

A Ladder of Swords

the Comtesse de Montgomery, sent him word to fetch De la Forêt to Mont Orgueil Castle. Clanking and blowing, he was shown into the great hall with De la Forêt, where waited Sir Hugh and the widow of the renowned Camisard. Clanking and purring like an enormous cat, he turned his head away to the window when De la Forêt dropped on his knees and kissed the hand of the comtesse, whose eyes were full of tears. Clanking and gurgling, he sat at a mighty meal of turbot, eels, lobsters, ormers, capons, boar's head, brawn and mustard, swan, curlew, and spiced meats. This he washed down with bastard, malmsey, and good ale, topped with almonds, comfits, perfumed cherries with "ipocras," then sprinkled himself with rose-water and dabbled his face and hands in it. Filled to the turret, he lurched to his feet, and, drinking to Sir Hugh's toast, "Her sacred Majesty!" he clanked and roared "Elizabeth!" as though upon the field of battle. He felt the star of De Carteret declining and Rozel's glory ascending like a comet. Once set in a course, nothing could