

A Man of His Age

her, though God help her with His comfort at the telling of it. But," and a catch came in his breath as his voice broke—"but that it should be through a coward stroke, and the lad with a laugh in his mouth. 'Father!' cried he twice—'father, father!' thinking I had slipped his bridle because all was well. That stung me, the savage hardness of the hound, and I crave pardon, Master Blaise, if I did aught that was unseemly to him, living or dead."

"'Tis a good riddance for Navarre," said I, slowly, "only, I wish to the Lord he had his life whole in him and a sword in his grip."

"Amen to that," answered Marcel, "for then the going would have tasted the bitterer."

"The lad?" said I, looking over my shoulder with a question, after we had ridden another furlong in silence.

"That's seen to," replied Marcel, shortly, "and, by your leave, what's least talked of is soonest forgotten."

Of the grief of the mother I say little. When God set up chambers in the heart he put a mother's sorrow in the Holy of Holies where none may enter save himself, and he who seeks to thrust his comfort there is either a blundering fool or one who knows little of the world's grief. Dry-eyed and silent, and with a face hard set in its stern repression she received us, asking, at least at that time, nothing of how or when. Later on, still dry-eyed and silent, she took to her arms all that malice had left to her of love and pride. Dry-eyed and silent she went about the silent rooms doing her woman's duty as