

CHAPTER XXV

"A MAN SHALL CLEAVE UNTO HIS WIFE"

OURS was, at the first, but a silent companionship as we rode home to Bernauld through the August sunshine, with the crisp breeze of the morning whistling in our ears. In the course of nature Marcel's thoughts were bitter and heavy enough, and a kind of shame for his savagery added to his dumbness. My own brain, too, was in a whirl, and I know not yet whether I was glad or wrathful that the Squire had thrust my will aside and taken the law of vengeance into his own hands.

So we rode in silence, and looked askance at one another as men do who are heavy at heart and fear to make bad worse by the wounding of an unweighed word; and what could I say? To blame Marcel was to condone the lad's murder, and what father would endure that? While to applaud him was to excuse in another what I had condemned in myself, so, in our war of thought, we rode in silence, and with a wall of restraint between us.

It was Marcel who broke it down.

"Don't think, Master Blaise, that I grudge him to Bernauld," said he, putting out a hand in a gesture of appeal. "No, nor will his mother when I tell