

to fight knee by knee with the mob. Enough!" he concluded; "to you I shall be but Ludovic, *mon ami*. Come—do you play?"

"I play, chevalier. I am at your service," answered the captain.

The chevalier preceded his new friend to his state-room, and ushered him in with "effusion."

A man rose stiffly from the table, where he had been reading, and made way for the chevalier and his guest.

A tall, elderly man, in servant's livery, who stooped and slunk softly about, whose sallow, brown face grew white when the captain scanned it curiously, whose thin, gray hair and immense overhanging gray mustache showed traces of cares rather than of years, and whose shitting, shrinking eyeballs ever sought the ground, as if their depths held emotions which the man must hide on peril of his life.

A sudden shudder seized Captain Brand; a thrill ran sickening through his heart, which had never so thrilled before. He turned his back—he knew not why—in hatred upon the chevalier's valet.

Was it a perception of evil, slow creeping toward him from the gloomy future—slow, but sure to come as death himself?

Pshaw! what necromancer's dream was this? The captain, scoffing, threw it from him, and forgot the haggard old servant.

"Thomas, we play *ecarte*," aspirated the chevalier, in his rough English (he invariably spoke French to the captain). "Bring wine and cards, and wait upon us."

They plunged with zest into the game, and passed many hours in its intricacies. The chevalier protested that he had found an adversary worthy of him, and Captain Brand swore that for want of more piquant sauce a game of euchre every night with Calembours might answer to flavor the insipidity of the voyage out to New York.

But the careless captain might have noted, too, had he considered such a worm worthy of notice, that whatever he did—talk, sing, drink wine, or muse—the secret, shifting eyes of Thoms, the valet, never lost a movement, but hour after hour watched him with the unearthly intentness of a blood-hound.

While the captain slept that night in unconscious security, the Chevalier de Calembours, with a complacent chuckle and a flowing pen, wrote down in his diary, these famous words:

"*I came, I saw, I conquered!*" Monsieur Brand promises to be excellent sport though little hope of pigeoning him, *en passant*. Yes, he has keener scent than monsieur, my patron, gave him credit for—he won't be led altogether by the nose. But pouf! who is

it that will not be gulled by Ludovic de Calembours?"

Thoms, too, in secret, and with wary ear pricked for possible interruption, bent, in the seclusion of his own state-room, over a tiny green note-book, jotted down some things he wished to remember, then thrusting away his little book in a secret pocket, he rubbed his long, lean hands together in stealthy triumph, and laughed long and wickedly.

Five days passed; the airy chevalier held his own in the sour captain's esteem, and they mutually approved of each other.

They leaned over the taffrail together, Thoms a step behind, and watched the glittering city of New York, glowing in their eyes, as the steamer plowed its way between green and pleasant shores to gain it.

Crowds waited on the pier—sailors, civilians, and soldiers mixed in frantic confusion.

The chevalier examined them through his glass with smiling nonchalance; but Captain Brand looked over the scene with thoughtful brow.

"What is monsieur's programme?" chirped the chevalier. "Does he dally with Fortune's train, or does he brush by her robes and seize the treasure which she guards? Shall *mon ami* live the short and merry life of conviviality with me in New York, or shall he choose the short and beastly bad career of a soldier?"

St. Udo Brand laughed bitterly.

"What is my life worth to me without fame to gild it?" growled he. "I have no gold to make it shine."

"*Bravissima!*" shouted the chevalier, clapping his hands; then, with a smile which just showed his long teeth in a hungry arch, "I, too, will go southward, because, that to me my life is very much worth, and I will do bravely to gild it with—gold. We will be brother colonels, *mon ami*, and Thoms—what shall you do?"

Thoms' evil face beamed with intelligence.

"I'll follow you masters as long as you live," uttered the smooth voice, humbly.

"We shall fight, by gar, for glory!" cried the chevalier. "At least, we shall say so. But each has his motive *pardieu*, and a sensible motive is mine. Ah, life is nothing without illusions, as Mendelssohn says."

"Nothing indeed," smiled the silent lips of Thoms, "nothing indeed."

Thus these three chose to walk together the road which had been apportioned them by that secret Power behind the scene, bound close together by Circumstance's chain, yet sundered in soul by walls as deep as dungeon walls, and the dusty banners,