

coarsened lineaments; but the woman! Who was she?

Just then there were heard shouts mingled with firing, and, ere the chevalier's eyes had time to light upon that beautiful face, a random ball struck him down at her feet. Like a bolt of retribution from Heaven, it laid him across the senseless clay of his deserted son.

And, with a shriek that tingled in the shocked St. Udo's ears, the lovely woman sank beside her dead, and the dark blood of her perfidious husband oozed onto her dainty robes, and washed her trembling hands; and, turning to the battle, he saw no more.

In half an hour St. Udo led back his soldiers, and found her still there, with the senseless man's head in her lap, and her soft hands deftly dressing his gaping wound.

"He will live," said she, quite calmly. "I have snatched him back from death; he will live for me."

"Can you forgive such perfidy as his?" asked the wondering St. Udo.

"Yes, if he will take me to his heart again," she said, with a flash of ineffable yearning. "I will forget his indifference to me, his injustice to this dead boy. I will be happy to be his bond slave, if he will own me as his wife evermore, for—I love him."

How passionately she breathed the sublime words, "I love him!" How God-like was the forgiveness of such sins as his for such a plea!

St. Udo forced some drops of brandy into his unfortunate comrade's lips, and in time had the satisfaction to hear a deep sigh escape him.

"Calembours," exclaimed St. Udo, "look up and speak to this noble woman."

The chevalier opened his eyes, and strove to see her through the dim gloom, but vainly.

"My husband!" breathed the lady, with bitter tears, "will you cast me off for the third time? Ah, don't break my heart! My poor Edgar is dead, and I have not a soul but you, and after all these years of separation. Oh, Ladislaus!"

Her face sank on his breast, she clung to him with both eager hands.

He glared about him like some savage animal. He forgot his pain and his capture, in rage at such a proposition, and answered with an insulting laugh.

"Oh—ha, ha!" screamed he, with the enjoyment of a hyena. "This maniac mistakes the Chevalier de Calembours for her husband Ladislaus. Excellent! *nom de Dieu!* most excellent. Sweet madam, your troubles have crazed your brain. A chance resemblance has deceived you—*mon coeur!* You have mistaken your man."

She heard him with a gasp of horror.

She extricated herself and stood off, a dark shadow in the gray night,

"You repudiate me once more?" she cried, in a thrilling voice. "Traitor, renegade—spy! You are not worthy of a woman's love; but you shall feel a woman's vengeance!"

She snatched a stiletto from her bosom, and threw herself upon the prostrate rascal, but was caught by St. Udo and disarmed.

"Enough, madam," said he, icily; "the miscreant shall expiate his villainies by death, but not at your hands."

She submitted in silence, and without one backward look upon the man who had been her life's curse, she galloped back with her attendants, to watch over her dead boy, and to keep him from the dews of Heaven and the birds of prey for many a dread day.

There is yet another scene to paint in this series of life-pictures, gentle reader.

It is the last.

On through dim night sped the little force, under a rising moon eclipsed by drifting clouds, and met face to face a regiment in full march.

The leaders anxiously gazed at each other, hoping to encounter friends, but in the gloom their uniforms were undistinguishable.

"What regiment is yours?" demanded St. Udo, at last.

There was a pause, brief and ominous.

"What is yours?" cautiously returned the officer in command.

"The—Vermont," said Udo Brand.

Then, in heaven's name, take it! Fire!" commanded the other.

A simultaneous flash along each line distinctly revealed every face, and then the front ranks fell in the windrows under the murderous volley.

"Again!" shouted the Confederate leader.

Again his men stepped forward, aimed at St. Udo's handful, and again the brave Vermonters melted away like smoke before the wind.

Then Colonel Brand gave the orders for retreat, and sullenly took the rear of his diminished band. But the foe pressed close, and a chance shot killed his horse, and a flying pursuer dealt the rider a stunning blow, and left him for dead; and the battle-storm rolled away, and was lost in the distant woods.

And when the shrouded moon was shining (three black stripes across its disk) upon the man lying on his broken sword, with his head upon the neck of his pulseless horse, he heard a rustle in the dewy leaves, and footsteps soft and sure approaching, and he raised his dark, dim eyes supplicatingly, for