

SPRING TIME

robed in blue, a gold circlet upon her head, facing her barons and knights-banneret, churchmen who held lands from her, and leaders of the townsmen. That which she had to lay before them was the matter of her marriage. . . .

At Castel-Noir the dark fir trees wore emeralds. The stream had its loud spring music. Nor Foulque nor Garin had been idle through the winter. Back to the Black Tower and the hamlet had come their men who had fought at Roche-de-Frêne — Foulque's men and the men who had come with Garin from the land over the sea. Houses had to be built for these — more fields ploughed and planted. Stables had to be made larger. The road was bad that led from the Black Tower to the nearest highway; it was remade. When spring came Castel-Noir was in better estate than ever before. Garin spoke of what manner of priest they should bring in — and of some clerk who might be given a house and who could teach.

Raimbaut the Six-fingered had for his chief been man of Montmaure, but for it Montmaure had been man of Roche-de-Frêne. Now, again, was it only Roche-de-Frêne's. Montmaure might look blackly across from his own borders, but that was all. . . . It seemed that, escheating to the ruling house, the barony was not yet given, for service paid and to be paid, to some lord who should rebuild the castle and bring up the lands that now were waste. . . . Foulque had hours of speculation as to that. In the hall, of