



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

THIODOLF THE ICELANDER. BY HARRISON DE LA MOTTE YOUNG. CHAPTER XXXI.

"Yes," said Thiodolf, after a time, "all is now right and good; we love each other heartily, and we could live as happy as kings, only by ill-luck we have not yet got at any gold. What is there about here that we can take? For I tell you I will go no further with empty purses.— We must see how we can do the people here some great service, for which we may receive, without shame, a rich recompense. Or, what would be yet better, we may search out for some pirates or other rogues, whom we may kill, and, with a clear conscience, take away what they possessed. How is that island before us called?" "Sir," answered an experienced seaman,—"that is the fair island of Cephalonia."

and the islanders shrank back frightened. "Be not afraid, children," he said; "Glykomeidon is not among you. How did she beseech herself towards him?" "Half reluctantly, half confidently," was the answer; "at least so it seemed. Sometimes she fixed her queen-like eyes on him as if inquiringly, till he trembled as if struck by an arrow. Then again he would speak to her of strange things—of the destruction of her father's castle—" "That is a falsehood," interrupted Thiodolf. "And how the whole country lay in smoke and flames, through a fearful Icelfinder, and how he was now pursuing them?" "Enough!" said Thiodolf. And after a long silence, seizing Malgherita's hand, he sighed deeply, saying: "Hear, oh! hear, she flees from me, and goes through the world with that deceitful boaster!" He looked like a man dangerously wounded, who yet, with the noble pride of a leader, holds himself erect before his troops. But suddenly returning to his former joyful strength, he asked again, "Towards the coasts of the Morea?"— And on the affirmative answer, he commanded the anchors to be raised, and the sails given to the wind; but first he lavished so much gold and precious things on the icelanders, that had not for once the entreaties of the old men prevailed, the whole of the Asmundur tribute would have been scattered from his hands.

for thou didst yet fall honorably before the enemy." "I have not yet fallen honorably before the enemy," murmured the figure, like a hollow echo, and sank slowly down again. "Leave him," said Thiodolf to his warriors; "he is going to sink down again into his bed of earth." But it could be seen by the faint star-light that he lay upon the grass. Then the soldiers brought torches near; it was not the face of a dead man that stared up at them, but of one dying; and after a few heavy breathings, he lay there a corpse. "It is one of the Freemen of Laconia," said Pietro. "Just such has their strange dress and figure been described to me. He must have fallen in a sharp fight. See only out of how many deep wounds has the blood escaped from his breast and forehead." Malgherita trembled violently. "We are standing on a fearful spot," she said. "Oh! I pray you lift me on that wall; my feet can support me no longer, and if I here sink down upon the grass, it will ever seem to me that I have a corpse for my pillow." Pietro and Thiodolf lifted her on the altar;— the Northernmen stood around, grave and silent, in the gloomy light of their torches. Malgherita wrapped herself in her veil; and thus they remained till the sun sent his first beams over the eastern hill.

by the immense size and beautiful shape of the weapon, and partly by the example of their young leader. Thiodolf now gazed with reverence at the firmly fixed spear, now looked round inquiringly at his soldiers. At length he said, "My people, this weapon—look once more at its mighty polished shaft of the most precious wood, the bright gold rim around the point, and the huge shining steel point itself—this weapon can be none other than a spear of Heimfrid's. But that we may know with entire certainty whether it do belong to the mightiest of northern warriors, and whether his strong hand have flung it, let us each in turn approach and try to draw it forth from the stem." It was done as Thiodolf commanded. Many a brave northern hand shook the shining weapon, but it remained firm and immovable in the tree. Pietro likewise in vain tried with his utmost strength. Then Thiodolf drew near, and even his first effort failed. He began again the trial, anger already flashing in his eyes; and at length he tore the spear from the groaning and cracking laurel-stem, and with it fell his whole length on the grass, his armor rattling as he fell; but he held fast in his hand the conquered spear. Then there came over him a tall old man, shining in brilliant northern armor, whose approach none had perceived in the heat of the contest, and who now, with a grave smile, said to the Icelanders: "Young man, young man, who then has taught thee to draw forth from a tree the lance of Heimfrid?"

CHAPTER XXXII. The dreaded Northman, as soon as the islanders became submissive, and ready to pay him his dues, spoke to them so gently and kindly that they soon lost all fear, and they looked with some pleasure upon the young stranger so tall and so beautiful; some of them even seemed to think that the strange acquaintance had not been bought too dearly with their share of the treasure. They knew likewise that those who could boast of a friendship with one of the northern sea-heroes, were thereby secure from all his fearful countrymen. In the midst of this peaceful intercourse, Thiodolf began to ask whether a lady, such as Isolde, had not appeared on their coasts; and he described the princely dazzling form with such clear and distinct words, that Pietro and Malgherita smiled at one another, and felt that it was as if some magician had called up the image of the lost one from the sea by his enchantments. The islanders also smiled as if the reflection of a bright apparition had spread over their countenance; and soon many voices were heard declaring that in truth such a noble woman had been seen some months before on their coast, in company with the knightly merchant prince Glykomeidon, but that he had quickly sailed on with her, it was not known whether to the shore of the freemen of Lacedemonia, or whether farther round the peninsula of the Morea. Malgherita knew well the name of the far-traveled Glykomeidon, and even thought that she had before seen him at a minstrel-feast in her father's castle. Thiodolf made the people describe him, and then repeated the description, suddenly crying out, "the coward must have cruelly deceived me! he it was who was walking under the chestnut trees, with another youth, as I thought, on his arm; but it was, in truth, none other than Isolde." The fearful light began to flash from his eyes, and then he roused himself by saying: "Well, still he found an honorable end, and the gods will never deprive a true heart of that, however sorely they may punish him in other ways." They now cast anchor; but the sea was very rough, and the ships had an uneasy, swinging motion; Malgherita came on deck and complained that she was unwell and frightened, and that only sounds of lamentation came to her saddened ears in the howling of the wind and the rolling of the waves, fear of her father's curse, and grief for her lost child. "We will go on shore," said Thiodolf. "If the night is dark, our torches burn bright, and that trembling lady will feel more secure." Malgherita, so long accustomed to Thiodolf's safeguard, had nothing to say against his proposal, and they landed. A path which seemed often trodden led up to a wooded light. The light of the torches, and their reflection from the armor, shone strangely on the leaves; but a delicious scent of herbs was wafted up from the ground, and the clustered olive-branches formed festive arches over the heads of the wanderers. On the summit was a large open space—in the midst a stone well. "It must be an altar of the old heathen times," said Pietro; but he was astonished, as he stretched out his hands towards it, to feel fresh wreaths hanging from it. He was about to seize a torch to throw light upon it, when the dark figure of a man rose up from the foot of the altar, who sighed out: "Leave me in peace; I have left the wild world to which you belong; but the parting from it yet smarts in my bosom." The Northernmen shuddered and drew back in silence. But Thiodolf stepped forward, and said: "Art thou, then, he who survived at Thermopylae? and canst thou find no rest in the grave?" "Be content, and go hence." "Brave hero-minstrel shall sing thy renown,