

## Chapter 30

### HOW CHICOT AND HIS COMPANION INSTALLED THEMSELVES AT THE HOTEL OF THE CROSS, AND HOW THEY WERE RECEIVED BY THE HOST.

Chicot watched Nicolas David into the principal hotel of the place, and then said to Gorenflot, "Go in and bargain for a private room, say that you expect your brother, then come out and wait about for me, and I will come in when it is dark, and you can bring me straight to my room. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"Choose a good room, as near as possible to that of the traveler who has just arrived; it must look on to the street, and on no account pronounce my name."

Gorenflot acquitted himself marvelously of the commission. Their room was only separated by a partition from that of Nicolas David.

"You deserve a recompense," said Chicot to him, "and you shall have sherry wine for supper."

"I never got tipsy on that wine; it would be agreeable."

"You shall to-night. But now ramble about the town."

"But the supper?"

"I shall be ready against your return; here is a crown meanwhile."

Gorenflot went off quite happy, and then Chicot made, with a gimlet, a hole in the partition at about the height of his eye. Through this, he could hear distinctly all that passed, and he could just see the host talking to Nicolas David, who was professing to have been sent on a mission by the king, to whom he professed great fidelity. The host did not reply, but Chicot fancied he could see an ironical smile on his lip whenever the king's name was mentioned.

"Is he a leaguer?" thought Chicot; "I will find out."

When the host left David he came to visit Chicot, who said, "Pray sit down, monsieur; and before we make a definitive arrangement, listen to my history. You saw me this morning with a monk?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Silence! that monk is proscribed."

"What! is he a disguised Huguenot?"

Chicot took an offended air. "Huguenot, indeed! he is my relation, and I have no Huguenot relations. On the contrary, he is so fierce an enemy of the Huguenots, that he has fallen into disgrace with his majesty Henri III., who protects them, as you know."

The host began to look interested. "Silence," said he.

"Why, have you any of the king's people here?"

"I fear so; there is a traveler in there."

"Then we must fly at once, for proscribed, menaced----"

"Where will you go?"

"We have two or three addresses given to us by an innkeeper we know, M. la Hurière."

"Do you know La Hurière?"

"Yes, we made his acquaintance on the night of St. Bartholomew."

"Well, I see you and your relation are holy people; I also know La Hurière. Then you say this monk----"

"Had the imprudence to preach against the Huguenots, and with so much success that the king wanted to put him in prison."

"And then?"

"Ma foi, I carried him off."

"And you did well."

"M. de Guise offered to protect him."

"What! the great Henri?"

"Himself; but I feared civil war."

"If you are friends of M. de Guise, you know this;" and he made a sort of masonic sign by which the leaguers recognized each other.

Chicot, who had seen both this and the answer to it twenty times during that famous night, replied, "And you this?"

"Then," said the innkeeper, "you are at home here; my house is yours, look on me as a brother, and if you have no money----"

Chicot drew out his purse. The sight of a well-filled purse is always agreeable, even to a generous host.

"Our journey," continued Chicot, "is paid for by the treasurer of the Holy Union, for we travel to propagate the faith. Tell us of an inn where we may be safe."

"Nowhere more so than here, and if you wish it, the other traveler shall turn out."

"Oh! no; it is better to have your enemies near, that you may watch them. But, what makes you think he is our enemy?"

"Well! first he came disguised as a lackey, then he put on an advocate's dress, and I am sure he is no more an advocate than he is a lackey, for I saw a long rapier under his cloak. Then he avowed he had a mission from the king!"

"From Herod, as I call him."

"Sardanapalus."

"Bravo!"

"Ah! I see we understand each other."

"Then we are to remain here?"

"I should think so."

"Not a word about my relation."

"Of course not."

"Nor of me."

"Oh, no! But hush! here is some one."

"Oh, it is the worthy man himself!"

The host turned to Gorenflot, and made a sign of the leaguers. Gorenflot was struck with terror and astonishment.

"Reply, my brother," said Chicot; "he is a member."

"Of what?"

"Of the Holy Union," said Bernouillet, in a low tone.

"You see all is safe; reply," said Chicot.

Gorenflot replied, to the great joy of the innkeeper.

"But," said Gorenflot, who did not like the conversation, "you promised me some sherry."

"Sherry, Malaga, Alicant--every wine in my cellar is at your disposal."

Gorenflot looked at Chicot in amazement.

For three following days Gorenflot got drunk, first on sherry, next on Malaga, then on Alicant; afterwards he declared he liked Burgundy best, and returned to that. Meanwhile, Chicot had never stirred from his room, and had constantly watched Nicolas David, who, having appointed to meet Pierre de Gondy at this inn, would not leave the house. On the morning of the sixth day he declared himself ill, and the next day worse. Bernouillet came joyfully to tell Chicot.

"What! do you think him in danger?"

"High fever, my dear brother; he is delirious, and tried to strangle me and beat my servants. The doctors do not understand his complaint."

"Have you seen him?"

"Yes; I tell you he tried to strangle me."

"How did he seem?"

"Pale and furious, and constantly crying out."

"What?"

"Take care of the king! they want to hurt the king! Then he constantly says that he expects a man from Avignon, and wishes to see him before he dies."

As for Gorenflot, he grew visibly fatter every day, so much so, that he announced to Chicot with terror one day that the staircase was narrowing. Neither David, the League, nor religion occupied him; he thought of nothing but how to vary his dinner and wine, so that Bernouillet often exclaimed in astonishment, "To think that that man should be a torrent of eloquence!"