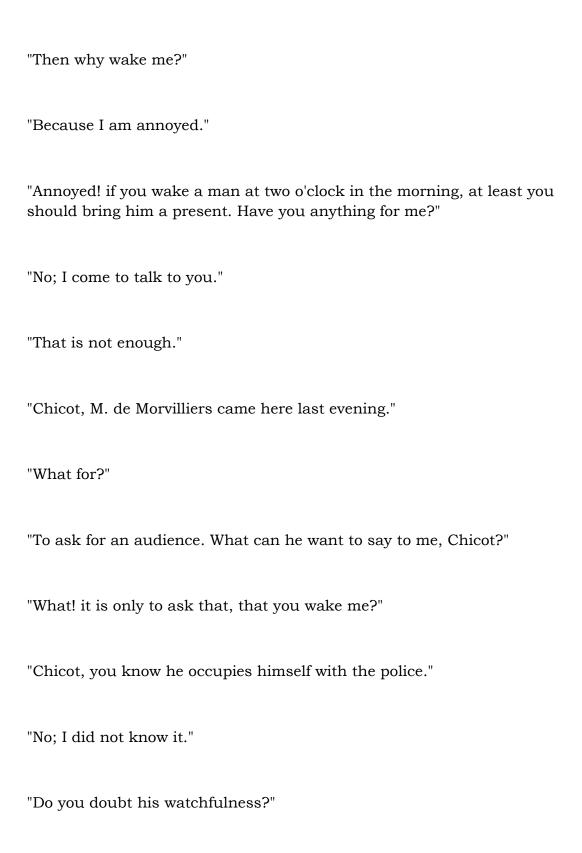
## Chapter 36

## CHICOT AND THE KING.

That same evening M. de Monsoreau presented his wife in the queen's circle. Henri, tired, had gone to bed, but after sleeping three or four hours, he woke, and feeling no longer sleepy, proceeded to the room where Chicot slept, which was the one formerly occupied by St. Luc; Chicot slept soundly, and the king called him three times before he woke. At last he opened his eyes and cried out, "What is it?"

"Chicot, my friend, it is I."
"You; who?"
"I, Henri."
"Decidedly, my son, the pheasants must have disagreed with you; I warned you at supper, but you would eat so much of them, as well as of those crabs."
"No; I scarcely tasted them."
"Then you are poisoned, perhaps. Ventre de biche! how pale you are!"
"It is my mask," said the king.
"Then you are not ill?"
"No."







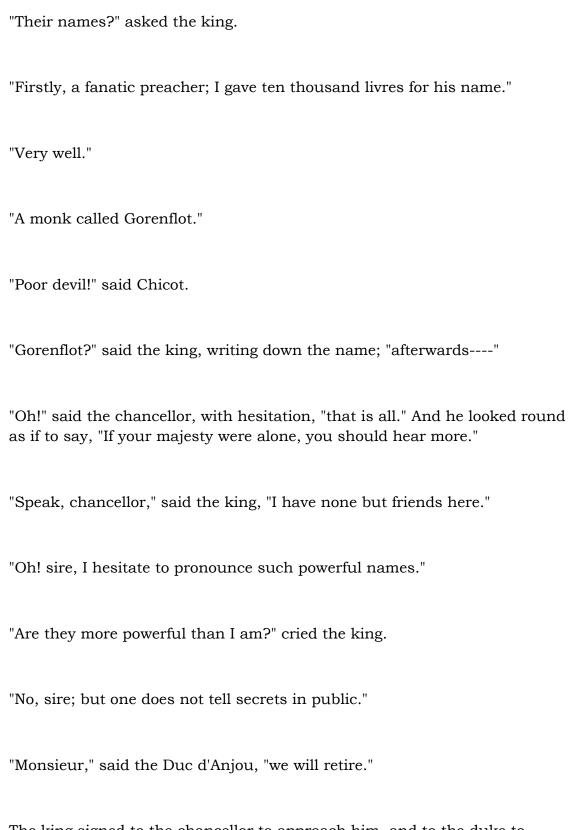


"Sire, for some time I have been watching some malcontents, but they were shopkeepers, or junior clerks, a few monks and students." "That is not much," said Chicot. "I know that malcontents always make use either of war or of religion." "Very sensible!" said the king. "I put men on the watch, and at last I succeeded in persuading a man from the provosty of Paris to watch the preachers, who go about exciting the people against your majesty. They are prompted by a party hostile to your majesty, and this party I have studied, and now I know their hopes," added he, triumphantly. "I have men in my pay, greedy, it is true, who, for a good sum of money, promised to let me know of the first meeting of the conspirators." "Oh! never mind money, but let us hear the aim of this conspiracy." "Sire, they think of nothing less than a second St. Bartholomew." "Against whom?" "Against the Huguenots." "What have you paid for your secret?" said Chicot. "One hundred and sixty thousand livres."

will tell you all the secrets of M. de Morvilliers."
"Speak."
"It is simply the League, instituted ten years ago; M. de Morvilliers has discovered what every Parisian knows as well as his _ave"
"Monsieur," interrupted the chancellor.
"I speak the truth, and I will prove it," cried Chicot.
"Tell me, then, their place of meeting."
"Firstly, the public streets; secondly, the public streets."
"M. Chicot is joking," said the chancellor; "tell me their rallying sign."
"They are dressed like Parisians, and shake their legs when they walk."
A burst of laughter followed this speech; then M. de Morvilliers said, "They have had one meeting-place which M. Chicot does not know of."
"Where?" asked the king.
"The Abbey of St. Geneviève."

Chicot turned to the king, saying, "If you like, for one thousand crowns, I

"Impossible!" murmured the duke.
"It is true," said M. de Morvilliers, triumphantly.
"What did they decide?" asked the king.
"That the Leaguers should choose chiefs, that every one should arm, that every province should receive a deputy from the conspirators, and that all the Huguenots cherished by his majesty (that was their expression)"
The king smiled.
"Should be massacred on a given day."
"Is that all?" said the duke.
"No, monseigneur."
"I should hope not," said Chicot; "if the king got only that for one hundred and sixty thousand livres, it would be a shame."
"There are chiefs"
The Duc d'Anjou could not repress a start.
"What!" cried Chicot, "a conspiracy that has chiefs! how wonderful! But we ought to have more than that for one hundred and sixty thousand livres."



communication, when a great clamor was heard in the court of the Louvre. The king jumped up, but Chicot, running to the window, called out, "It is M. de Guise entering the Louvre."

"The Duc de Guise," stammered the Duc d'Anjou.

"How strange that he should be in Paris," said the king, reading the truth in M. de Morvilliers' look. "Was it of him you were about to speak?" he asked.

"Yes, sire; he presided over the meeting."

"And the others?"

"I know no more."

"You need not write that name on your tablets! you will not forget it," whispered Chicot.

The Duc de Guise advanced, smiling, to see the king.