

yearned to have her cling to her thus forever.

"I will stay with you as long as you want me," she whispered, kissing the pellucid brow of Lady Julie.

CHAPTER V.

ATTEMPT AT MURDER.

The fair dawn slid with crimson ray under the yellow mist; the breath of morning stirred the pendant leaves, and on its wings it bore the tramp of a host.

In a moment the loud *reveille* was sounding, the thundering camp was alive with voices, every man was on his feet.

"A surprise!" shouted St. Udo, marshaling his company. "Be ready to meet them! Form, men!"

The soldiers under Colonel Brand's command had come straight from their pleasant homes among the Green Mountains. Untried and but freshly trained, one might have doubted their stability in a moment like this.

Not so their colonel; he had carefully studied these intelligent faces, and he had read both sense and spirit there. His ringing voice carried confidence and enthusiasm to its utterances, and was met by a cheer from his men which reverberated from the distant forest like an echo of the sea. In a few moments the tents were struck, the baggage vans were loaded, and the small army was in rapid motion toward the point from which the alarm had sounded.

In the midst of the plain they halted; their flashing arms were presented to the wall of foliage behind which lurked the foe. They stood there awaiting the onset, motionless as if they had sprung up from the earth and been petrified in the first instant of their resurrection.

Then a roar of musketry broke from the emerald wall; a storm of lead swept into the human ranks; a wild huzzah burst from the invisible enemy, and the battle had begun. The fight was fierce and long—courage and daring were exhibited on both sides—but when it was over, St. Udo Brand and his brave band were famous forever. They were the victors.

The two colonels were smoking together before St. Udo's tent, enjoying an hour's chat, as usual, before they parted for the night, and in the welcome absence of Thoms, were served by a fine fellow from Vermont, who almost worshiped his colonel.

As the friends joked and laughed with all the reckless abandon of soldiers, a pistol-shot was heard, and simultaneously a pistol ball whistled past their ears and buried itself in the earth at a few feet's distance.

Both sprang to their feet, and rushing round the tent, came upon two men in deadly strife—one in gray, the other in blue. They rolled on the ground; each held the other's throat in a deadly grasp. It seemed impossible to decide upon which side the victory would turn, and their continual writhings and contortions rendered interference impossible. But at last the struggle ended in the Federal soldier succeeding in drawing a dagger from his breast and plunging it into his opponent's side.

The wounded man's hold relaxed from the other's throat; he fell back heavily with a stifled groan, and the victor rose and turned round his haggard, white face to the brother colonels.

"*Morbleu!* it is Thoms!" cried Calembour, in accents of incredulity.

"Well fought, gray-beard," chimed in St. Udo, in equal amazement. "You deserve promotion. What was this Confederate soldier about?"

Thoms glared at the two colonels like a tiger, then down at his vanquished enemy, from whose side the blood poured hotly.

"He pretended that he wanted to offer himself as a guide to the grand army," muttered Thoms, "and we passed the pickets and came straight to your tent to speak about it. But he tried to pistol you when he came in sight of you, and I had just time to dash his arm up."

"Brave Thoms!" applauded Calembours. "Good Thoms!"

"What is it, Reed?" demanded St. Udo of the soldier, who was kneeling by the fallen Confederate.

"He is trying to speak," answered Reed. "He is saying, 'No, no.'"

Thoms bent eagerly over him, with murderous look in his eyes.

The man was dying; his half-closed eyes were glazing fast, but his bloodless lips moved convulsively, and though his life-blood welled forth at every effort, he still strove to utter some frantic word.

"No!—he—lies!" muttered he, at last.

Thoms' trembling fingers were at his throat in a moment—Thoms' tigerish eyes flashed out their rage.

"Let him alone," expostulated Reed. "Let the poor wretch speak."

"Off, Thoms!" thundered St. Udo, with a terrible frown.

Both colonels stooped over the Confederate soldier. St. Udo put his ear close to the twitching lips.

"He shot the pistol off himself," muttered the man. "Before Heaven, I swear it! He stabbed me to save himself. He did—he did!"

The life-blood oozed into his lungs and