

hand, and for a moment the two remained in a position which might well have awakened the fears and jealousy of Richelieu, had he witnessed the scene. Erect in the majesty of female loveliness stood the tender Princess, seemingly an inhabitant of a brighter world than this, and kneeling at her feet, forgetful of every thing in the enchantment of the moment, the form of the noble Englishman in all the grace and maturity of manliness, bowed in allegiance at the altar of beauty.

"Duke of Buckingham," at length she replied slowly, "I doubt not the sincerity of your protestations, but I fear"—

"Fear what, dearest," interrupted Buckingham, impatiently—"why need you fear any thing? Say but that you will return your love for mine—say but that you will be my bride, and against all the world, with but my sword and buckler only for my aids, I will maintain your fame. Oh! dear lady, promise me only that you will be mine, and Charles himself shall not tear you from me. Together we will seek some fairy-like secluded spot, and forgetful of all the world, we will sip of the fount of love, free from all sorrow and care. Blissfully will pass the remainder of our lives, unchecked by a single cloud."

"I will confess my weakness," was the soft reply, "but it shall not conquer me. Had you but told me this a few months since, I would have asked for no greater worldly happiness than to have become the wife of the Duke of Buckingham; but now I am betrothed to another, and my promise must not be retracted. Never shall it be said that Henrietta of France broke her plighted faith. Charles, yours only will I be in this life, and pray heaven give me strength to school my heart to the strict performance of its duty. Buckingham, my momentary failing has passed away, and duty takes its place. As an affectionate friend ever will I regard you, more I must never be to you. Forget what has passed between us this night. Seek a more worthy object for your affections, and in her society, cease to think of one whose wishes will ever be for your prosperity. Farewell, forget me and be happy."

Withdrawing her hand from his, she turned away; and it was with secret pleasure that Buckingham caught a glimpse of sparkling tear drops beneath her eyelids. Rising to his feet, he bowed respectfully; and as the door closed upon her receding figure, buried his face in his mantle, and leaned his head against the wall.

Time, when wafted on the breezes of pleasure, rolls swiftly on. Days, weeks, and months follow each other in quick succession. Events tread

rapidly upon each other's footsteps, and the shadow of to-day has scarcely thrown his vision on our minds, ere it passes into the eternity of yesterday; and the forerunner of to-morrow is plainly seen in the distance advancing onward with gigantic strides. So it is in life. In infancy we imagine we shall *never* reach the grey hairs of wisdom, and time is chided for its dilatory movements. We long for experience, and forget the pleasure of the moment in the fond anticipation of the future. Hope cheers us on with visions too blissful to be real, we picture bright happiness in after years, anticipating delights in time to come, which too frequently are never realized. But, alas! how often does age cause us to sigh and sigh again for the futility of early hopes. Swiftly passed the days allotted for the visit of the embassy to the court of France. The cup of pleasure was drained to the dregs. Dissipation and debauchery were sated with the multitude of their victims, and when the time drew near for the departure of their princess Henrietta for a foreign home, not one wished the visit prolonged, but each looked forward to the day of leave-taking as the messenger of relief.

It was the Sabbath morning; but, oh! how unlike the quiet Sunday morning which dawns in peace upon the hills and valleys of our own fair land. No church-going bells awakened the echoes of the city. The haughty cathedrals did indeed send forth loud and prolonged peals from their spires, but not to welcome in the Saviour's day. The ensigns of France tossed their proud emblems in the air from every roof and spire; drums and trumpets rolled out their startling sounds; shouts and huzzas from thousands and thousands rose up to increase the din, and joy was demonstrated in every action. On that morning, Charles the First of England espoused by proxy the Princess Henrietta of France.

Immediately after the marriage had been solemnized, preparations were made for the departure of the embassy. A goodly cavalcade composed of the flower of the court of France, stood ready at the gates of the Louvre palace to escort the nuptial party to the seaport from which they were to embark for England. The sun was not many hours high, when the goodly company swept through the gates and accompanied by multitudes of citizens, in the midst of shouting and cheering, the clanging of bells and the rattling of drums, bade adieu to Paris, and exchanged the pleasures in which for a short time they had revelled to satiety, for the anticipation of the more real delights of home. The first of the cavalcade was the French escort commanded by a gallant nobleman, Count Hugh, of Cleaves; then a small