

The Federal hero turned to St. Udo with a grim smile.

Heavens! it was Thoms.

The next moment he had vanished in the whirl of battle, and was no more to be seen.

"Ye gods! he has saved my life!" cried St. Udo Brand. "Thoms, the despised—Thoms, the sleuth-hound—the old maniac! What can this mean? Have we used him badly?"

St. Udo, lying in his tent, mused deeply on the strange kindness which the man whom he had spurned had done him, when a shadow flitted near—Thoms, with his intent face and wary eye.

"Gad! I was looking for you to come, Thoms," cried St. Udo, getting up and extending his hand frankly. "I cannot express my thanks to you for your gallantry on my behalf to-day, but I am grateful for it, and there's my hand on that."

The long, brown fingers clutched his as if in a vise, and wrung them hard.

"Don't mention it, colonel. You was in danger, and I couldn't abear to have you killed yet," smiled the old man, grimly.

"By Jove! you make me ashamed of my suspicions of you," cried St. Udo, with ingenuous candor. "Let me say now that I am sorry for them."

"I knewed you would change your mind about me some day," muttered Thoms; "so I were contented to wait for the time, colonel."

"I was so sure you owed me some grudge, my good fellow," said St. Udo.

"No, Colonel Brand, I owe you no grudge as long as you trust me and don't treat me like a secret felon," exclaimed Thoms, in a hoarse voice. "And now that you treat me better, I'll never leave you as long as you live—I won't by Heaven!"

His sallow face, more ghastly than ever after the day's bloody toil, whitened in the lurid gloom of twilight, and a terrible smile played about the twitching corners of his mouth.

St. Udo placed a heavy hand upon his shoulder.

"Forgive me, my friend, for all my harshness to you," said he, earnestly. "I will not doubt your good faith again. Faith, man, you almost make me believe in disinterested goodness."

He turned away in deep emotion; he could say no more.

Was it an answering thrill which, stirring the secret heart of the strange old servant, sent his eyes, filled with such an unearthly glare, over the gallant colonel? He had saved him from a certain death, with mad

bravery, that day; he had come to listen to his grateful thanks; yet, if ever the fires of Pandemonium blazed in human eyes, they blazed in his in that quiet, murderous look.

Steadily, surely, the man was creeping toward his secret purpose, and if St. Udo's entire trust removed another obstacle from his path, that obstacle was removed to-night, and nothing stood between him and the end.

"*Eh bien!*" chirped the chevalier, who had been an edified spectator of this scene. "Since we are all once more the happy family; let us be merry, let us sing, talk, and scare the blue devils away. Tell me the little history of your life in England, *mon ami.*"

"England be hanged," returned St. Udo, returning to his gloom. "She gave me no history but the black records of vice, treachery, and disappointment. What do you want with such a history?"

"Amusement, instruction," yawned Calembours. "Something to make gray-bearded time fly quick."

"Very well, I accede for want of other employment. What shall I tell you of? My hours devoted to finding out the world, and presided over by idiot Credulity? Or my hours devoted to revenging my injuries upon the world, and presided over by the great Father of lies? What will you have?"

"Your life," breathed the chevalier, impressively.

St. Udo placed himself in a comfortable position and began with a smile of mockery. Calembours fixed his eager eyes upon him and listened intently; and Thoms crept into the shadow behind the tent, crouched there on his knees, and held his breath patiently.

So the story was told.

Every incident worthy of note in St. Udo's life was correctly narrated, every name connected with the characters involved stated, their portraits distinctly painted, their characteristics faithfully recalled, with many a reference to the pocket-album, between; clear as if he lived it all over again, St. Udo placed his past before the eyes of the Chevalier de Calembours.

And neither the chevalier nor St. Udo Brand saw the slow-match flickering over a tiny note-book behind the tent, or heard the stealthy scrape of a pencil as long, brown fingers took down, in phonetic characters, the words dropping lazily from the unconscious man's lips.

When St. Udo had finished, the chevalier rose and stretched his cramped limbs.

"*Morbleu!* Time has fled nimbly this night. I forgot everything in your recital.