

A Man of His Age

"Monsieur de Coligny taught me loyalty, Madame, and to protect the weak and defenceless."

"I take your meaning, Monsieur," said the Queen, sharply. "Never fear but I take your meaning. Loyalty, but not to me. Loyalty! A pretty loyalty that, to a vile wench who plots the killing of the Prince of Béarn."

"No, no, no!" cried Mademoiselle, passionately, and turning from Jeanne she put her hands upon his shoulder, raising her face to his. "Never believe it! never! never!"

Turning, he looked down at her, and a light leaped to his eyes—a light my lady, seeing, understood. "Thank the Lord," he said, under his breath, and slipping an arm round her he drew her close to him and then faced the Queen again.

"You hear, Madame," he said, simply.

"It is well, Monsieur de Crussenay," said Jeanne, gravely—"it is very well that I have not forgotten Tarbes, for it seems to me you give me the lie direct. Were I Catherine and De Grammont Tavannes that word had been your last. Come girl, the truth. You plotted with La Hake to seize the Prince of Béarn?"

"Not to his hurt, Madame."

"What? To his bettering? See thou hurt not the lamb, quoth the fox to the wolf; but rather let the kites of Paris do the rending! A pretty bettering that! Your own mouth condemns you, girl."

From the Queen Mademoiselle turned to De Crussenay, as if to convince him touched her more nearly.

"La Hake swore he would do the Prince no hurt," said she, earnestly. "It makes for peace, he said, for