

body of English horsemen followed by the bridal party and the remainder of Buckingham's suite bringing up the rear. Upon an ambling palfrey, arrayed in a robe of virgin white, rode the lovely bride, still more beautiful from the excitement of the scene. By her side rode her *pro tem.* husband, the accomplished Buckingham, as gay and frivolous as when a few weeks previous he had left his royal master's court to conduct to him the being for whose sake he had relinquished the Infanta of Spain.

"Lady, have you no regret at leaving the home wherein you have passed your early days," said Buckingham, first breaking silence as Paris was lost in the distance.

"Many and many a tear have I dropped within a few hours," replied Henrietta, even then brushing away a pearly drop which had started unbidden to her eye. "But what avails it. I go to him who has sworn before heaven to love and cherish me through life."

Buckingham made no reply, but suffered her palfrey to proceed a few feet in advance while he turned to speak to Locksler.

"You must give up, Buckingham," said he "and confess you have lost your wager. The Princess cares no more for you than Richelieu."

"Hush," interrupted Buckingham, "my time is not yet out. Before it expires, if I do not convince you that I have gained the bet, set me down as one unskilled in the arts of love. Was Richelieu present at the ceremony this morning?"

"He was."

"I saw him not."

"Quite likely he was behind those window curtains," replied Locksler with a smile, "those curtains—you know, which."

"Locksler," demanded Buckingham, "know you what passed that night of the ball?"

"Every thing but the conversation between you and the Princess. After the ball was over I returned to the room in quest of you. As I entered one door, Henrietta came in at the other. Unperceived I hid myself. I saw you draw her to the balcony and put down the curtain. The Cardinal came stealthily in to listen, I suppose, and my sword came half out of my sheath, while I for a moment meditated trying an experiment to see how English steel would go through French flesh and blood."

"Had you done it," said Buckingham earnestly, "you would have rolled in wealth for the rest of your life. Why did you hesitate?"

"Because I was afraid the old sinner might die hard, and in his struggles I might have been detected. I heard your voices whispering, though I could not distinguish your words, saw the lady

run from you, heard her scream, and your conversation with the Cardinal, and then, for fear I should be detected, took the wisest course and beat a retreat."

At sunset the embassy embarked on board the fleet which was waiting for them. As they took leave of their escort, Count Cleaves slipped a small scrap of paper into the hands of Henrietta, unperceived by Buckingham, and then giving a shout for England and France, retraced his steps to Paris.

With a fair and steady breeze, the ships stood out to sea, and by dark were well off the coast; as night set in, the glittering stars, one by one peeped out from the sky, and the bright and radiant moon shinning through her thin gauze-like curtains of clouds, threw a rich flood of unveiled light upon the bosom of the rolling deep. Upon the quarter deck of the leading barque, enjoying the beauty of the scene, stood Buckingham and the Princess, and a little in the rear, hid, however, by the shadow of the sails, was the boon companion of Buckingham, Locksler.

"A lovely night," said Henrietta breaking silence, "see where the moon is reflected in a bright, golden column on the water. Have you ever such scenes upon your Thames?"

"Often, Lady, often."

"I shall learn to love it then, for it will remind me of my own home and the sparkling Seine."

"Henrietta," said Buckingham in a low tone. She turned her head to catch his words.

"Be not offended if I tell you once again that I love you."

"Duke," said Henrietta, "I bid you never speak to me upon that subject again."

"Yet, you once told me you could have returned my love."

"I did, and ah! my heart will not let me now deny it," said she.

"Enough. In a few hours you will meet your husband, and then I shall be forgotten. I love you devotedly, and grant me one request, and I'll never trouble you more."

"And that request is——"

"This." As he spoke he encircled her waist with his arm, and kissed her lips. Startled, she burst from him, and fled toward the cabin.

"Bravo," said Locksler. "You've won the wager."

Henrietta turned and fixed her eyes full upon Buckingham, then drawing the paper which the Count of Cleaves had given her from her bosom, she read it by the light of the moon. For a moment she stood in silence, the giving the paper to Buckingham, with all the dignity of insulted