

bestow our weary bodies for the night.

"It will go hard, Martin," he said, "but we shall hear more of this. He may lord it how he can in his own city and among the merchants who make him powerful. They of the house of Aulnac fight only with the sword, having slight skill with the tongue. 'Tis a pity he should have forgotten so far. And yet," and he mused as though speaking to himself, "it might have been wiser to have lighted his path by the glint of steel than to have parted thus in peace. But the dead must be respected, whatever come of it;" and with that he raised his cap in reverence of the benignant memory and was gone, leaving me more at a loss than ever and happily too tired to pursue the subject.

When I thought it over in the morning I saw everything clearly enough; but a little later, coming upon Henri and his sister talking together, and hearing her upbraid him for the affront put upon the Italian by himself and by me, and above all for having suffered him to part in such manner, the clouds settled down again. It was like facing the savagest martinet in the army, to stand silently receiving the weight of these reproaches, for silent we were, he for reasons he knew of, and I because I knew nothing and thought it wise to follow his manner. But I carried a sick heart with me for many a month, thinking over the bitterness of what she had said.

For a matter of six months or so after these events there was a quiet time at Aulnac. And yet we were busy enough repairing the place where it had fallen into neglect, and bringing to bear upon the defences such skill as we had learned around the camp fires. And beyond this there were dis-

putes of long standing among the tenants on the domain. There was one band of Burgundian riders whose glory lay in their reputation for striking suddenly and hard in unexpected places. They rode night and day and so hard that they were always ahead of the news of their coming. Thus once they had descended upon the domain of Aulnac just as the harvest was ready for the barns. Driving the peasants in a mad rush to the safety of the castle, they pillaged and laid waste the estate, carrying off all that was readily portable, burning many of the poor people's houses and destroying from sheer fiendish mischief all landmarks wherever they could be discovered. The peasants went back to their farms and to what was left of their houses, but the disputes as to properties were unceasing. Thus one good man, having watched his house burning to the ground, came next day to look upon the ruins and found the work of his life and the hope of his old age gone forever. So he took shelter with his neighbor and it was nigh two years before he could again undertake the erection of a cottage. Meantime his host, a right cunning fellow, had been utilising much of the little plot of ground, with the result that when affairs came to be straightened the fortunate one claimed more than his due and the other poor wight would not speak against the man who, after all, had preserved him and his in the time of need.

Now this hardship was never made known to Henri directly, mainly because of the motives I have mentioned. But the Lady Margaret, his sister, who accompanied us frequently on our rounds of visitation, had a way with her