

THE FAVORITE

Vol. I.—No. 19.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1873.

PRICE FIVE CENTS, OR SIX CENTS, U.S. Cr.



"EXCUSE ME, CAPTAIN, BUT BEFORE GOING WITH US, YOU MUST TAKE OFF YOUR BREASTPLATE."

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 VIII.
KINDNESS IS NEVER WASTED.

Captain de Maurevert, whose prolonged absence had been the cause of deep unhappiness to Raoul, had met, with many adventures since his departure from Tauva. It is only doing him justice to state that in setting forth he was not ignorant of the serious dangers to which he was exposing himself. At every step he expected to see the hungry and sanguinary pack of the marquis dart upon him from some ambush; and at the prospect of this unequal combat he was very little inclined to smile, in spite of his real and unquestionable bravery.

"I know," he said to himself, as he set spurs to his horse, "I am committing an act of imprudence unpardonable at my age. If I had listened to the voice of my reason, I should at this very moment have been the intimate friend and confidant of the Marquis de la Tremblais. Bah! the least one can do is, at some time or other, to allow one's self to perform an act of kindness, and it has not happened so often in my life that I need worry myself about in the present case. This Chevalier Raoul singularly pleases me, and I should be greatly vexed if any harm came to him. After all, supposing I should get myself stabbed or shot with an arquebuse—which is not yet certain—I shall only be paying a debt, for has not Raoul spared my life?"

Talking to himself in this fashion, the captain passed on for a distance of four leagues without disturbance; his confidence was beginning to revive.

"Good!" he said, "it is hardly to be supposed the apostles will now attempt to surprise me on the road, the rascals would not dare to venture so near the Chateau de Tournell. What admirable roads! Come, my poor beast—courage! In an hour we shall be at our journey's end."

The captain was murmuring these fragments of speeches when a ringing "Who goes there?" pronounced thirty paces from him, startled him from his reverie. He pulled up his horse, instantly seized his arquebuse, and called out in a loud voice:

"I am a captain in the service of his Majesty, and a friend of Monsieur de Guise."

From behind a large mass of rock which divided the road in two, or, to be more exact, the path which De Maurevert was following, sprang a dozen men, armed with cross-bows, arquebuses and pikes. A glance sufficed the adventurer to estimate the quality of his adversaries.

"You are very venturesome and very imprudent, I think, to dare to stop a gentleman," he said, haughtily. "By the devil's claws, if I were not to-day in a particularly gay humor, I would cut to pieces the whole of you, from first to last. Stand out of the way, and let me pass."

This bold language made but very little impression on the armed man. One of them—their leader no doubt—advanced towards De Maurevert, and saluted him ironically:

"Monsieur," he said, "from the moment you entered the service of his Majesty and became the friend of the Guises you may consider yourself a lost man. We belong to the reformed religion, and it is our custom never to accord either mercy or pity to any supporters of the Pope whom heaven may throw in our way. Don't put us out of temper, for this will not be of any service to you; and all resistance will be useless. Come! Dismount!"

"Death and curses!" cried De Maurevert, "I scent carnage in the air. Back, out, or the ball of my arquebuse shall lay you dead on the road."

The leader of the armed band remained quite unmoved by this threat.

"My good gentleman," he said, quietly, "do not disturb the urbanity of our character; instead of hanging you, as we intended, the idea may come into our minds of either breaking you upon the wheel, or burning you at a slow fire."

De Maurevert hesitated; suddenly he plunged his spurs into his horse's flanks, and sprang upon his interlocutor, seized him by the top of his cuirass, lifted him from the ground as easily as if he had been an infant, and hung him across the saddle, his head hanging down on one side, his feet on the other. Then, addressing his adversaries, whom this exhibition of audacity and strength had struck with a sort of superstitious terror, he cried:

"Learn to pay proper respect to a nobleman, blackguards!—form your ranks, and attend me as an escort. I am on my way to your petty stronghold of Tournell."

The bandits wearily obeyed, and De Maurevert continued:

"My friend," he said, addressing his prisoner, "if you attempt to stab my horse, I will send my dagger through your back. You wish me to allow you to dismount? Do not think of such a thing. I allow that your position is neither graceful nor comfortable, but I intend to show your master how little reliance he can place on such a servant as you."

At the end of an hour's march, De Maurevert