

## Chapter 32

### BROTHER BORROMÉE.

It was about ten o'clock in the evening when the deputies returned home. Nicholas Poulain remained behind the others, reflecting on the perplexing situation in which he found himself, and considering whether he should report all that he had heard to M. d'Epernon, when, in the middle of the Rue de la Pierre-au-Réal, he ran right against a Jacobin monk. They both began to swear, but, looking up, recognized each other.

"Brother Borromée!" cried Poulain.

"Nicholas Poulain!" exclaimed the monk.

"How are you?" asked Nicholas cautiously. "Where in the world were you running to in such a hurry at this time of night? Is the priory on fire?"

"No; I was going to the Duchesse de Montpensier's hotel, to speak to M. de Mayneville."

"And what for?"

"Oh! it is very simple," said Borromée, seeking for a specious answer; "the reverend prior was solicited by the duchesse to become her

confessor; he accepted at the time, but since then he has had scruples, and has sent me to tell her not to rely upon him."

"Very good; but you are going away from the Hotel Guise."

"Exactly so; for I hear she is at the Hotel St. Denis, with her brother."

"Quite true; but why do you deceive me? It is not the treasurer who is sent with these sort of messages."

"But to a princess! Now do not detain me, or I shall miss her."

"She will return, you might have waited for her."

"True; but I shall not be sorry to see M. le Duc also."

"Oh! that is more like the truth, so go on. There is something new going on," thought Nicholas; "but why should I try to discover what it is?"

Meanwhile the brother and sister had been conversing together, and had settled that the king had no suspicions, and was therefore easy to attack. They also agreed that the first thing to be done was to organize the League more generally in the provinces, while the king abandoned his brother, who was the only enemy they had to fear, so long as Henri of Navarre occupied himself only with love affairs.

"Paris is all ready, but must wait," said Mayenne.

At this moment M. de Mayneville entered, and announced Borromée.

"Borromée! who is he?" cried the duke.

"The man whom you sent me from Nancy, when I asked for a man of action and mind."

"I remember; I told you he was both. But he was called Borroville."

"Yes, monseigneur; but now he is a monk, and Borromée."

"Borroville a monk! and why so?"

"That is our secret, monseigneur; you shall know hereafter, but now let us see him, for his visit disquiets me."

"Why, Borroville," cried the duke, laughing, as he entered; "what a disguise!"

"Yes, monseigneur, I am not much at my ease in this devil of a dress, I confess; but, as it is worn in the service of her highness, I do not complain."

"And what do you want so late?"

"I could not come sooner; I have all the priory on my hands."

"Well! now speak."

"M. le Duc, the king is sending succors to the Duc d'Anjou."

"Bah! we have heard that the last three years."

"Yes; but this time it is certain. At two o'clock this morning, M. de Joyeuse set out for Rouen; he is to take ship to Dieppe, and convey three thousand men to Antwerp."

"Oh! who told you that, Borroville?"

"I heard it from a man who is going to Navarre."

"To Navarre! to Henri?"

"Yes, monseigneur."

"And who sends him?"

"The king, with a letter."

"What is his name?"

"Robert Briquet; he is a great friend of Gorenflot's."

"And an ambassador of the king's?"

"Yes; I am sure of it; for he sent one of our monks to the Louvre to fetch the letter."

"And he did not show you the letter?"

"The king did not give it to him; he sent it by his own messenger."

"We must have this letter."

"Certainly," said the duchess.

"How was it that this did not occur to you?" said Mayneville.

"I did think of it, and wished to send one of my men, who is a perfect Hercules, with M. Briquet, but he suspected, and dismissed him."

"You must go yourself."

"Impossible!"

"And why?"

"Because he knows me."

"As a monk, but not as captain, I hope."

"Ma foi! I do not know; he seems to know everything."

"What is he like?"

"He is tall--all nerves, muscles and bones; silent, but mocking."

"Ah! ah! and clever with his sword?"

"Marvelously."

"A long face?"

"Yes."

"And an old friend of the prior's?"

"Yes."

"Oh! I have a suspicion which I must have cleared up. Borroville, you must go to Soissons, to my brother--"

"But the priory?"

"Oh! you can invent some excuse to Gorenflot; he believes all you say," said Mayneville.

"You will tell my brother all you know about the mission of M. de Joyeuse."

"Yes, monseigneur."

"And Navarre--" said the duchess.

"Oh! I charge myself with that," said Mayenne. "Let them saddle me a fresh horse, Mayneville." Then he murmured to himself, "Can he be still alive?"