## Chapter 61

HOW THE KING LEARNED THE FLIGHT OF HIS BELOVED BROTHER, AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

When Monsoreau had retired, the repast continued, and was more gay and joyous than ever.

"Now, Livarot," said the duke, "finish the recital of your flight from Paris, which Monsoreau interrupted."

Livarot began again, but as our title of historian gives us the privilege of knowing better than Livarot himself what had passed, we will substitute our recital for that of the young man.

Towards the middle of the night Henri III. was awoke by an unaccustomed noise in the palace. It was oaths, blows on the wall, rapid steps in the galleries, and, amidst all, these words continually sounding, "What will the king say?"

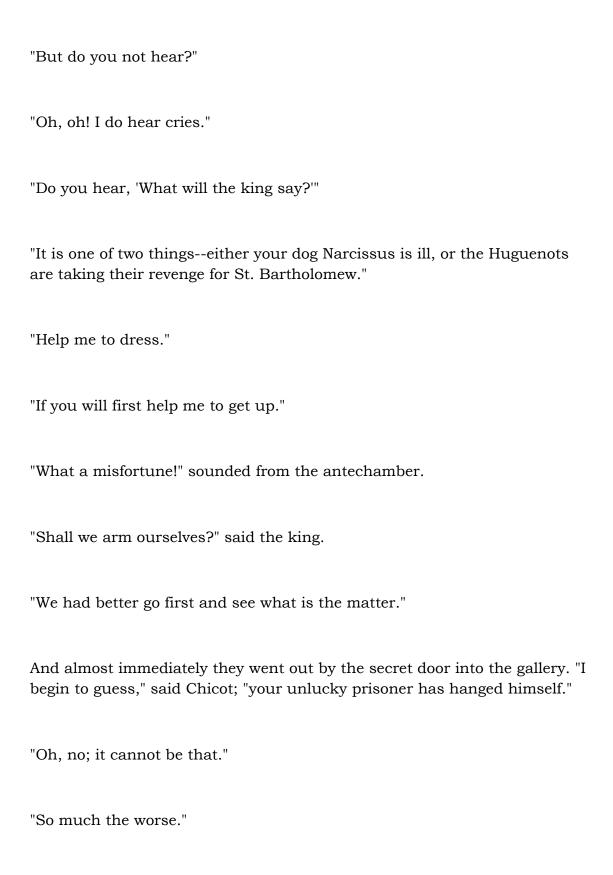
Henri sat up and called Chicot, who was asleep on the couch.

Chicot opened one eye.

"Ah, you were wrong to call me, Henri," said he; "I was dreaming that you had a son."

"But listen."

"To what? You say enough follies to me by day, without breaking in on my nights."



"Come on;" and they entered the duke's chamber.

The window was open, and the ladder still hung from it. Henri grew as pale as death.

"Oh, my son, you are not so blasé as I thought!" said Chicot.

"Escaped!" cried Henri, in such a thundering voice that all the gentlemen who were crowded round the window turned in terror. Schomberg tore his hair, Quelus and Maugiron struck themselves like madmen; as for D'Epernon, he had vanished. This sight calmed the king.

"Gently, my son," said he, laying hold of Maugiron.

"No! mordieu!" cried he, "I will kill myself!" and he knocked his head against the wall.

"Hola! help me to hold him."

"It would be an easier death to pass your sword through your body!" said Chicot.

"Quelus, my child," said the king, "you will be as blue as Schomberg when he came out of the indigo."

Quelus stopped, but Schomberg still continued to tear at his hair.

"Schomberg, Schomberg, a little reason, I beg."

"It is enough to drive one mad!"

"Indeed, it is a dreadful misfortune; there will be a civil war in my kingdom. Who did it--who furnished the ladder? Mordieu! I will hang all the city! Who was it? Ten thousand crowns to whoever will tell me his name, and one hundred thousand to whoever will bring him to me, dead or alive!"

"It must have been some Angevin," said Maugiron.

"Oh yes! we will kill all the Angevins!" cried Quelus. However, the king suddenly disappeared; he had thought of his mother, and, without saying a word, went to her. When he entered, she was half lying in a great armchair: She heard the news without answering.

"You say nothing, mother. Does not this flight seem to you criminal, and worthy of punishment?"

"My dear son, liberty is worth as much as a crown; and remember, I advised you to fly in order to gain a crown."

"My mother, he braves me--he outrages me!"

"No; he only saves himself."

"Ah! this is how you take my part."

"What do you mean, my son?"

"I mean that with age the feelings grow calm--that you do not love me as much as you used to do."

"You are wrong, my son," said Catherine coldly; "you are my beloved son, but he of whom you complain is also my son."

"Well, then, madame, I will go to find other counselors capable of feeling for me and of aiding me."

"Go, my son; and may God guide your counselors, for they will have need of it to aid you in this strait."

"Adieu, then, madame!"

"Adieu, Henri! I do not pretend to counsel you--you do not need me, I know-but beg your counselors to reflect well before they advise, and still more before they execute."

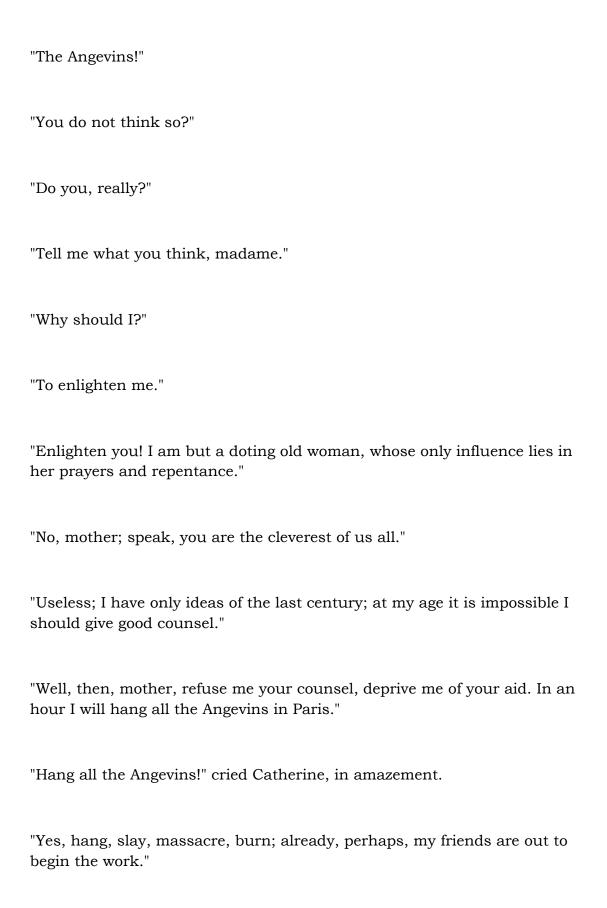
"Yes, madame, for the position is difficult."

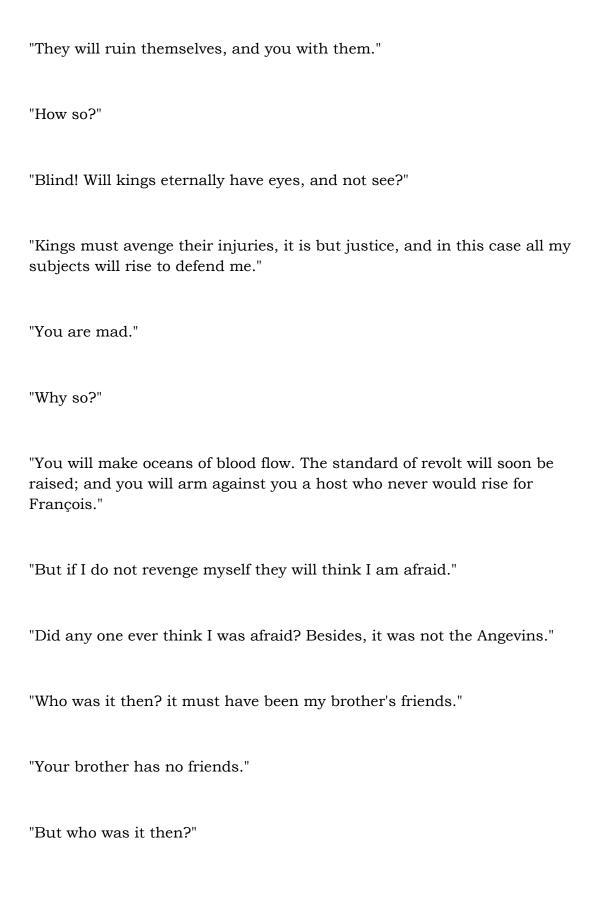
"Very grave," replied she, raising her eyes to heaven.

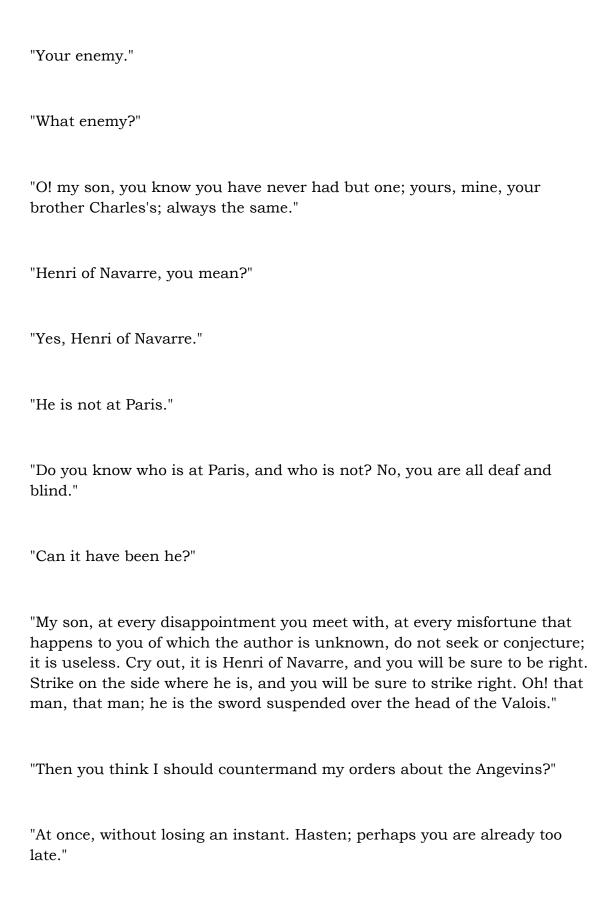
"Have you any idea who it was that carried him off?" Catherine did not reply.

"I think it was the Angevins," continued the king.

Catherine smiled scornfully.







Henry flew out of the Louvre to find his friends, but found only Chicot drawing figures in the sand with a stone.