

# THE CANADIAN

VOL. II.—No. 5.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 1873.

PRICE } FIVE CENTS,  
OR SIX CENTS, U.S. CY.

## 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 XLIII.

Catherine-Marie of Lorraine, daughter of the Duke of Guise, killed at Orleans, and wife of Louis II., Duke de Montpensier, was at this time about twenty-five years of age. She was, without doubt, one of the haughtiest princesses in Christendom, as well as one of the most fascinating women in the Court of Henry III.

Her bold, daring spirit, her fervent nature, her courage proof against all fear, her love of intrigue, made her a worthy daughter of the haughty and ambitious house of Lorraine, which was then dreaming of the crown of France, and, later, lost the throne only by the length of a sword.

The Duchess de Montpensier lost no opportunity, under any circumstances, of displaying the contempt with which the weakness of the King inspired her. It was pretended that an imprudent and awkward jest of Henry III. concerning a slight irregularity in the walk of the irascible princess

was the cause of the deep hatred she bore him, a deadly hatred which brought forth, if certain histories of the age can be believed, the odious attempt of the monk Jacques Clement.

A furtive glance enabled Diane to appreciate the physical perfection of the princess. As for the latter, advancing to within a step of Mademoiselle d'Erlanges, she fixed upon her a haughty and mocking look.

"You are gifted, mademoiselle," said she finally, in a tone of raillery, "with that delicate and artless beauty with which inexperienced young people willingly allow themselves to make their entrance into the world. Your affected simplicity, your pretended modesty, become you wonderfully. But it is not necessary for you to take advantage of this kind of fascination, that brings you at length to a despairing monotony, and wears your admirers. How old are you, mademoiselle?"

At this question, asked in a highly impertinent manner, Diane blushed, and her eyes flashed with indignation.

"Madame," said she coolly, "allow me first, I pray you, to inquire the motive that procures me the undeserved honor of your visit."

"I have nothing to do with your questions, mademoiselle. When I deign to question you, your duty is to answer me. How old are you?"

"Madame," replied Diane, with a firm dignity which made Raoul start with surprise and joy, "your language leads me to suppose that you are the victim this moment of a strange mistake. Allow me to correct your error. My name is Mademoiselle d'Erlanges, and as a lady of high and ancient nobility I am your equal—if not in beauty, at least in birth!"

"Jour de Dieu, my sweet little dove," exclaimed the duchess, "it seems to me your tiny little finger-nails are stretched out like claws, and would like to tear away the flesh! Do not play that game, my child; it would be the death of you. You ask me how it happens



"MY DEAR COUSIN, HOW HAPPY I AM TO MEET YOU"

I am here at such a time? Since the grandeur of your station and the humility of mine give you the right of the initiative, and impose upon me the duty of obedience, I must answer you. I come here, my Lady d'Erlanges, to seek Chevalier Sforzi, my lover! Ah, ha! the frankness of my avowal, and my plain language, astonish you! You must know, most noble and illustrious Lady d'Erlanges, that *parvenus* like myself express themselves as they think, roughly, without deceit or evasion. Heavens!" continued the duchess, her ironical air giving place to a threatening *hauteur*, "do you suppose I would stoop to use artifice with you? My birth and position place me above vulgar prejudices. Yes or no, do you dare to dispute with me my lover?"

"Madame," said Diane, indignation showing itself in every feature, and lending an additional grace to her matchless beauty, "the form and nature of your request are so at variance with your dignity as princess and woman that I persuade myself I must be dreaming—"

"Cease your foolish affectation of innocence, which does not deceive me," interrupted the duchess angrily. "Have done, mademoiselle; have done!"

"Madame," answered Diane sadly, "the remembrance of this conversation will weigh like remorse upon my conscience for a long time. It must be that my conduct towards Monsieur Sforzi has been, unknown to myself, very unworthy for you to dare to address such language to me! Be assured, madame, I have not the least intention of crowning my shame by entering into rivalry with you. At the moment you came I had spoken to Monsieur Sforzi a final, an irrevocable farewell."

"Madame," Diane went on, after a pause, "do not attribute to fear the readiness with which I resign all claim to Monsieur Sforzi's love. If a brother's affection were in question that would be another thing. I would bravely en-

sure the struggle, heedless of your rage or abuse."

While Diane was speaking Raoul gazed at her with a feeling of admiration, approaching rapture.

"Imprudent," murmured De Maurevert, observing the young man about to speak. "Why the devil does he not let the two victims devour each other at their ease! Now they will join themselves against him and make mince-meat of him."

De Maurevert was not mistaken in regard to Raoul's intentions.

Scarcely had Diane ceased speaking when he advanced and knelt before her.

"Mademoiselle," he exclaimed, in a thrilling voice, "will the entire devotion of my whole life ever compensate you for the grief and humiliation I have caused you this evening?"

"Rise, monsieur," replied Diane, at once moved and surprised; "such a position belongs only to a culprit."

"A culprit, mademoiselle," returned Raoul vehemently, "that is too gentle, too merciful a term to apply to a wretch like myself! Oh! leave me not thus, Diane, do not repulse me with horror! If you could but read my heart, you would see there a repentance so deep, so sincere that, despite your just anger towards me, you would be moved by it!"

"Rise, monsieur, I beg, I command you," said Diane, with involuntary kindness.

Diane, pure and noble though she was, was still a woman; would it not have been requiring an impossibility to ask her to forego such a brilliant, unexpected, and entire triumph over her rival?

As for the Duchess de Montpensier, it would require an artist to depict the varied emotions her face expressed; it reflected with an intensity and rapidity almost marvellous the most conflicting passions, hatred, love, anger, sorrow, revenge and despair.

The great violence of her feelings made her for the moment speechless. Raoul took occasion of her silence to address Diane.

"Mademoiselle," he cried, "if there is anything capable of lessening the regret I feel at having subjected you to this painful discussion, it is the thought that I am able to declare publicly, before her highness, the unbounded esteem with which you have inspired me, the great love I feel for you! Mademoiselle Diane, I must, I will repeat, in the presence of her highness, all that I have said to you before her arrival! Yes, for a moment, I was dazzled, intoxicated, fascinated—I will not say with love—that would be to profane the divine word—but by a madman's vision! And now, before heaven, that hears my words and sees my remorse—by my hope of eternal happiness—on my honor as a gentleman—never, even during the paroxysm of this guilty delirium, has my love for you ceased to be absolute, boundless!"

Sforzi was about to continue, but the duchess sharply interrupted him:

"A truce to eloquence, I beg!—and lend me your serious attention," she said. "What I now say is serious. I do not believe I love you—no, I am sure I do not. That which has attracted me to you, and which I feel for you, is more than love! Do you understand me? I am not saying that, among all the princes and gentlemen who pay hom-

age to me, you are the youngest, the most elegant, the most witty, the handsomest! My dreams are not haunted by your image! No!—I see you only as you are, such a gentleman as may be met at every step in the neighborhood of the Louvre, or in the ante-chamber of the palace. Your presence causes me no emotion. Take my hand, chevalier—it is cold as that of a statue. My fancy addresses itself not to the man, but only to his character. I have noticed in you a wild and unrestrained energy which has pleased me in a high degree, and which I have wished to bend to my best desires. This difficult task pleased my imagination. I cannot tell you what joy and pride I should have felt in seeing you a suppliant at my feet! From that moment, doubtless, I should have ceased to take the smallest interest in you. Who knows, now, whether I may not find a master where I sought to find a slave! Do you fear to engage in this struggle, in which I have shown myself so sure of myself and so disdainful of your merits, that I do not even take the trouble to hide my designs from you?"

"Madame," replied Sforzi, "to guard myself from overstepping the strict limits of respect towards you, I have to remind myself of your double majesty, as a princess and as a woman. I have often heard tell, without believing, of the strange sentiments which weariness, arising from the want of contact with humanity, gives to the great ones of the earth. Your words prove to me that I have not been deceived. You might offer me your love and your name, madame—if you were free—your enormous riches, and I should not hesitate to refuse them. Judge, then, whether it is possible for me to accept such a degraded part as that which you destined for me."

"And your refusal is irrevocable, Monsieur Sforzi?" cried the duchess, imperiously.

"Yes, madame—irrevocable."

"You have thoroughly reflected?"