## Chapter 93

WHERE CHICOT GUESSES WHY D'EPERNON HAD BLOOD ON HIS FEET AND NONE IN HIS CHEEKS.

The king, returning to the Louvre, found his friends peacefully asleep, except D'Epernon, whose bed was empty.

"Not come in yet; how imprudent," murmured the king to Chicot, who had also returned, and was standing with them by their beds. "The fool; having to fight to-morrow with a man like Bussy, and to take no more care than this. Let them seek M. d'Epernon," said he, going out of the room, and speaking to an usher.

"M. d'Epernon is just coming in, sire," replied the man.

Indeed, D'Epernon came softly along, thinking to glide unperceived to his room.

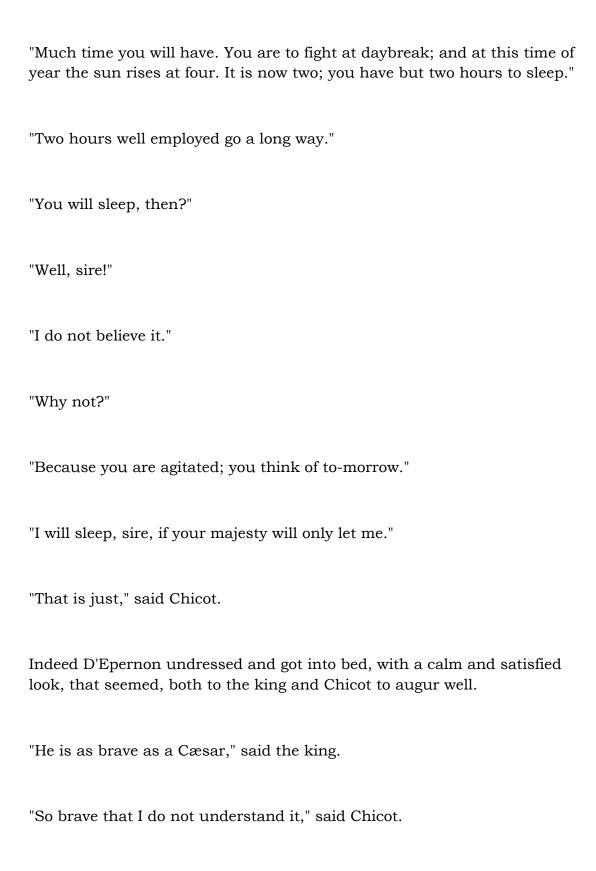
On seeing the king he looked confused.

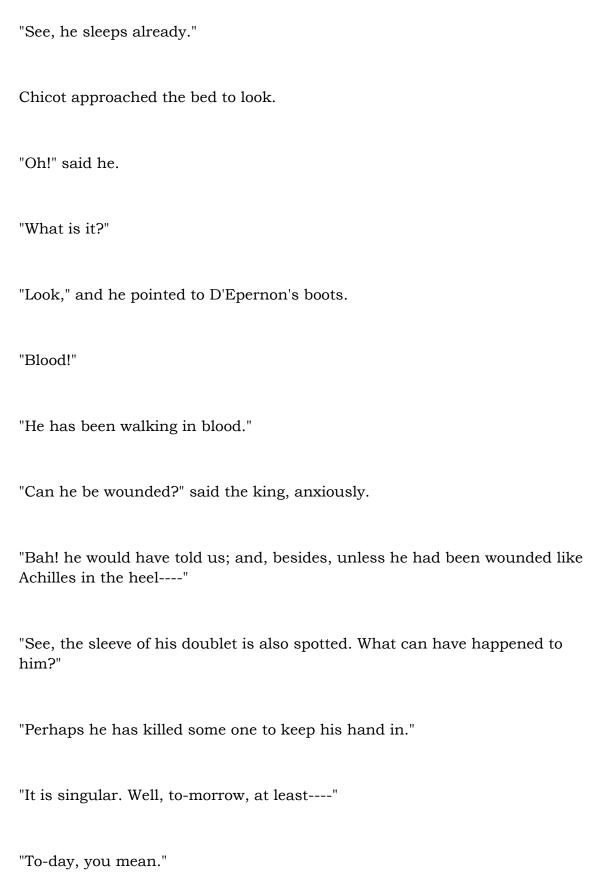
"Ah! here you are at last," said Henri; "come here and look at your friends. They are wise! they understand the importance of the duel to-morrow; but you, instead of praying and sleeping like them, have been running about the streets. Corbleu; how pale you are! What will you look like to-morrow?"

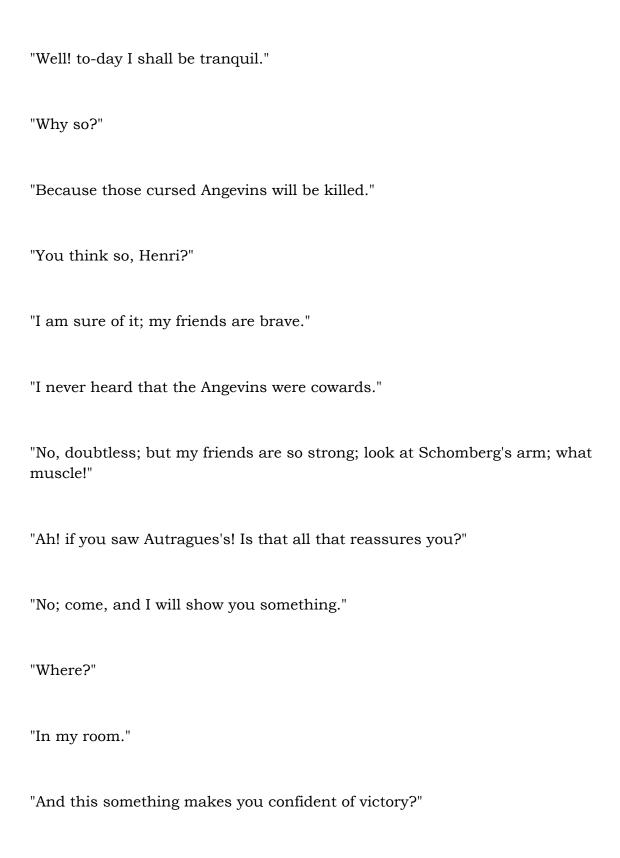
D'Epernon was indeed pale, but at the king's remark he colored.

"Now go to bed," continued Henri, "and sleep if you can."

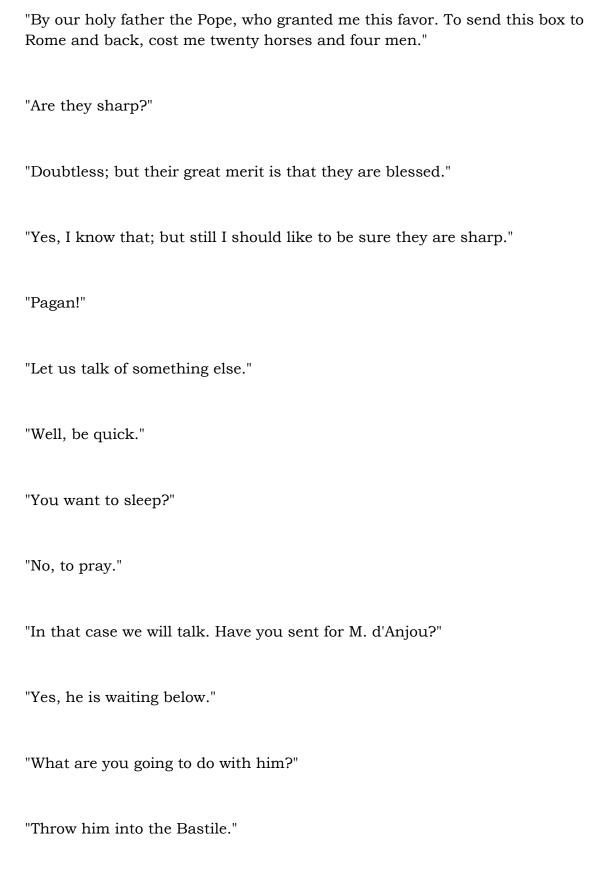
"Why not?"

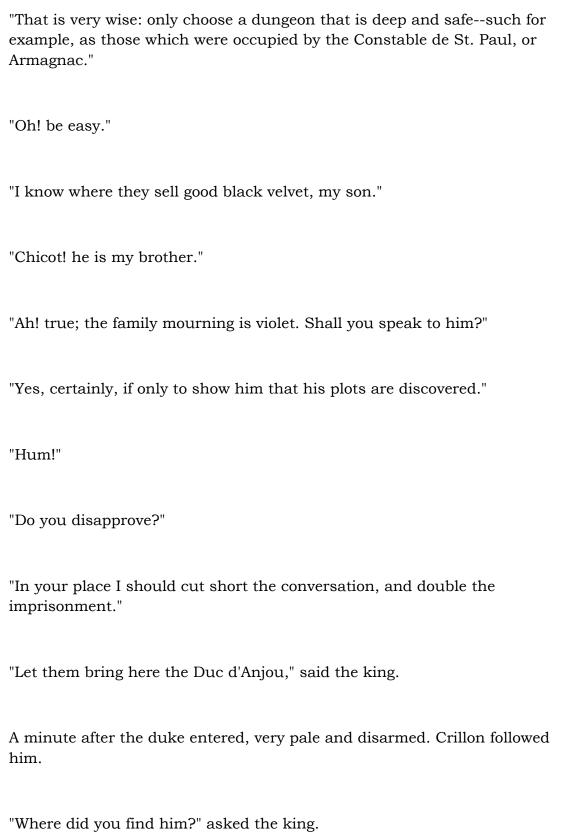


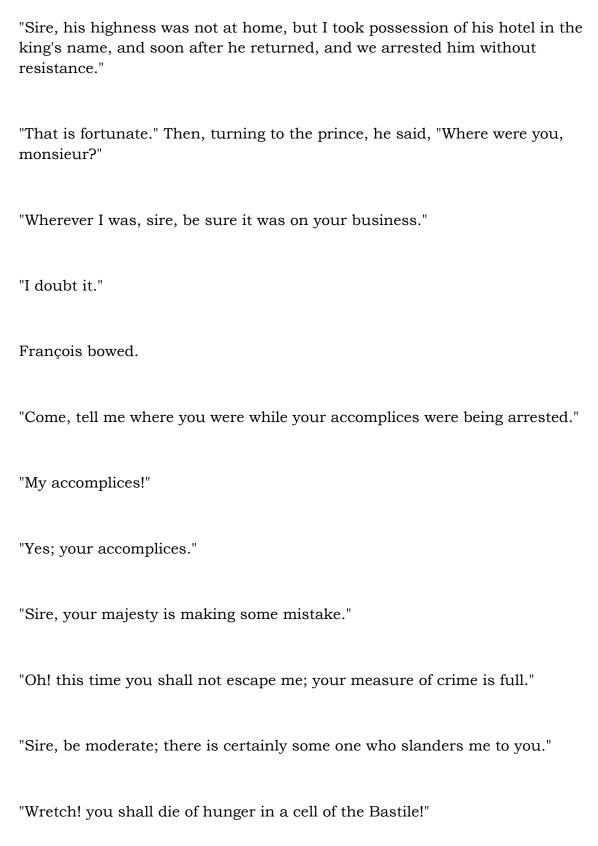




"Yes."
"Come, then."
"Wait, and let me take leave of them. Adieu, my good friends," murmured the king, as he stooped and imprinted a light kiss on each of their foreheads.
Chicot was not superstitious, but as he looked on, his imagination pictured a living man making his adieux to the dead.
"It is singular," thought he. "I never felt so beforepoor fellows."
As soon as the king quitted the room, D'Epernon opened his eyes; and, jumping out of bed, began to efface, as well as he could, the spots of blood on his clothes. Then he went to bed again.
As for Henri, he conducted Chicot to his room, and opened a long ebony coffer lined with white satin.
"Look!" said he.
"Swords!"
"Yes! but blessed swords, my dear friend."
"Blessed! by whom?"







"I bow to your orders, whatever they may be." "Hypocrite! But where were you?" "Sire, I was serving your majesty, and working for the glory and tranquillity of your reign." "Really! your audacity is great." "Bah!" said Chicot, "tell us about it, my prince; it must be curious." "Sire, I would tell your majesty, had you treated me as a brother, but as you have treated me as a criminal, I will let the event speak for itself." Then, bowing profoundly to the king, he turned to Crillon and the other officers, and said, "Now, which of you gentlemen will conduct the first prince of the blood to the Bastile?" Chicot had been reflecting, and a thought struck him. "Ah!" murmured he, "I believe I guess now why M. d'Epernon had so much

blood on his feet and so little in his cheeks."