

speedily as his reeling head would permit him.

A pursuit was immediately made of the fugitive, and precautions taken to foil his intended treachery; but the pursuit was fruitless—Calembours had dodged misfortune successfully this time.

Lying face down in his tent, St. Udo Brand mused over the fleeting incidents of his late existence, and owned himself at fault.

He looked back upon the friends he had expected fidelity from—which of them had not betrayed his trust? Upon the humble worm he had crushed with scornful heel—his life-preserver—his only friend now.

The deserted man scanned his reckless life, and in its shapeless fragments began to find a plan, and wonderingly, as a child fits together the scattered sections of his little puzzle, St. Udo linked the parted sections of his existence into their possible plan—and lo! he discovered that Providence held the key!

The remorseful man rose, and found Thoms studying him with his uncanny stare.

"My kind fellow," said St. Udo, gently, "Since your master has left you on my hands, and since I can't forget the noble service you have done me, perhaps you had better enter my service and see me through the war?"

"That will I, colonel," answered Thoms, with a keen smile.

"You have been a good friend to me, and Heaven knows I have need of friends," said St. Udo, gratefully.

The glittering eyes watched him as intently as if the old man were learning a lesson.

"If there's anything I could do for you, Thoms, to mark my gratitude, I would like to hear of it," said St. Udo.

"Nothing, colonel, except to let me stay by you."

"You may get shot in battle, my man."

"So may you, colonel, and more likely."

"Well, we won't dispute about that," said St. Udo, sunnily. "But wouldn't you rather go North, out of the scrape?"

"I'll never leave you!"

St. Udo, glancing up gratefully, saw that in his eye, which chilled as with the finger of death, the warm words crowding to his lips; a thrill of mortal dread, a sure premonition of evil seized his soul, and he waited, with the words frozen, regarding the man with stony stare until he turned on his heel and shuffled out of sight.

That night, when Thoms ventured back to see his gloating eyes again upon St. Udo Brand, he sought for him in vain—his sub-officer occupied his tent.

"Where is the colonel?" asked Thoms, turning sharply on the nearest soldier.

"Gone, two hours ago."

"Gone!"

How white the fallow face blanched. How the tones quavered.

"By Heaven, I have lost him!" cried Thoms, vehemently. "Where did he go?"

"On a secret embassy somewhere."

"Without me!" groaned Thoms, with a wild flash of the wolfish eyes. "He has stolen away from me—he has found me out!"

CHAPTER VIII.

MARGARET'S VISION.

Lady Juliana Ducie concealed her disappointed love so well that no one would have suspected, not even simple Margaret Walsingham, that she suffered from its pangs.

As the summer season wore on and she began to get over her "awkward affair" with the rail-cars, she plunged into gayety, and a violent flirtation with the Irish duke, which threatened quite to banish any lingering memories of the soldier who was fighting in other scenes, and Hautville Park became thronged with illustrious visitors.

Margaret Walsingham, in her somber black dress, mingled as rarely as possible with the flippant cavaliers who were forever hanging about my lady's drawing-rooms, or dangling after her in her saunters with her companion. She rarely lifted her eyes when they bowed to the carelessly introduced Miss Walsingham; and never by any chance engaged in conversation with them.

Yet a new world of knowledge was opening to her daily, and filling her mind with absorbing speculations.

How often she heard St. Udo Brand, the young guardsman, discussed by these London fashionables, with appropriate jest or story, they laughed at his withering flashes of wit, admired his brilliant follies, and narrated his erratic generosity, with never a sigh for the heart which, to be so reckless now, must once have been so warm and true.

Day by day, the broken image of a primal god was built up in her heart with here and there a flashing glimpse of virtue, or a suggestion of innate chivalry of soul, or high-minded honor which contrasted sadly with the wild devilry of a rampant friend.

And each day this simple woman carried some bright gem of goodness with which to deck her demi-god, until the vision seemed so kindly, that she took to defending his defects to herself, and covering them from her own eyes.

Morning and noon, and in the midnight hours, when strains of music and the din of revelry stole dimly up to the companion's