

## Fontenay, the Swordsman.

(Continued from Page 1.)

heart of the only woman he ever loved, and whom he loves still—but he must have an heir to establish his empire. He may, however, decide on adopting Prince Eugene. But let us drop this sad subject my dear Paul. The Empress bids me tell you not to trouble about the outfit for your new campaign, as she has provided everything. You will be the best horsed, equipped and monetarily provided captain in the Army of Valencia and Aragon. I suppose you purpose taking your orderly with you?"

"I believe you! do without Tournesol? never!"

"I can understand it, from having learnt in this month what the man is worth. He has looked after you with admirable devotedness, and we are now a brace of friends. What do you think when I tell you that I spoke of him to the Empress, who, I wager, has made him a present of a full purse, as she went out?"

"She is so good and generous."

"She knows all the services he did for you in Spain and does not want him to leave you."

"Oh, he has no desire. He is attached to me like a dog to his master."

"I do not doubt that, but I am instructed on matters not known to you. I have become his confidant. Our brave Tournesol has no secrets from me; and the other day he hinted that he greatly pleased a young, good-looking widow who keeps the grocery near here; he made her acquaintance in buying sugar for your portions, and it looks as if he had only to say the word to marry her."

"The mischief! if he marries I should be puzzled to find his like. Did he tell you he intended to settle down?"

"No! but this grocery-keeper is so good a match for a man who has no property outside his sabre and his boots, that—"

At this juncture, Tournesol opened the room-door a little and joyfully shouted:

"Oh, let me tell you, captain, the lady gave me twenty-five napoleons! I never saw so many in a purse before!"

"Do you know who it is?" abruptly challenged Fontenay.

"Well, captain, I pretended not to recognize her; but I did know her all the same. None but the Empress would fill a poor cuirassier's hand with gold, and he not asking her for anything. I did not mean to tell you about it, but I could not keep it in!"

"She came to let me know that the ministry of war sends me back into Spain."

"That just suits me, captain. You are cured, and I was beginning to tire of Paris."

"I fancied you wanted to remain."

"Leave you to go into that dog's own country alone! Why, captain, what have I done to make you think that of me?"

"I was told that you were courting a lady of the neighborhood—"

"Pélagie, the grocer's widow round the corner? It is true I have a liking for her. I am not handsome, and I am thin as a spike, but a man is gilded thickly with glory when he has served in the 13th Cuirassiers," said Tournesol, laughing and twirling his moustache.

"Well, why not marry her? she is rich."

"And I had not a penny before the Empress's gift! Well, later on, when I am honorably discharged and you are a general, if the grocery-keeper is still ready to replace her late lamented husband with Jean Tournesol, I do not say I shall refuse to make her happy; but, assure as I am a heavy cavalry man! I will stay with you, captain, as long as you like to keep me; Pélagie will have to wait."

The two gentlemen exchanged a glance. Both admired the veteran's disinterested outburst; without hesitation or flourishes he proclaimed that he would not quit his officer for ease and rest in his old days.

"Come, come," said Fontenay, keenly affected, "you are an honest fellow! We shall not part company. I shall take you to Spain on condition that, if we return, you will invite me to your wedding."

He dared not speak of his own, although he no longer doubted his future. The good Empress' words and Marguerite's glances had wound up his heart to go on forever again! He was eager to start for Spain where he had all but left his lifeless body.

He did not foresee that the dangers previously encountered there were trifles compared to those awaiting him!

## CHAPTER XXVI.

THE OFFER OF LIFE.

Paul Fontenay's convalescence took longer than he expected. All danger was over, but strength only slowly returned, and if he had not been so young, he never would have recovered from the gash in his chest. In five weeks, however, after the Empress' departure, the captain could go on the road into Spain.

The end of his Parisian stay was as calm as the outset had been otherwise. Fouché's agents no longer watched him, a proof that the minister of police had sought simply to ensnare the Empress Josephine in trying to compromise him. Since she was in Strasburg beyond his power, he paid no heed to the officer whom she favored.

Paul passed his time in strolls with

George de Prigny, and nothing was absent for his happiness, as Marguerite had written to him three times, letters not a little contributing to accelerate his cure. Affection pierced through the reserve which her position imposed upon her. He replied in terms overflowing with creole passionateness.

This sweet correspondence did not make him forget the war with which he was about to renew acquaintance under agreeable conditions—in other words, in Suchet's army, with its headquarters in Saragossa, and admirably furnished through the generosity of his imperial patroness.

Tournesol had had a share in it. His fine new uniform heightened his martial mien and achieved fully the conquest of the sensitive Pélagie. Formal promise of marriage was made between him and the well-to-do widow, on the condition that it should be after the campaign.

The news from Germany was excellent. The Emperor had already beaten the enemy at Abensberg, Eckmühl and Ratisbon, and had entered Vienna on the 12th of May, exactly a month from his departure from the Tuileries. Everything presaged that this triumphal march would soon finish with a brilliant victory.

Fontenay had no time to lose if he meant to win in Spain that cross of honor which Josephine wished to see sparkle on his breast on the day when he led Marguerite to the altar.

On the 22nd of May, the young captain set out with the faithful Tournesol, after bidding farewell to George de Prigny, without dreaming that, at the same hour as he stepped into the carriage to go to Bayonne, Marshal Lannes, under whose orders he had served, fell mortally wounded by an Austrian cannon-ball on the battlefield of Essling.

No accident disturbed the long journey from Paris to Saragossa over the road he had travelled homeward after the siege. Again he saw the defile where a guerrilla had attacked his party, and Tulea where an over-zealous commander had saluted Palafox with an unseasonable cannonade.

But all was changed in the country. A blazing sun scorched the mountains, seen by him covered with frost, and the Ebro valley where he had splashed under torrential rains.

It was another Spain, and Fontenay, overpowered by heat where he had shivered, understood the accuracy of the popular saying about a Madrid year: "Three months winter, nine months *inferno*."

From a military point of view, however, matters had not ameliorated. The French held Aragon, and the regular Spanish armies had melted away like the snows of their Sierras, but the open warfare had been succeeded by that of ambush and the invader could not win at this. The soldiers captured towns which insurgents did not try to defend, and the latter re-entered them as soon as the victors marched out to another point threatened by the irregulars. At this game of "Keep Jack alive!" as children say, the French troops were rapidly used up.

Though strongly garrisoned, Saragossa contained a population which tremulously awaited only the news of a severe check to the enemy's generals, to break out in revolt.

Here Fontenay found Suchet to greet him paternally. He was an already illustrious leader who was soon to conquer and almost pacify the ancient kingdom of Valencia, where he won, in two years after, his dukedom of Albafera. Suchet did not employ the new-comer on his staff, but that was because he wished to do so more usefully. He advised him to take part in the movements of the flying columns, incessantly hunting the insurgent bands. Fontenay would learn his profession better thus than in writing out orders or even in carrying them. This pleased Fontenay, as he had not returned into Spain so much to use the pen as the sword.

One of these flying columns was at the heels of Villacampa, the most famous partisan leader of the province. Its operations were at this period in the Guadalquivir Valley, and when Fontenay learned that it was formed of a battalion of the 14th line regiment, a Polish battalion and two squadrons of the 13th Cuirassiers, he blessed the general for literally making him "at home" until he should be called back beside him to march upon Valencia.

Fontenay could not contain his joy. He was going again to see his companions-in-arms of the terrible siege, share their dangers, and fight anew in the ranks of that valiant Vistula Legion where he counted none but friends. He would find Zolnycki, brave and kind, and perhaps even Command Carénac, the adversary become his friend.

The young captain was not alone delighted.

Tournesol also had left friends in the Polish Legion and he was so enchanted that he almost forgot the tender Pélagie.

All their hopes were realized. On the upper Guadalquivir they joined the column; it had just routed Villacampa's bands and hurled them back into the Albaracin Sierra.

They were feasted. Zolnycki almost squeezed Fontenay breathless in his arms, and as provisions happened for once to abound in the camp, that night officers and soldiers toasted the happy return of the old friend.

The expedition was touching its end.

The officer of the Vistula Legion related to Fontenay, who was agreeably surprised to hear it, that this bivouac was only two leagues from Teruel where the column was to stay. Fontenay knew the topography scantily of this rough country, and he had not dreamt that Providence had led him, as by the hand, to the town he despaired of ever seeing.

Teruel! here was born Marguerite and mother; here the dread Tio dwelt; here he may have hidden the memorable casket stolen from la Malmaison; here, peradventure, was hidden the legendary treasure of the Seguras.

The creole entered it next day with the Poles and the 14th Foot Battalion, but in three weeks he did not find even a clew what he sought.

The garrison had a happy time, as Teruel was then one of the principal towns of Aragon; pleasantly located on a hill, bathed at its base by the Guadalquivir's waters, rich in monumental edifices, and sufficiently well fortified to defy a sudden attack, an advantage well appreciated by the French who had taken possession without resistance.

This was not precisely what our young war-hawk had dreamt of. Idleness soon weighed upon him; yet it threatened to be prolonged, for the insurgents did not show themselves in the valley, and General Suchet having gone with his main body towards Valencia, no order for undertaking fresh expeditions might be expected.

The soldiers did not complain about this, as the last one had been fruitful and they were enjoying the results. They had secured provisions of all kinds and never lived in greater luxury since they foraged in Aragon. All revelled; and while the officers caroused in the finest mansions "requisitioned" for their lodgings, their men regaled in the public squares on luscious roasts and fine wine brought from Albarracín, where they had leave to fill their knapsacks and load the mules following the column.

It is easy to believe that the inhabitants of Teruel did not take any part in these feasts or in their vanquisher's glee. They did not show themselves in the public ways, and the only open stores were the confectioners, the *confetiaris* or confectioners, taking the place of coffee-houses or cafés, almost unknown then in minor Spanish towns; here were sold stale pastry, chocolate and ice-water. One stood not far from the church where is exhibited the tomb of the famous lovers of Teruel. It was also Fontenay's lodging and the American would sometimes come to sit down in it, far more from having nothing else to do and to dream of his hopes, than to feast.

This melancholy house was kept by a tall, bearded Spaniard, whom the captain could not esteem altogether unfamiliar. He was assuredly not the Tio, but he was not any better looking. He wore rather the aspect of a bandit than a sweetmeat maker, and was not more engaging in manner than in countenance.

Moreover, his reputation was that of a fierce hater of the French, and Tournesol asserted that some day he would stuff the officers who patronized his den with some poisoned cakes. Like the others, the creole laughed at his orderly's suspicions and continued his daily visits to Don Angel's *confeteria*. The pastry-cook had nothing angelic about him save his name, and his attendance—like angel's visits, so far as it was not regular; he did not appear every day in his dark shop like a spider's hole. When absent, he left the guard of the establishment to an ugly old woman, who answered to the sweet name of Carmen; her repulsive appearance would have put a whole squadron of heavy dragoons to flight. It was certainly not to pay his addresses to her that Fontenay dropped into the confectioner's. When she was asked the whereabouts of her master, she would invariably answer with a "*Non saber, Senor*," in a tone so surly that nobody ever persisted.

None of the garrison knew where Don Angel took his walks abroad so mysteriously every two or three days, repeated eclipses which finally attracted the attention of an old superior officer commanding the place. He strongly suspected him of slipping out of town to give intelligence of what occurred to the bands hidden in the Sierras, and he only waited for a chance to have him arrested.

In spite of this, Don Angel continued frequently to disappear, without Tournesol, who kept an eye upon him, being able to discover how he stole out or returned without being seen.

The store was on the ground floor of a rather large house belonging to the confectioner; no doubt there was a secret issue.

Fontenay little perturbed himself about these movements and at length ceased to cudgel his brains to trace out the haunting resemblance. He had other cares. It was Blas de Montalvan whom he wished to find, and he had more than once inquired about one whose name ought to be known in Teruel. The natives questioned in their own tongue assumed an amazed air, pretended to search in their recollections and finally declared that they had never heard this nobleman spoken of.

When Fontenay asked if any Seguras still existed in Teruel, they never failed to answer him: "Oh, señor, Isabella de Seguras lived in the time of King Don Jayme and she never had any off-spring, having



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