my offence? My remorse, by showing me the whole extent of my baseness, renders Diane still more dear to me. How superior she is to Marie! In Diane, courage has its source only in the sentiment of duty; Marie, on the contrary, exercises her audacity only at the impulse of her caprice. Diane represents the spirit of Good, Marie the spirit of Evil!—the one is an angel, the other a demon. Wretch that I am, it was with eyes fixed on heaven that I was allowing myself to fall into the bottomless pit!"

His excitement was still at its height when a knock at the door of his chamber attracted his attention. It was the landlord, who brought him a letter. As soon as that individual had left the room, he nervously broke the seal. The missive was from Marie.

The mysterious young woman begged him to come to her without delay, as she had a serious communication to make to him and an important service to ask of him. Raoul hesitated; to obey this invitation was, he felt, to cast himself deeper than ever into the gulph from which he wished, at any cost, to extricate himself; it was to go into battle unarmed.

"Yes, I will go," he said, at length, "for my fears are more injurious to Diane than my passing infidelity has been. The respect I owe to Mademoiselle d'Erlanges forbids my preserving to her my heart by a shameful flight from temptation. It is victorious and triumphant that I must cast myself at her feet, or not at all."

Before going out, and in spite of his hostile intentions, the chevalier dressed himself with the most scrupulous care. Half an hour later he knocked at the door of the solitary house on the Marché-aux-Chevaux, hardly twenty minutes after the Marquis de la Tremblais had taken his departure thence.

Though it was still broad daylight—five o'clock was about striking—it was in a room hung with black, and tenderly lit by a lamp veiled with gauze—the same room into which he had been introduced on his first visit—that Marie received the chevalier. Sforzi bowed ceremoniously to the unknown, and waited with a cold and severe air until she should address him.

Whether it was that Marie observed the attitude—so aggressive, or, at least, so defensive—taken by the chevalier, or whether, excited by what had passed between herself and the Marquis, she wished to strike a decisive blow, it was



"THE FLOWERS SHE FLINGS AWAY."—SEE PAGE 36.

with a perfectly enchanting look that she opened the conversation.

"Monsieur Sforzi," she said, "if, carried away by the impulsion of a vivacity stronger than my reason, I suffered myself unreflectingly to wound your sensitiveness by sending you a souvenir of friendship, I now see my error and hasten to repair it. I ought—before following the custom universally received at the Court of France—to have divined and respected your exaggerated susceptibility. The ambassador you sent to me, Monsieur de Maurevert, brought me the expression of your grave discontent. I trust, chevalier, that, with your justice and knowledge of life, you will deem sufficient the explanations I now give you."

The air, half serious and confused, half pleasant and embarrassed, with which Marie pronounced these words, contrasting so remarkably with her ordinary manner, indicated clearly how much this explanation cost her pride. Sforzi, somewhat fortified as he was against her seductions, could not resist a feeling of vanity. He felt that what Marie had now done for him she would not have done for any other person.

"Madame," he replied, with a slight tremor in the tone of his voice, "I humbly thank you for your explanation, and I see that my susceptibility has exhibited itself in very ill taste. But, as you so judiciously remarked, when I had first the honor to visit you, I am but a poor provincial gentleman, very awkward, and altogether out of place in the neighborhood of the Court, and worthy only to taste the common-place joys of a peaceful marriage. It is for me, therefore, to beg you to accept my most humble apologies."

"Monsieur Sforzi," said Marie after a brief pause, "am I to attribute to irony or to lack of

spirit, the allusion you have made to certain words spoken by me during our first interview? If, in the first instance, I hurt your self-love, by offering to your ambition a vulgar and limited perspective, it was but the better afterwards to excite your emulation and awaken your pride."

"Madame," replied Sforzi, "you attach to my words a sense I had not intended to give to them. I spoke neither in irony nor in discouragement, but simply expressed my tastes and hopes. I repeat, madame, that I do not feel drawn either towards the splendours or the struggles of the Court. My dream of the future is concentrated in the tranquil mediocrity to which you have counselled me to attach myself. The love of a princess would destroy my independence, my instincts of liberty; for a princess can love only a slave."

"What if I told you that I love you, Raoul!" cried Marie with so much impetuosity that the strangeness of the avowal was put out of sight by its bold audacity.

The chevalier's heart bounded in his bosom, his blood boiled in his veins, and a bewildering cloud passed before his eyes; but at length he was able to master his emotion, and to reply firmly:

"Madame, what is the use of mocking my credulity, of playing with my weakness? I love with all my soul a noble and angelic girl—a chaste and adorable creature! Would it not be cruelty in you, for the mere purpose of amusing an idle hour, to bring trouble into my heart?"

"Sforzi," interrupted the unknown, vehemently, "I am too high in rank, and you have too proud a spirit, for us to descend to falsehood! Let us treat as equals—with faces unmasked. Deception is only for the weak! Let us be frank,

then, since we are strong. Chevalier Sforzi, is your love for Diane d'Erlanges serious—real? or is it one of those ephemeral passions, one of those youthful errors, of which reason quickly cures us?"

At the name of Diane, the chevalier's emotion was calmed as by enchantment; it was the drop of iced water falling on to the boiling lava and changing it into a cold stone.

"Madame," he cried, "I am ignorant by what means you have become mistress of my secret; but it is better thus. I can now the more easily speak with perfect frankness. Yes, madame, I love Mademoiselle d'Erlanges with all my strength; my love for her will not finish even with my life, for my soul will take its flight with hers to heaven. Nothing, madame, be assured nothing—neither the prospect of the most brilliant future nor the certainty of a frightful catastrophe, could make me renounce Mademoiselle d'Erlanges!"

"Though I am still young, I have already suffered much, which means also that I have lived much. I am not the foolish provincial nor the inexperienced gentleman you imagine; and now that I am no longer blinded by passion, I can tell you what the part is you have played towards me—what were your projects concerning me. You sought—and for a moment, I confess, you were successful—to turn my head, because you had need of me to carry out certain projects of your own, of which I am ignorant—perhaps to avenge you for the infidelity of a lover; such things are seen every day at Court. You had need, I say, of a devotion, blind, absolute! You required a valiant sword, ready, at a word from you, to strike the victim you pointed out. From the indignation with which I received your charity this morning, you have doubtless discovered that I am not precisely the scoundrel or fool you were seeking. You have now changed your tactics—you have decided to strike a great blow—you have pretended to be in love with me! Perhaps even your knowledge of my passion for Mademoiselle d'Erlanges may have inspired you with the idea of entering into rivalry with her! If it is so, I warn you that to persist in playing such a part, madame, will be but to expose yourself to humiliating defeat."

While Raoul was thus freely and violently expressing himself, Marie remained perfectly unmoved by his words; but for the fire in her eyes, nothing about her betrayed the least vexation or anger.

"Monsieur Sforzi," she replied, coldly, "I have really been grossly mistaken concerning you. I certainly did think you were something other than I find you to be. Monsieur Sforzi, I will not detain you any longer."

And without deigning to enter into any further explanation, the unknown saluted the chevalier by an inclination of the head, and passed majestically out of the room.

"Where the devil have you come from, so handsomely accoutred, chevalier?" inquired De Maurevert, when the two companions in arms met, half an hour later, at the Stag's Head.

"From the house on the Marché-aux-Chevaux," replied Raoul.

"Aha! then I'll wager that you and I have to-day seen the two prettiest women in Paris!" cried the captain.

"Of whom are you speaking?"
"Parbleu!—of Marie and Mademoiselle d'Erlanges," replied De Maurevert, "Why, how you blush and then turn pale!—donkey that I was not to mind more what I am saying! Yes, dear companion, Mademoiselle d'Erlanges is at this moment in Paris."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE GIANT AND THE DWARF.

At the news that Diane d'Erlanges had escaped the pursuit of the Marquis de la Tremblais, and inhabited the same city as himself, Sforzi was beside himself with joy. The