

A Man of His Age

and entered, saying that Mademoiselle de Romenay was in waiting. For a moment the Queen stood irresolute, looking from me to the door, and from the door to De Montamar, then, half to herself, she said:

"She has come sooner than I had counted on, but all's one for that. Admit her, Monsieur d'Arros, and then to your duty again. Monsieur de Montamar, we will excuse your presence for the moment, but let the rest remain."

One not in the secret might have seen but little difference in Mademoiselle Suzanne, but to me there was a subtle change. There was a new grace of womanliness, a softening of the lines of the mouth, a quenching of the malice in the eyes, and an added touch of pallor but made her face the sweeter.

"You sent for me, Madame," said she, courtesying; and then there was a silence, for at that moment not even the Queen knew what was to come next.

"In France," said she, at last, speaking with studied slowness, and looking at Mademoiselle as if they two alone were in the room—"in France they break a murderess on the wheel, and a would-be killer of princes they tear asunder with cart-ropes—that is brutal, and in Navarre the sword and the block serve for either."

"Is La Hake's crime still unpurged?" answered Mademoiselle, turning from the Queen to my lady; "or am I a scapegoat for the breaking of treaties?"

"Answer for yourself, Mademoiselle de Romenay," cried the Queen, furiously. "The Lord knows the count is heavy enough without adding to it the sins of others."