

"Never, chevalier."

"Know you why?"

"Not I, indeed."

"I love you, *mon ami*, by gar! I could not betray you for any sum."

"Generous man. But don't ruin your prospects for the sake of honesty, who is such a lax companion of yours that he is scarce worth such a sacrifice."

"*Mon ami*, my honor is unimpeachable."

"Doubtless, such as it is. By Jove! here come letters from home. One for you, Calembours, a budget for me. Huzzah!"

Yes, letters had reached the army, and many a poor fellow that night forgot the anguish of his wounds and the gloom of his prospects in glad perusal of his loved one's words of affection.

St. Udo, too, held an envelope in a tight hand, while he hastily scanned the other missives, eager to fling them aside and to devote himself without restraint to it.

He laughed with a kind of uncaring scorn at Mr. Davenport's stiff business letter, and he frowned at good little Gay's warmhearted persuasions to hasten back to England and settle down in Castle Brand before the year was out. He glanced with abstracted eye over the notes of astonishment, reproach, and regrets which his movements had elicited from his brother officers in the Guards, and then he put them all away, and tenderly broke the seal of the hoarded envelope.

And as his darkening eye took in the meaning of its heartless words, and his heart realized the hollowness, the vanity, the treachery of the woman who had penned them, an awful scowl settled upon his brow, a demoniac sneer curled his fierce lip, and for a moment he lifted his blazing eyes to heaven, as if in derisive question of its existence when such an earth lay below.

"Farewell, doting fantasy!" muttered St. Udo, tearing Lady Juliana's letter in two, and casting the fragments into the flames. "So ends my faith in goodness, truth, purity, as held by women. Once, twice, have I madly laid my life under woman's heel, to be betrayed, my foolish yearning after a better belief to be laughed at, flouted at, scorned. I might have stuck to my only deity, Fate, and let these idle dreams go. I would not then have received this last sting. I was right at first—there is no created being so traitorous, so cold, so cruel and Judas-like as a woman, except the devil who fashioned her."

He scanned the polite dismissal of the Marquis of Ducie and smiled with scoffing indifference, and folding his arms, stared into the hissing embers for a long time.

At sunrise six or seven detachments, among which were those of Colonels Brand

and Calembours, received orders to march to the relief of an advanced post, and on their arrival, they were at once hurried into action.

St. Udo, on his maddened horse, was coursing before the serried ranks of his detachment, shouting his commands and cheering on his men to the attack, when a blaze of battery guns opened fire upon the rushing Federals, and, sweeping their lines obliquely, turned the sally into wild confusion.

Colonel Brand galloped along the broken line, calling them on, and waving his sword to the object of attack, the horse and his rider looming like spirits through the murk, and inviting the savage aim of a score of riflemen.

Heedless of the storm of red-hot hail, he pranced onward, inspiring the quailing men by his fearless example, till his horse staggered under him, sprang wildly upward, then fell, with a crash, upon his side.

The colonel lay face up, stunned by the fall, and pinned to the ground by the limbs under his horse, and a host of the foe rushed down the slope and charged the wavering Vermont boys.

When St. Udo was able to look up, he saw a giant Southerner making toward him with clubbed musket. He was helpless, his men were everywhere grappling with their adversaries, and the colonel gave himself up for lost, when, lo! a tall figure darted from a neighboring thicket, the blue uniform of the Federal crossed the path of the Confederate giant, and with a furious lunge of the bayonet, he attempted to beat him back from his charge upon St. Udo.

The foe met him at first with a scornful cry, but, finding it impossible to escape him, turned and closed in desperate encounter. Hand to hand they struggled, now grappling with the fury of gladiators, now retiring and gazing in each other's faces with determination.

So well matched were they, that this terrible conflict lasted for full three minutes, and many stopped to gaze in wonder upon the desperate encounter; and St. Udo, dragged from under his dead horse and mounted upon another, paused to see the end.

The Federal soldier waited until the rush of a passing sally hampered his adversary's arm, and then, raising his clubbed gun on high, he brought it down with a crashing blow upon his head.

The giant threw up his arms, with a fearful cry, quivered from head to foot for a moment, and then fell backward, like a clod, dead.