

## Chapter 20

### THE BREAKFAST.

Gorenflot was not long in giving his orders. The cook was summoned.

"Brother Eusebius," said Gorenflot, in a severe voice, "listen to what my friend M. Briquet is about to tell you. It seems that you are negligent, and I hear of grave faults in your last soup, and a fatal mistake in the cooking of your ears. Take care, brother, take care; a single step in a wrong direction may be irremediable."

The monk grew red and pale by turns, and stammered out an excuse.

"Enough," said Gorenflot, "what can we have for breakfast to-day?"

"Eggs fried with cock's combs."

"After?"

"Mushrooms."

"Well?"

"Crabs cooked with Madeira."

"Those are all trifles; tell us of something solid."

"A ham boiled with pistachios."

Chicot looked contemptuous.

"Pardon!" cried Eusebius, "it is cooked in sherry wine."

Gorenflot hazarded an approving glance toward Chicot.

"Good! is it not, M. Briquet?" said he.

Chicot made a gesture of half-satisfaction.

"And what have you besides?"

"You can have some eels."

"Oh! we will dispense with the eels," said Chicot.

"I think, M. Briquet," replied the cook, "that you would regret it if you had not tasted my eels."

"What! are they rarities?"

"I nourish them in a particular manner."

"Oh, oh!"

"Yes," added Gorenflot; "it appears that the Romans or the Greeks--I forget which--nourished their lampreys as Eusebius does his eels. He read of it in an old author called Suetonius."

"Yes, monsieur, I mince the intestines and livers of fowls and game with a little pork, and make a kind of sausage meat, which I throw to my eels, and they are kept in soft water, often renewed, in which they become large and fat. The one which I shall offer you to-day weighs nine pounds."

"It must be a serpent!" said Chicot.

"It swallowed a chicken at a meal."

"And how will it be dressed?"

"Skinned and fried in anchovy paste, and done with bread crumbs; and I shall have the honor of serving it up with a sauce flavored with garlic and allspice, lemons and mustard."

"Perfect!" cried Chicot.

Brother Eusebius breathed again.

"Then we shall want sweets," said Gorenflot.

"I will invent something that shall please you."

"Well, then, I trust to you; be worthy of my confidence."

Eusebius bowed and retired. Ten minutes after, they sat down, and the programme was faithfully carried out. They began like famished men, drank Rhine wine, Burgundy and Hermitage, and then attacked that of the fair lady.

"What do you think of it?" asked Gorenflot.

"Good, but light. What is your fair petitioner's name?"

"I do not know; she sent an ambassador."

They ate as long as they could, and then sat drinking and talking, when suddenly a great noise was heard.

"What is that?" asked Chicot.

"It is the exercise which commences."

"Without the chief? Your soldiers are badly disciplined, I fear."

"Without me! never!" cried Gorenflot, who had become excited with wine.

"That cannot be, since it is I who command--I who instruct--and stay,

here is Brother Borromée, who comes to take my orders."

Indeed, as he spoke, Borromée entered, throwing on Chicot a sharp and oblique glance.

"Reverend prior," said he, "we only wait for you to examine the arms and cuirasses."

"Cuirasses!" thought Chicot, "I must see this," and he rose quietly.

"You will be present at our maneuvers?" said Gorenflot, rising in his turn, like a block of marble on legs. "Your arm, my friend; you shall see some good instruction."