

A Man of His Age

this quitting of the kingdom seems to my ignorance doubtful wisdom. Messengers have ridden post to recall the Prince of Béarn, and we count on his return to-morrow. Come thou to Pau with all speed, dear love—if thou art strong enough, as I pray God thou art—and let Marcel follow with his enrolment, losing no time on the way. Were it not that peace and truth are threatened, and that death and sorrow must possess both France and Navarre, I would thank God that thou art to come back to me so many days the sooner.

“Thy loving wife,

“JEANNE.”

There is the letter, word for word, as it lies in the muniment chest with the Prince of Béarn's letter, and such other papers as have the heart and pride of a man bound up in them. One other time only, since she had ceased to be Jeanne la Carmeuse, had my lady written me. Then it was a blurred and half heart-broken farewell ere I sailed for Florida, and if there is no abiding record of the words it is because they are written still deeper on my life.

It was late at night when my lady's letter reached Bernauld, and the first light of the morning found me riding out of the court-yard whence three days before we had made our burst on La Hake's men. Of the Prince I had heard nothing, and therefore argued—rightly, as it turned out—that he had made his way to Beauvoir in safety. But as I rode down the slope I thought, grimly enough, that Jeanne d'Albret had little notion how far the lad had been on a journey from the end of which not all the mothers or queens in Christendom could have recalled him. Our hopes and fortunes were low