

happiness to observe or be annoyed by the Dauphin's presence.

It would be idle to dilate upon the preparations that ushered in the marriage-day, or upon the magnificence of the wedding, or the feasting and festivities that followed.—It is sufficient to say, that as the wedded pair had arranged to leave Paris on the evening of the same day, to pass a few hours at a country house some miles from the capital, and proceed thence direct to England, the Count of ——— and his friends would part with them on no other condition than that they should devote the last few hours of their stay in Paris to a farewell party in the Count's mansion. In vain Richard pleaded: the Count would take no denial, but promised to release them at an early hour, as they had determined on leaving Paris that night.

That evening the Dauphin was not present, and the mirth was unrestrained; but time flew on, and every minute seemed an hour, to two at least—to the young couple. No sooner would Richard allude to the necessity of departure, than he was surrounded, and cheated into staying a little longer. The count had an admirable story to tell—the marquis recollected a striking illustration to it—and some one else, now that the affair was mentioned, remembered a singular collateral circumstance—and, in fine, it was near midnight before they escaped into their carriage and drove rapidly away.

It was a night in spring, and the heavy clouds had deepened in their hue, and hung like a pall over the silent capital. The streets were now deserted, and the feeble light of the lamps, that scarcely served to show the ropes by which they were suspended across the roads, appeared more fitful and cheerless than ever.

The carriage was proceeding slowly along an ill-paved street in a quiet quarter of the city, when a man, masked and cloaked, suddenly stepped forward to the horses' heads, and cried in a loud voice,—

"I arrest you!" seizing the reins with both his hands. At the same moment four others, but without masks, emerged from an archway, and rushed to the carriage door; but Richard had thrown it open at the sound of the voice, and now confronted the assailants.

"What means this? Who are you that dare to stay us in the public road?"

"Gentlemen of fortune!" was the laconic reply of one; "we pick up our living in the streets."

"Industrious artizans," said another, "for we work whilst our neighbours are asleep."

There was no need for these facetious explanations, for their exterior betrayed their calling.

Not caring to parley with the ruffians, who were too numerous, also, to be easily shaken off, Richard drew out his purse, saying:

"You are poor—you want money; take this and let us pass—I have no more."

"A very benevolent gentleman," remarked the fellow who had just spoken, as he snatched the purse; "and a very acute sense of the wants of his fraternity: but at the same time, that lady must come with us," producing a pistol as he spoke; "just as a pledge of your good faith, you know."

Richard started back, and the words—"My wife!" escaped his lips as he grasped the carriage door; and, as he spoke, a coach came slowly from the archway into the street, and drew up.

"Sorry to disturb conjugal felicity," rejoined the man, rubbing his chin with the muzzle of his pistol, "but if you're like me with *my* wife, you'll stand something handsome to get rid of her."

"Why do you delay?" demanded a tall, masked figure who had alighted from the coach; "bind him if he resists, and seize the lady."

The terrified Marie screamed as the men approached, and Richard instantly exclaimed to the masked figure as he held fast the door, and kept the men at bay:

"Dauphin, your disguise is useless! I know you—and I know you now for a villain!"

He had not drawn his sword, for policy withheld him; and although the prince, to avoid the possibility of bloodshed, and depending on superior force, had strictly forbidden the pistols to be loaded, Richard knew it not; and in a moment he was overpowered, and Marie dragged into the street. She implored the prince's mercy, and called upon his honour, but in vain, when a thought seemed suddenly to strike the prince, and at his command they were released—Marie flying to her husband for protection.