

this search from end to end of the country for a fool."

"A fool, sir!" exclaimed the landlord.

"Aye, you may well fancy we've come to the end of our journey, but you're too fat for the part. And it takes a clever man to be the kind of fool we're looking for, though for that matter the last fool was a pretty dull fellow to my way of thinking. It was heavy work laughing at his humour."

"It must be true that I am a fool as some have said, for I do not understand what you mean," said the landlord.

"What! Did you never hear tell of Bergolet?"

"Never, sir."

"Lord, what it is to live out of the world! Bergolet was a fool, paid for being a fool at the court of the Duchess, and Bergolet is dead."

"And you would fill his place?"

"No, Master Landlord, I would not, but Her Grace would. All women have strange fancies, and the Duchess has more than her fair share of them. It pleases her to cling to custom like limpet to rock. A fool there has always been at Court so a fool she will have. Mark you, there are plenty of unpaid ones there already, but they will not suffice. Bergolet came originally out of France, they say, but rumour has it that the late Duke found him in your village yonder."

"I never heard of him."

"For all that he existed, and is dead. Her Grace is in the village hoping to find one of his family to take the vacant place. Presently she will be here, and then for Metzburg please heaven and that cellar I know of in the market place."

"Coming here! The Duchess!"

"And if no fool has been found she'll be in a tem-

pestu
know
sides,
of gr
please
woma

Th
dering
spect.
speak
lord I
concer
sion c
was in
ter to
beauty
tendon
cause
interes
trembl

"I'l
"I'll d
best, b
some s

Laug
ously i

"He
ing to l
ing his

The
trooper
entranc

"Is

"No