

## Chapter 92

### HOW BROTHER GORENFLOT FOUND HIMSELF MORE THAN EVER BETWEEN A GALLOWS AND AN ABBEY.

The guard placed to catch the conspirators got none of them; they all escaped, as we have seen; therefore, when Crillon at last broke open the door, he found the place deserted and empty. In vain they opened doors and windows; in vain the king cried, "Chicot!" No one answered.

"Can they have killed him?" said he. "Mordieu! if they have they shall pay for it!"

Chicot did not reply, because he was occupied in beating M. de Mayenne, which gave him so much pleasure that he neither heard nor saw what was passing. However, when the duke had disappeared, he heard and recognized the royal voice.

"Here, my son, here!" he cried, trying at the same time to raise Gorenflot, who, beginning to recover himself, cried, "Monsieur Chicot!"

"You are not dead, then?"

"My good M. Chicot, you will not give me up to my enemies?"

"Wretch!"

Gorenflot began to howl and wring his hands.

"I, who have had so many good dinners with you," continued Gorenflot; "I, who drank so well, that you always called me the king of the sponges; I, who

loved so much the capons you used to order at the Corne d'Abondance, that I never left anything but the bones."

This climax appeared sublime to Chicot, and determined him to clemency.

"Here they are! Mon Dieu," cried Gorenflot, vainly trying to rise, "here they come, I am lost! Oh! good M. Chicot, help me!" and finding he could not rise, he threw himself with his face to the ground.

"Get up," said Chicot.

"Do you pardon me?"

"We shall see."

"You have beaten me so much."

Chicot laughed; the poor monk fancied he had received the blows given to Mayenne.

"You laugh, M. Chicot."

"I do, animal."

"Then I shall live?"

"Perhaps."

"You would not laugh if your Gorenflot was about to die."

"It does not depend upon me, but on the king; he alone has the power of life and death."

At this moment lights appeared, and a crowd of embroidered dresses and swords shining in the light of the torches.

"Ah! Chicot! my dear Chicot, how glad I am to see you," cried the king.

"You hear, good M. Chicot," whispered Gorenflot, "this great prince is glad to see you."

"Well?"

"Well! in his happiness he would not refuse you a favor; ask for my pardon."

"What! from Herod?"

"Oh! silence, dear M. Chicot."

"Well! sire, how many have you caught?" said Chicot, advancing.

"Confiteor," said Gorenflot.

"Not one," said Crillon, "the traitors must have found some opening unknown to us."

"It is probable."

"But you saw them?" said the king.

"All."

"You recognized them, no doubt?"

"No, sire."

"Not recognized them?"

"That is to say, I recognized only one."

"Who was that?"

"M. de Mayenne."

"M. de Mayenne, to whom you owed----"

"Yes, sire; we are quits."

"Ah! tell me about that, Chicot."

"Afterwards, my son; now let us think of the present."

"Confiteor," repeated Gorenflot.

"Ah! you have made a prisoner," said Crillon, laying his large hand on the monk's shoulder.

Chicot was silent for a minute, leaving Gorenflot a prey to all the anguish of such profound terror that he nearly fainted again.

At last Chicot said, "Sire, look well at this monk."

"The preacher Gorenflot," cried Henri.

"Confiteor, confiteor," repeated he.

"Himself," said Chicot.

"He who----"

"Just so," interrupted Chicot.

"Ah, ah!"

Gorenflot shook with terror, for he heard the sounds of swords clashing.

"Wait," said Chicot, "the king must know all." And, taking him aside, "My son," said he, "thank God for having permitted this holy man to be born thirty-five years ago, for it is he who has saved us all."

"How so?"

"It was he who recounted to me the whole plot, from the alpha to the omega."

"When?"

"About a week ago; so that if ever your majesty's enemies catch him he will be a dead man."

Gorenflot heard only the last words, "a dead man"; and he covered his face with his hands.

"Worthy man," said the king, casting a benevolent look on the mass of flesh before him, "we will cover him with our protection."

Gorenflot perceived the nature of the look, and began to feel relieved.

"You will do well, my king," said Chicot.

"What must we do with him?"

"I think that as long as he remains in Paris he will be in danger."

"If I gave him guards."

Gorenflot heard this proposition of Henri's. "Well!" thought he, "I shall get off with imprisonment; I prefer that to beating, if they only feed me well."

"Oh! no, that is needless," said Chicot, "if you will allow me to take him with me."

"Where?"

"Home."

"Well! take him, and then return to the Louvre."

"Get up, reverend father," said Chicot.

"He mocks me," murmured Gorenflot.

"Get up, brute," whispered Chicot, giving him a sly kick.

"Ah! I have deserved it," cried Gorenflot.

"What does he say?" asked the king.

"Sire, he is thinking over all his fatigues and his tortures, and when I promised him your protection, he said, 'Oh! I have well merited that.'"

"Poor devil!" said the king, "take good care of him."

"Oh! be easy, sire, he will want for nothing with me."

"Oh! M. Chicot, dear M. Chicot," cried Gorenflot, "where am I to be taken to?"

"You will know soon. Meanwhile, monster of iniquity, thank his majesty."

"What for?"

"Thank him, I tell you."

"Sire," stammered Gorenflot, "since your gracious majesty----"

"Yes," interrupted Henri, "I know all you did for me, in your journey from Lyons, on the evening of the League, and again to-day. Be easy, you shall be recompensed according to your merits."

Gorenflot sighed.

"Where is Panurge?" said Chicot.

"In the stable, poor beast."

"Well! go and fetch him, and return to me."

"Yes, M. Chicot."

And the monk went away as fast as he could, much astonished not to be followed by guards.



"Now, my son," said Chicot, "keep twenty men for your own escort, and send ten with M. Crillon to the Hôtel d'Anjou and let them bring your-brother here."

"Why?"

"That he may not escape a second time."

"Did my brother----"

"Have you repented following my advice to-day?"

"No, par le mordieu."

"Then do what I tell you."

Henri gave the order to Crillon, who set off at once.

"And you?" said Henri.

"Oh! I am waiting for my saint."

"And you will rejoin me at the Louvre?"

"In an hour; go, my son."

Henri went; and Chicot, proceeding to the stables, met Gorenflot coming out on his ass. The poor devil had not an idea of endeavoring to escape from the fate that he thought awaited him.

"Come, come," said Chicot, "we are waited for." Gorenflot made no resistance, but he shed many tears.