

his wildest mood. He uttered an infinity of jests, and cut a thousand absurd antics, and rallying me on my gravity, soon came near to making me repent of the easiness which had led me to fall in with his humour.

However it was too late to retreat, and in a moment we were standing in the street. It would not have surprised me if he had celebrated his freedom by some noisy extravagance there; but he refrained, and contented himself—while Maignan locked the postern behind us—with cocking his hat and lugging forward his sword, and assuming an air of whimsical recklessness, as if an adventure were to be instantly expected.

But the moon had not yet risen, the night was dark, and for some time we met with nothing more diverting than a stumble over a dead dog, a word with a forward wench, or a narrow escape from one of those liquid douches that render the streets perilous for common folk and do not spare the greatest. Naturally I began to tire, and wished myself with all my heart back at the the Arsenal; but Henry, whose spirits a spice of danger never failed to raise, found a hundred things to be merry over, and some of which he made a great tale afterwards. He would go on; and presently, in the Rue de la Pourpointerie, which we entered as the clocks struck the hour before midnight, his persistence was rewarded.

By that time the moon had risen; but, naturally, few were abroad so late, and such as were to be seen belonged to a class among whom even Henry did not care to seek adventures. Our astonishment was great therefore when half-way down the street—a street of tall, mean houses neither better nor much worse than others in that quarter—we saw, standing