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*A Merry Tale of a Merry Time*

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temptuously. "I am not ready to sail for France so soon."

The King stood irresolute. Events had transpired so quickly that he scarce knew what it was best to do. His troubled spirit longed for a further hearing, while his heart demanded the ending of the scene with a peremptory word.

Before he could decide upon his course, the Duchess had swept across the room, with queenly grace.

"Our hostess will pardon my eyes for wandering," she said, 'undaunted'; "but her abode is filled with pleasant surprises. Sire, here is a piece of handiwork."

She knelt by the couch, and drew from under it a coat of gray, one sleeve of which had caught her eye.

Neil looked at Moll with reproving glances.

"Marry, 't is Strings's, of course," continued Portsmouth, dangling the coat before the wondering eyes of all. "The lace, the ruffle, becomes his complexion. He fits everything here so beautifully."

As she turned the garment slowly about,