

# The Merry Jests Of King Louis The Eleventh

Honore de Balzac

King Louis The Eleventh was a merry fellow, loving a good joke, and-- the interests of his position as king, and those of the church on one side--he lived jovially, giving chase to soiled doves as often as to hares, and other royal game. Therefore, the sorry scribblers who have made him out a hypocrite, showed plainly that they knew him not, since he was a good friend, good at repartee, and a jollier fellow than any of them.

It was he who said when he was in a merry mood, that four things are excellent and opportune in life--to keep warm, to drink cool, to stand up hard, and to swallow soft. Certain persons have accused him of taking up with a dirty trollops; this is a notorious falsehood, since all his mistresses, of whom one was legitimised, came of good houses and had notable establishments. He did not go in for waste and extravagance, always put his hand upon the solid, and because certain devourers of the people found no crumbs at his table, they have all maligned him. But the real collector of facts know that the said king was a capital fellow in private life, and even very agreeable; and before cutting off the heads of his friends, or punishing them--for he did not spare them--it was necessary that they should have greatly offended him, and his vengeance was always justice; I have only seen in our friend Verville that this worthy sovereign ever made a mistake; but one does not make a habit, and even for this his boon companion Tristan was more to blame than he, the king. This is the circumstance related by the said Verville, and I suspect he was cracking a joke. I reproduce it because certain people are not familiar with the exquisite work of my perfect compatriot. I abridge it and only give the substance, the details being more ample, of which facts the savans are not ignorant.

Louis XI. had given the Abbey of Turpenay (mentioned in 'Imperia') to a gentleman who, enjoying the revenue, had called himself Monsieur de Turpenay. It happened that the king being at Plessis-les-Tours, the real abbot, who was a monk, came and presented himself before the king, and presented also a petition, remonstrating with him that, canonically and a monastically, he was entitled to the abbey and that the usurping gentleman wronged of his right, and therefore he called upon his majesty to have justice done to him. Nodding his peruke, the king promised to render him contented. This monk, importunate as are all hooded animals, came often at the end of the king's meals, who, bored with the holy water of the convent, called friend Tristan and said to him: "Old fellow, there is here a Turpenay who angers me, rid the world of him for me." Tristan, taking a frock for a monk, or a monk for a frock, came to this gentleman, whom all the court called Monsieur de Turpenay, and having accosted him managed to lead him to one side, and taking him by the button-hole gave him to understand that the king desired he should die. He tried to resist, supplicating and supplicating to escape, but in no way could he obtain a hearing. He was delicately strangled between the head and shoulders, so that he expired; and, three hours afterwards, Tristan told the king that he was discharged. It happened five days afterwards, which is the space in which souls come back again, that the monk came into the room where the king was, and when he saw him he was much astonished. Tristan was present: the king called him, and whispered into his ear--

"You have not done that which I told you to."

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"Saving your Grace I have done it. Turpenay is dead."

"Eh? I meant this monk."

"I understood the gentleman!"

"What, is it done then?"

"Yes, sire,"

"Very well then"--turning towards the monk--"come here, monk." The monk approached. The king said to him, "Kneel down!" The poor monk began to shiver in his shoes. But the king said to him, "Thank God that he has not willed that you should be killed as I had ordered. He who took your estates has been instead. God has done you justice. Go and pray God for me, and don't stir out of your convent."

The proves the good-heartedness of Louis XI. He might very well have hanged the monk, the cause of the error. As for the said gentleman, he died in the king's service.

In the early days of his sojourn at Plessis-les-Tours king Louis, not wishing to hold his drinking-bouts and give vent to his rakish propensities in his chateau, out of respect to her Majesty (a kingly delicacy which his successors have not possessed) became enamoured of a lady named Nicole Beaupertuys, who was, to tell the truth, wife of a citizen of the town. The husband he sent into Ponent, and put the said Nicole in a house near Chardonneret, in that part which is the Rue Quincangrogne, because it was a lonely place, far from other habitations. The husband and the wife were thus both in his service, and he had by La Beaupertuys a daughter, who died a nun. This Nicole had a tongue as sharp as a popinjay's, was of stately proportions, furnished with large beautiful cushions of nature, firm to the touch, white as the wings of an angel, and known for the rest to be fertile in peripatetic ways, which brought it to pass that never with her was the same thing encountered twice in love, so deeply had she studied the sweet solutions of the science, the manners of accommodating the olives of Poissy, the expansions of the nerves, and hidden doctrines of the breviary, the which much delighted the king. She was as gay as a lark, always laughing and singing, and never made anyone miserable, which is the characteristic of women of this open and free nature, who have always an occupation--an equivocal one if you like. The king often went with the hail-fellows his friends to the lady's house, and in order not to be seen always went at night-time, and without his suite. But being always distrustful, and fearing some snare, he gave to Nicole all the most savage dogs he had in his kennels, beggars that would eat a man without saying "By your leave," the which royal dogs knew only Nicole and the king. When the Sire came Nicole let them loose in the garden, and the door of the house being sufficiently barred and closely shut, the king put the keys in his pocket, and in perfect security gave himself up, with his satellites, to every kind of pleasure, fearing no betrayal, jumping about at will, playing tricks, and getting up good games. Upon these occasions friend Tristan watched the neighbourhood, and anyone who had taken a walk on the Mall of Chardonneret would be rather quickly placed in a position in which it would have been easy to give the passers-by a benediction with his feet, unless he had the king's pass, since often would Louis send out in search of lasses for his friends, or people to entertain him with the amusements suggested by Nicole or the guests. People of Tours were

there for these little amusements, to whom he gently recommended silence, so that no one knew of these pastimes until after his death. The farce of "Baisez mon cul" was, it is said, invented by the said Sire. I will relate it, although it is not the subject of this tale, because it shows the natural comicality and humour of this merry monarch. They were at Tours three well known misers: the first was Master Cornelius, who is sufficiently well known; the second was called Peccard, and sold the gilt-work, coloured papers, and jewels used in churches; the third was hight Marchandean, and was a very wealthy vine-grower. These two men of Touraine were the founders of good families, notwithstanding their sordidness. One evening that the king was with Beaupertuys, in a good humour, having drunk heartily, joked heartily, and offered early in the evening his prayer in Madame's oratory, he said to Le Daim his crony, to the Cardinal, La Balue, and to old Dunois, who were still soaking, "Let us have a good laugh! I think it will be a good joke to see misers before a bag of gold without being able to touch it. Hi, there!"

Hearing which, appeared one of his varlets.

"Go," said he, "seek my treasurer, and let him bring hither six thousand gold crowns--and at once! And you will go and seize the bodies of my friend Cornelius, of the jeweller of the Rue de Cygnes, and of old Marchandean, and bring them here, by order of the king."

Then he began to drink again, and to judiciously wrangle as to which was the better, a woman with a gamy odour or a woman who soaped herself well all over; a thin one or a stout one; and as the company comprised the flower of wisdom it was decided that the best was the one a man had all to himself like a plate of warm mussels, at that precise moment when God sent him a good idea to communicate to her. The cardinal asked which was the most precious thing to a lady; the first or the last kiss? To which La Beaupertuys replied: "that it was the last, seeing that she knew then what she was losing, while at the first she did not know what she would gain." During these sayings, and others which have most unfortunately been lost, came the six thousand gold crowns, which were worth all three hundred thousand francs of to-day, so much do we go on decreasing in value every day. The king ordered the crowns to be arranged upon a table, and well lighted up, so that they shone like the eyes of the company which lit up involuntarily, and made them laugh in spite of themselves. They did not wait long for the three misers, whom the varlet led in, pale and panting, except Cornelius, who knew the king's strange freaks.

"Now then, my friends," said Louis to them, "have a good look at the crowns on the table."

And the three townsmen nibbled at them with their eyes. You may reckon that the diamond of La Beaupertuys sparkled less than their little minnow eyes.

"These are yours," added the king.

Thereupon they ceased to admire the crowns to look at each other; and the guests knew well that old knaves are more expert in grimaces than any others, because of their physiognomies becoming tolerably curious, like those of cats lapping up milk, or girls titillated with marriage.

"There," said the king, "all that shall be his who shall say three times to the two others, 'Baisez mon cul', thrusting his hand into the gold; but if he be not as serious as a fly who

had violated his lady-love, if he smile while repeating the jest, he will pay ten crowns to Madame. Nevertheless he can essay three times."

"That will soon be earned," said Cornelius, who, being a Dutchman, had his lips as often compressed and serious as Madame's mouth was often open and laughing. Then he bravely put his hands on the crowns to see if they were good, and clutched them bravely, but as he looked at the others to say civilly to them, "Baisez mon cul," the two misers, distrustful of his Dutch gravity, replied, "Certainly, sir," as if he had sneezed. The which caused all the company to laugh, and even Cornelius himself. When the vine-grower went to take the crowns he felt such a commotion in his cheeks that his old scummer face let little laughs exude from its pores like smoke pouring out of a chimney, and he could say nothing. Then it was the turn of the jeweller, who was a little bit of a bantering fellow, and whose lips were as tightly squeezed as the neck of a hanged man. He seized a handful of the crowns, looked at the others, even the king, and said, with a jeering air, "Baisez mon cul."

"Is it dirty?" asked the vine-dresser.

"Look and see," replied the jeweller, gravely.

Thereupon the king began to tremble for these crowns, since the said Peccard began again, without laughing, and for the third time was about to utter the sacramental word, when La Beaupertuys made a sign of consent to his modest request, which caused him to lose his countenance, and his mouth broke up into dimples.

"How did you do it?" asked Dunois, "to keep a grave face before six thousand crowns?"

"Oh, my lord, I thought first of one of my cases which is tried tomorrow, and secondly, of my wife who is a sorry plague."

The desire to gain this good round sum made them try again, and the king amused himself for about an hour at the expression of these faces, the preparations, jokes, grimaces, and other monkey's paternosters that they performed; but they were bailing their boats with a sieve, and for men who preferred closing their fists to opening them it was a bitter sorrow to have to count out, each one, a hundred crown to Madame.

When they were gone, and Nicole said boldly to the king, "Sire will you let me try?"

"Holy Virgin!" replied Louis; "no! I can kiss you for less money."

That was said like a thrifty man, which indeed he always was.

One evening the fat Cardinal La Balue carried on gallantly with words and actions, a little farther than the canons of the Church permitted him, with this Beaupertuys, who luckily for herself, was a clever hussy, not to be asked with impunity how many holes there were in her mother's chemise.

"Look you here, Sir Cardinal!" said she; "the thing which the king likes is not to receive the holy oils."

Then came Oliver le Daim, whom she would not listen to either, and to whose nonsense she replied, that she would ask the king if he wished her to be shaved.

Now as the said shaver did not supplicate her to keep his proposals secret, she suspected that these little plots were ruses practised by the king, whose suspicions had perhaps been aroused by her friends. Now, for being able to revenge herself upon Louis, she at least determined to pay out the said lords, to make fools of them, and amuse the king with the tricks she would play upon them. One evening that they had come to supper, she had a lady of the city with her, who wished to speak with the king. This lady was a lady of position, who wished asked the king pardon for her husband, the which, in consequence of this adventure, she obtained. Nicole Beaupertuys having led the king aside for a moment into an antechamber, told him to make their guests drink hard and eat to repletion; that he was to make merry and joke with them; but when the cloth was removed, he was to pick quarrels with them about trifles, dispute their words, and be sharp with them; and that she would then divert him by turning them inside out before him. But above all things, he was to be friendly to the said lady, and it was to appear as genuine, as if she enjoyed the perfume of his favour, because she had gallantly lent herself to this good joke.

"Well, gentlemen," said the king, re-entering the room, "let us fall to; we have had a good day's sport."

And the surgeon, the cardinal, a fat bishop, the captain of the Scotch Guard, a parliamentary envoy, and a judge loved of the king, followed the two ladies into the room where one rubs the rust off one's jaw bones. And there they lined the mold of their doublets. What is that? It is to pave the stomach, to practice the chemistry of nature, to register the various dishes, to regale your tripes, to dig your grave with your teeth, play with the sword of Cain, to inter sauces, to support a cuckold. But more philosophically it is to make ordure with one's teeth. Now, do you understand? How many words does it require to burst open the lid of your understanding?

The king did not fail to distill into his guests this splendid and first-class supper. He stuffed them with green peas, returning to the hotch-potch, praising the plums, commending the fish, saying to one, "Why do you not eat?" to another, "Drink to Madame"; to all of them, "Gentlemen, taste these lobsters; put this bottle to death! You do not know the flavour of this forcemeat. And these lampreys--ah! what do you say to them? And by the Lord! The finest barbel ever drawn from the Loire! Just stick your teeth into this pastry. This game is my own hunting; he who takes it not offends me." And again, "Drink, the king's eyes are the other way. Just give your opinion of these preserves, they are Madame's own. Have some of these grapes, they are my own growing. Have some medlars." And while inducing them to swell out their abdominal protuberances, the good monarch laughed with them, and they joked and disputed, and spat, and blew their noses, and kicked up just as though the king had not been with them. Then so much victuals had been taken on board, so many flagons drained and stews spoiled, that the faces of the guests were the colour of cardinals gowns, and their doublets appeared ready to burst, since they were crammed with meat like Troyes sausages from the top to the bottom of their paunches. Going into the saloon again, they broke into a profuse sweat, began to blow, and to curse their gluttony. The king sat quietly apart; each of them was the more willing to be silent because all their forces were required for the intestinal digestion of the huge platefuls confined in their stomachs, which began to wobble and rumble violently. One said to himself, "I was stupid to eat of that sauce."

Another scolded himself for having indulged in a plate of eels cooked with capers. Another thought to himself, "Oh! oh! The forcemeat is serving me out." The cardinal, who was the biggest bellied man of the lot, snorted through his nostrils like a frightened horse. It was he who was first compelled to give vent to a loud sounding belch, and then he soon wished himself in Germany, where this is a form of salutation, for the king hearing this gastric language looked at the cardinal with knitted brows.

"What does this mean?" said he, "am I a simple clerk?"

This was heard with terror, because usually the king made much of a good belch well off the stomach. The other guests determined to get rid in another way of the vapours which were dodging about in their pancreatic retorts; and at first they endeavoured to hold them for a little while in the pleats of their mesenteries. It was then that some of them puffed and swelled like tax-gatherers. Beaupertuys took the good king aside and said to him--

"Know now that I have had made by the Church jeweller Peccard, two large dolls, exactly resembling this lady and myself. Now when hard-pressed by the drugs which I have put in their goblets, they desire to mount the throne to which we are now about to pretend to go, they will always find the place taken; by this means you will enjoy their writhings."

Thus having said, La Beaupertuys disappeared with the lady to go and turn the wheel, after the custom of women, and of which I will tell you the origin in another place. And after an honest lapse of water, Beaupertuys came back alone, leaving it to be believed that she had left the lady at the little laboratory of natural alchemy. Thereupon the king, singling out the cardinal, made him get up, and talked with him seriously of his affairs, holding him by the tassel of his amice. To all that the king said, La Balue replied, "Yes, sir," to be delivered from this favour, and slip out of the room, since the water was in his cellars, and he was about to lose the key of his back-door. All the guests were in a state of not knowing how to arrest the progress of the fecal matter to which nature has given, even more than to water, the property of finding a certain level. Their substances modified themselves and glided working downward, like those insects who demand to be let out of their cocoons, raging, tormenting, and ungrateful to the higher powers; for nothing is so ignorant, so insolent as those cursed objects, and they are importunate like all things detained to whom one owes liberty. So they slipped at every turn like eels out of a net, and each one had need of great efforts and science not to disgrace himself before the king. Louis took great pleasure in interrogating his guests, and was much amused with the vicissitudes of their physiognomies, on which were reflected the dirty grimaces of their writhings. The counsellor of justice said to Oliver, "I would give my office to be behind a hedge for half a dozen seconds."

"Oh, there is no enjoyment to equal a good stool; and now I am no longer astonished at sempiternal droppings of a fly," replied the surgeon.

The cardinal believing that the lady had obtained her receipt from the bank of deposit, left the tassels of his girdle in the king's hand, making a start as if he had forgotten to say his prayers, and made his way towards the door.

"What is the matter with you, Monsieur le Cardinal?" said the king.

"By my halidame, what is the matter with me? It appears that all your affairs are very extensive, sire!"

The cardinal had slipped out, leaving the others astonished at his cunning. He proceeded gloriously towards the lower room, loosening a little the strings of his purse; but when he opened the blessed little door he found the lady at her functions upon the throne, like a pope about to be consecrated. Then restraining his impatience, he descended the stairs to go into the garden. However, on the last steps the barking of the dogs put him in great fear of being bitten in one of his precious hemispheres; and not knowing where to deliver himself of his chemical produce he came back into the room, shivering like a man who has been in the open air! The others seeing the cardinal return, imagined that he had emptied his natural reservoirs, unburdened his ecclesiastical bowels, and believed him happy. Then the surgeon rose quickly, as if to take note of the tapestries and count the rafters, but gained the door before anyone else, and relaxing his sphincter in advance, he hummed a tune on his way to the retreat; arrived there he was compelled, like La Balue, to murmur words of excuse to this student of perpetual motion, shutting the door with as promptitude as he opened it; and he came back burdened with an accumulation which seriously impeded his private channels. And in the same way went to guests one after the other, without being able to unburden themselves of their sauces, as soon again found themselves all in the presence of Louis the Eleventh, as much distressed as before, looking at each other slyly, understanding each other better with their tails than they ever understood with their mouths, for there is never any equivocal in the transactions of the parts of nature, and everything therein is rational and of easy comprehension, seeing that it is a science which we learn at our birth.

"I believe," said the cardinal to the surgeon, "that lady will go on until to-morrow. What was La Beaupertuys about to ask such a case of diarrhoea here?"

"She's been an hour working at what I could get done in a minute. May the fever seize her" cried Oliver le Daim.

All the courtiers seized with colic were walking up and down to make their importunate matters patient, when the said lady reappeared in the room. You can believe they found her beautiful and graceful, and would willingly have kissed her, there where they so longed to go; and never did they salute the day with more favour than this lady, the liberator of the poor unfortunate bodies. La Balue rose; the others, from honour, esteem, and reverence of the church, gave way to the clergy, and, biding their time, they continued to make grimaces, at which the king laughed to himself with Nicole, who aided him to stop the respiration of these loose-bowelled gentlemen. The good Scotch captain, who more than all the others had eaten of a dish in which the cook had put an aperient powder, became the victim of misplaced confidence. He went ashamed into a corner, hoping that before the king, his mishap might escape detection. At this moment the cardinal returned horribly upset, because he had found La Beaupertuys on the episcopal seat. Now, in his torments, not knowing if she were in the room, he came back and gave vent to a diabolical "Oh!" on beholding her near his master.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the king, looking at the priest in a way to give him the fever.

"Sire," said La Balue, insolently, "the affairs of purgatory are in my ministry, and I am



bound to inform you that there is sorcery going on in this house."

"Ah! little priest, you wish to make game of me!" said the king.

At these words the company were in a terrible state.

"So you treat me with disrespect?" said the king, which made them turn pale. "Ho, there! Tristan, my friend!" cried Louis XI. from the window, which he threw up suddenly, "come up here!"

The grand provost of the hotel was not long before he appeared; and as these gentlemen were all nobodies, raised to their present position by the favour of the king, Louis, in a moment of anger, could crush them at will; so that with the exception of the cardinal who relied upon his cassock, Tristan found them all rigid and aghast.

"Conduct these gentleman to the Pretorium, on the Mall, my friend, they have disgraced themselves through over-eating."

"Am I not good at jokes?" said Nicole to him.

"The farce is good, but it is fetid," replied he, laughing.

This royal answer showed the courtiers that this time the king did not intend to play with their heads, for which they thanked heaven. The monarch was partial to these dirty tricks. He was not at all a bad fellow, as the guests remarked while relieving themselves against the side of the Mall with Tristan, who, like a good Frenchman, kept them company, and escorted them to their homes. This is why since that time the citizens of Tours had never failed to defile the Mall of Chardonneret, because the gentlemen of the court had been there.

I will not leave this great king without committing to writing this good joke which he played upon La Godegrand, who was an old maid, much disgusted that she had not, during the forty years she had lived, been able to find a lid to her saucepan, enraged, in her yellow skin, that she still was as virgin as a mule. This old maid had her apartments on the other side of the house which belonged to La Beaupertuys, at the corner of the Rue de Hierusalem, in such a position that, standing on the balcony joining the wall, it was easy to see what she was doing, and hear what she was saying in the lower room where she lived; and often the king derived much amusement from the antics of the old girl, who did not know that she was so much within the range of his majesty's culverin. Now one market day it happened that the king had caused to be hanged a young citizen of Tours, who had violated a noble lady of a certain age, believing that she was a young maiden. There would have been no harm in this, and it would have been a thing greatly to the credit of the said lady to have been taken for a virgin; but on finding out his mistake, he had abominably insulted her, and suspecting her of trickery, had taken it into his head to rob her of a splendid silver goblet, in payment of the present he had just made her. This young man had long hair, and was so handsome that the whole town wished to see him hanged, both from regret and out of curiosity. You may be sure that at this hanging there were more caps than hats. Indeed, the said young man swung very well; and after the fashion and custom of persons hanged, he died gallantly with his lance couched, which fact made a great noise in

the town. Many ladies said on this subject that it was a murder not to have preserved so fine a fellow from the scaffold.

"Suppose we were to put this handsome corpse in the bed of La Godegrand," said La Beupertuys to the king.

"We should terrify her," replied Louis.

"Not at all, sire. Be sure that she will welcome even a dead man, so madly does she long for a living one. Yesterday I saw her making love to a young man's cap placed on the top of a chair, and you would have laughed heartily at her words and gestures."

Now while this forty-year-old virgin was at vespers, the king sent to have this young townsman, who had just finished the last scene of his tragic farce, taken down, and having dressed him in a white shirt, two officers got over the walls of La Godegrand's garden, and put the corpse into her bed, on the side nearest the street. Having done this they went away, and the king remained in the room with the balcony to it, playing with Beupertuys, and awaiting an hour at which the old maid should go to bed. La Godegrand soon came back with a hop, skip, and jump, as the Tourainians say, from the church of St Martin, from which she was not far, since the Rue de Hierusalem touches the walls of the cloister. She entered her house, laid down her prayer-book, chaplet, and rosary, and other ammunition which these old girls carry, then poked the fire, and blew it, warmed herself at it, settled herself in her chair, and played with her cat for want of something better; then she went to the larder, supping and sighing, and sighing and supping, eating alone, with her eyes cast down upon the carpet; and after having drunk, behaved in a manner forbidden in court society.

"Ah!" the corpse said to her, 'God bless you!'"

At this joke of luck of La Beupertuys, both laughed heartily in their sleeves. And with great attention this very Christian king watched the undressing of the old maid, who admired herself while removing her things--pulling out a hair, or scratching a pimple which had maliciously come upon her nose; picking her teeth, and doing a thousand little things which, alas! all ladies, virgins or not, are obliged to do, much to their annoyance; but without these little faults of nature, they would be too proud, and one would not be able to enjoy their society. Having achieved her aquatic and musical discourse, the old maid got in between the sheets, and yelled forth a fine, great, ample, and curious cry, when she saw, when she smelt the fresh vigour of this hanged man and the sweet perfume of his manly youth; then sprang away from him out of coquetry. But as she did not know he was really dead, she came back again, believing he was mocking her, and counterfeiting death.

"Go away, you bad young man!" said she.

But you can imagine that she proffered this requests in a most humble and gracious tone of voice. Then seeing that he did not move, she examined him more closely, and was much astonished at this so fine human nature when she recognised the young fellow, upon whom the fancy took her to perform some purely scientific experiments in the interests of hanged persons.

"What is she doing?" said La Beupertuys to the king.

"She is trying to reanimate him. It is a work of Christian humanity."

And the old girl rubbed and warmed this fine young man, supplicating holy Mary the Egyptian to aid her to renew the life of this husband who had fallen so amorously from heaven, when, suddenly looking at the dead body she was so charitably rubbing, she thought she saw a slight movement in the eyes; then she put her hand upon the man's heart, and felt it beat feebly. At length, from the warmth of the bed and of affection, and by the temperature of old maids, which is by far more burning than the warm blasts of African deserts, she had the delight of bringing to life that fine handsome young fellow who by lucky chance had been very badly hanged.

"See how my executioners serve me!" said Louis, laughing.

"Ah!" said La Beupertuys, "you will not have him hanged again? he is too handsome."

"The decree does not say that he shall be hanged twice, but he shall marry the old woman."

Indeed, the good lady went in a great hurry to seek a master leech, a good bleeder, who lived in the Abbey, and brought him back directly. He immediately took his lancet, and bled the young man. And as no blood came out: "Ah!" said he, "it is too late, the transshipment of blood in the lungs has taken place."

But suddenly this good young blood oozed out a little, and then came out in abundance, and the hemipen apoplexy, which had only just begun, was arrested in its course. The young man moved and came more to life; then he fell, from natural causes, into a state of great weakness and profound sadness, prostration of flesh and general flabbiness. Now the old maid, who was all eyes, and followed the great and notable changes which were taking place in the person of this badly hanged man, pulled the surgeon by the sleeve, and pointing out to him, by a curious glance of the eye, the piteous cause, said to him--

"Will he for the future be always like that?"

"Often," replied the veracious surgeon.

"Oh! he was much nicer hanged!"

At this speech the king burst out laughing. Seeing him at the window, the woman and the surgeon were much frightened, for this laugh seemed to them a second sentence of death for their poor victim. But the king kept his word, and married them. And in order to do justice he gave the husband the name of the Sieur de Mortsauif in the place of the one he had lost upon the scaffold. As La Godegrand had a very big basket of crowns, they founded a good family in Touraine, which still exists and is much respected, since M. de Mortsauif faithfully served Louis the Eleventh on different occasions. Only he never liked to come across gibbets or old women, and never again made amorous assignations in the night.

This teaches us to thoroughly verify and recognise women, and not to deceive ourselves in the local difference which exists between the old and the young, for if we are not hanged for

our errors of love, there are always great risks to run.

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