

A Ladder of Swords

think I'm not a proper man and a gentleman? Dost think I'll not use thee well and 'fend thee, Huguenot though thou art, 'gainst trouble or fret or any man's persecutions—be he my lord bishop, my lord chancellor, or King of France, or any other?"

She came a step closer to him, even as though she would lay a hand upon his arm. "I believe that you would do all that in you lay," she answered, steadily. "Yours is a rough wooing, but it is honest—"

"Rough! Rough!" he protested, for he thought he had behaved like some Adonis. Was it not ten years only since he had been at court?

"Be assured, monsieur, that I know how to prize the man who speaks after the light given him. I know that you are a brave and valorous gentleman. I must thank you most truly and heartily, but, monsieur, you and yours are not for me. Seek elsewhere, among your own people, in your own religion and language and position, the Mistress of Rozel."

He was dumfounded. Now he com-