

forwarding to you a dozen bottles of my Anjou wine, with which they are much pleased. They are desirous that you should drink to their health in their favourite wine. I have done this, and am, monsieur, with great respect,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

GODEAU,

*PURVEYOR OF THE MUSKETEERS*

'That's all well!' cried d'Arragnan. 'They think of me in their pleasures, as I thought of them in my troubles. Well, I will certainly drink to their health with all my heart, but I will not drink alone.'

And d'Arragnan went among those Guardsmen with whom he had formed greater intimacy than with the others, to invite them to enjoy with him this present of delicious Anjou wine which had been sent him from Villeroy.

One of the two Guardsmen was engaged that evening, and another the next, so the meeting was fixed for the day after that.

D'Arragnan, on his return, sent the twelve bottles of wine to the refreshment room of the Guards, with strict orders that great care should be taken of it; and then, on the day appointed, as the dinner was fixed for midday d'Arragnan sent Planchet at nine in the morning to assist in preparing everything for the entertainment.

Planchet, very proud of being raised to the dignity of landlord, thought he would make all ready, like an intelligent man; and with this view called in the assistance of the lackey of one of his master's guests, named Fourreau, and the false soldier who had tried to kill d'Arragnan and who, belonging to no corps, had entered into the service of d'Arragnan, or rather of Planchet, after d'Arragnan had saved his life.

The hour of the banquet being come, the two guards arrived, took their places, and the dishes were arranged on the table. Planchet waited, towel on arm; Fourreau uncorked the bottles; and Brisemont, which was the name of the convalescent, poured the wine, which was a little shaken by its journey, carefully into decanters. Of this wine, the first bottle being a little thick at the bottom, Brisemont poured the lees into a glass, and

d'Arragnan desired him to drink it, for the poor devil had not yet recovered his strength.

The guests having eaten the soup, were about to lift the first glass of wine to their lips, when all at once the cannon sounded from Fort Louis and Fort Neuf. The Guardsmen, imagining this to be caused by some unexpected attack, either of the besieged or the English, sprang to their swords. D'Arragnan, not less forward than they, did likewise, and all ran out, in order to repair to their posts.

But scarcely were they out of the room before they were made aware of the cause of this noise. Cries of 'Live the king! Live the cardinal!' resounded on every side, and the drums were beaten in all directions.

In short, the king, impatient, as has been said, had come by forced marches, and had that moment arrived with all his household and a reinforcement of ten thousand troops. His Musketeers proceeded and followed him. D'Arragnan, placed in line with his company, saluted with an expressive gesture his three friends, whose eyes soon discovered him, and M. de Tréville, who detected him at once.

The ceremony of reception over, the four friends were soon in one another's arms.

'*Pardieu!*' cried d'Arragnan, 'you could not have arrived in better time; the dinner cannot have had time to get cold! Can it, gentlemen?' added the young man, turning to the two Guards, whom he introduced to his friends.

'Ah, ah!' said Porthos, 'it appears we are feasting!'

'I hope,' said Aramis, 'there are no women at your dinner.'

'Is there any drinkable wine in your tavern?' asked Athos.

'Well, *pardieu!* there is yours, my dear friend,' replied d'Arragnan.

'Our wine?' said Athos, astonished.

'Yes, that you sent me.'

'We sent you wine?'

'You know very well—the wine from the hills of Anjou.'

'Yes, I know what brand you are talking about.'

'The wine you prefer.'

'Well, in the absence of champagne and chambertin, you must content yourselves with that.'

'And so, connoisseurs in wine as we are, we have sent you some Anjou wine?' said Porthos.

'Not exactly, it is the wine that was sent by your order.'

'On our account?' said the three Musketeers.

'Did you send this wine, Aramis?' said Athos.

'No; and you, Porthos?'

'No; and you, Athos?'

'No!'

'If it was not you, it was your purveyor,' said d'Arragnan.

'Our purveyor!'

'Yes, your purveyor, Godeau—the purveyor of the Musketeers.'

'My faith! never mind where it comes from,' said Porthos, 'let us taste it, and if it is good, let us drink it.'

'No,' said Athos; 'don't let us drink wine which comes from an unknown source.'

'You are right, Athos,' said d'Arragnan. 'Did none of you charge your purveyor, Godeau, to send me some wine?'

'No! And yet you say he has sent you some as from us?'

'Here is his letter,' said d'Arragnan, and he presented the note to his comrades.

'This is not his writing!' said Athos. 'I am acquainted with it; before we left Villeroy I settled the accounts of the regiment.'

'A false letter altogether,' said Porthos, 'we have not been disciplined.'

'D'Arragnan,' said Aramis, in a reproachful tone, 'how could you believe that we had made a disturbance?'

D'Arragnan grew pale, and a convulsive trembling shook all his limbs.

'Thou alarmest me!' said Athos, who never used *thee* and *thou* but upon very particular occasions, 'what has happened?'

'Look you, my friends!' cried d'Arragnan, 'a horrible suspicion crosses my mind! Can this be another vengeance of that woman?'

It was now Athos who turned pale.

D'Arragnan rushed toward the refreshment room, the three Musketeers and the two Guards following him.

The first object that met the eyes of d'Arragnan on entering the room was Brisemont, stretched upon the ground and rolling in horrible convulsions.

## Chapter XLII

### The Anjou Wine



AFTER the most disheartening news of the king's health, a report of his convalescence began to prevail in the camp, and as he was very anxious to be in person at the siege, it was said that as soon as he could mount a horse he would set forward.

Meantime, Monsieur, who knew that from one day to the other he might expect to be removed from his command by the Duc d'Angoulême, by Bassompierre, or by Schomberg, who were all eager for his post, did but little, lost his days in wavering, and did not dare to attempt any great enterprise to drive the English from the Isle of Ré, where they still besieged the citadel St. Martin and the fort of La Pré, as on their side the French were besieging La Rochelle.

D'Arragnan, as we have said, had become more tranquil, as always happens after a past danger, particularly when the danger seems to have vanished. He only felt one uneasiness, and that was at not hearing any tidings from his friends.

But one morning at the commencement of the month of November everything was explained to him by this letter, dated from Villeroy:

M. d'Arragnan,

MM. Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, after having had an entertainment at my house and enjoying themselves very much, created such a disturbance that the provost of the castle, a rigid man, has ordered them to be confined for some days; but I accomplish the order they have given me by

Planchet and Fourreau, as pale as death, were trying to give him succour; but it was plain that all assistance was useless—all the features of the dying man were distorted with agony.

'Ah!' cried he, on perceiving d'Arragnan, 'ah! this is frightful! You pretend to pardon me, and you poison me!'

'I!' cried d'Arragnan. 'I, wretch? What do you say?'

'I say that it was you who gave me the wine; I say that it was you who desired me to drink it. I say you wished to avenge yourself on me, and I say that it is horrible!'

'Do not think so, Brisemont,' said d'Arragnan; 'do not think so. I swear to you, I protest—'

'Oh, but God is above! God will punish you! My God, grant that he may one day suffer what I suffer!'

'Upon the Gospel,' said d'Arragnan, throwing himself down by the dying man, 'I swear to you that the wine was poisoned and that I was going to drink of it as you did.'

'I do not believe you,' cried the soldier, and he expired amid horrible tortures.

'Frightful! frightful!' murmured Athos, while Porthos broke the bottles and Aramis gave orders, a little too late, that a confessor should be sent for.

'Oh, my friends,' said d'Arragnan, 'you come once more to save my life, not only mine but that of these gentlemen. Gentlemen,' continued he, addressing the Guardsmen, 'I request you will be silent with regard to this adventure. Great personages may have had a hand in what you have seen, and if talked about, the evil would only recoil upon us.'

'Ah, monsieur!' stammered Planchet, more dead than alive, 'ah, monsieur, what an escape I have had!'

'How, sirrah! you were going to drink my wine?'

'To the health of the king, monsieur; I was going to drink a small glass of it if Fourreau had not told me I was called.'

'Alas!' said Fourreau, whose teeth chattered with terror, 'I wanted to get him out of the way that I might drink myself.'

'Gentlemen,' said d'Arragnan, addressing the Guardsmen, 'you may easily comprehend that such a feast can only be very dull after what has

taken place; so accept my excuses, and put off the party till another day, I beg of you.'

The two Guardsmen courteously accepted d'Artagnan's excuses, and perceiving that the four friends desired to be alone, retired.

When the young Guardsman and the three Musketeers were without witnesses, they looked at one another with an air which plainly expressed that each of them perceived the gravity of their situation.

'In the first place,' said Athos, 'let us leave this chamber; the dead are not agreeable company, particularly when they have died a violent death.'

'Planchet,' said d'Artagnan, 'I commit the corpse of this poor devil to your care. Let him be interred in holy ground. He committed a crime, it is true; but he repented of it.'

And the four friends quit the room, leaving to Planchet and Fourreau the duty of paying mortuary honours to Brisemont.

The host gave them another chamber, and served them with fresh eggs and some water, which Athos went himself to draw at the fountain. In a few words, Porthos and Aramis were posted as to the situation.

'Well,' said d'Artagnan to Athos, 'you see, my dear friend, that this is war to the death.'

Athos shook his head.

'Yes, yes,' replied he, 'I perceive that plainly; but do you really believe it is she?'

'I am sure of it.'

'Nevertheless, I confess I still doubt.'

'But the *fleur-de-lis* on her shoulder?'

'She is some Englishwoman who has committed a crime in France, and has been branded in consequence.'

'Athos, she is your wife, I tell you,' repeated d'Artagnan; 'only reflect how much the two descriptions resemble each other.'

'Yes; but I should think the other must be dead, I hanged her so effectually.'

It was d'Artagnan who now shook his head in his turn.

'But in either case, what is to be done?' said the young man.

'The fact is, one cannot remain thus, with a sword hanging eternally over his head,' said Athos. 'We must extricate ourselves from this position.'

'But how?'

believed that he might be tranquil, as one of his two enemies was killed and the other devoted to his interests.

This tranquillity proved one thing—that d'Artagnan did not yet know Milady.

‘Yes, yes!’ murmured d’Artagnan; ‘that’s the place—Milady’s own residence!’

Then the young man tremblingly comprehended what a terrible thirst for vengeance urged this woman on to destroy him, as well as all who loved him, and how well she must be acquainted with the affairs of the court, since she had discovered all. There could be no doubt she owed this information to the cardinal.

But amid all this he perceived, with a feeling of real joy, that the queen must have discovered the prison in which poor Mme. Bonacieux was explaining her devotion, and that she had freed her from that prison; and the letter he had received from the young woman, and her passage along the road of Chaillet like an apparition, were now explained.

Then also, as Athos had predicted, it became possible to find Mme. Bonacieux, and a convent was not impregnable.

This idea completely restored clemency to his heart. He turned toward the wounded man, who had watched with intense anxiety all the various expressions of his countenance, and holding out his arm to him, said, ‘Come, I will not abandon you thus. Lean upon me, and let us return to the camp.’

‘Yes,’ said the man, who could scarcely believe in such magnanimity, ‘but is it not to have me hanged?’

‘You have my word,’ said he; ‘for the second time I give you your life.’ The wounded man sank upon his knees, to again kiss the feet of his preserver; but d’Artagnan, who had no longer a motive for staying so near the enemy, abridged the testimonials of his gratitude.

The Guardsman who had returned at the first discharge announced the death of his four companions. They were therefore much astonished and delighted in the regiment when they saw the young man come back safe and sound.

D’Artagnan explained the sword wound of his companion by a *sortie* which he improvised. He described the death of the other soldier, and the perils they had encountered. This recital was for him the occasion of veritable triumph. The whole army talked of this expedition for a day, and Monsieur paid him his compliments upon it. Besides this, as every great action bears its recompense with it, the brave exploit of d’Artagnan resulted in the restoration of the tranquility he had lost. In fact, d’Artagnan

‘Listen! You must try to see her, and have an explanation with her. Say to her: ‘Peace or war! My word as a gentleman never to say anything of you, never to do anything against you; on your side, a solemn oath to remain neutral with respect to me. If not, I will apply to the chancellor, I will apply to the king, I will apply to the hangman, I will move the courts against you, I will denounce you as branded, I will bring you to trial; and if you are acquitted, well, by the faith of a gentleman, I will kill you at the corner of some wall, as I would a mad dog.’

‘I like the means well enough,’ said d’Artagnan, ‘but where and how to meet with her?’

‘Time, dear friend, time brings round opportunity; opportunity is the martingale of man. The more we have ventured the more we gain, when we know how to wait.’

‘Yes; but to wait surrounded by assassins and poisoners.’

‘Bah!’ said Athos. ‘God has preserved us hitherto, God will preserve us still.’

‘Yes, we. Besides, we are men; and everything considered, it is our lot to risk our lives; but *she*,’ asked he, in an undertone.

‘What she?’ asked Athos.

‘Constance.’

‘Madame Bonacieux! Ah, that’s true!’ said Athos. ‘My poor friend, I had forgotten you were in love.’

‘Well, but,’ said Aramis, ‘have you not learned by the letter you found on the wretched corpse that she is in a convent? One may be very comfortable in a convent; and as soon as the siege of La Rochelle is terminated, I promise you on my part—’

‘Good,’ cried Athos, ‘good! Yes, my dear Aramis, we all know that your views have a religious tendency.’

‘I am only temporarily a Musketeer,’ said Aramis, humbly.

‘It is some time since we heard from his mistress,’ said Athos, in a low voice. ‘But take no notice; we know all about that.’

‘Well,’ said Porthos, ‘it appears to me that the means are very simple.’

‘What?’ asked d’Artagnan.

‘You say she is in a convent?’ replied Porthos.

‘Yes.’

'Very well. As soon as the siege is over, we'll carry her off from that convent.'

'But we must first learn what convent she is in.'

'That's true,' said Porthos.

'But I think I have it,' said Athos. 'Don't you say, dear d'Aragnan, that it is the queen who has made choice of the convent for her?'

'I believe so, at least.'

'In that case Porthos will assist us.'

'And how so, if you please?'

'Why, by your marchioness, your duchess, your princess. She must have a long arm.'

'Hush!' said Porthos, placing a finger on his lips. 'I believe her to be a cardinalist; she must know nothing of the matter.'

'Then,' said Aramis, 'I take upon myself to obtain intelligence of her.'

'You, Aramis?' cried the three friends. 'You! And how?'

'By the queen's almoner, to whom I am very intimately allied,' said Aramis, colouring.

And on this assurance, the four friends, who had finished their modest repast, separated, with the promise of meeting again that evening. D'Aragnan returned to less important affairs, and the three Musketeers repaired to the king's quarters, where they had to prepare their lodging.

And with a light step, an eye on the watch, observing the movements of the enemy and taking advantage of the accidents of the ground, d'Aragnan succeeded in reaching the second soldier.

There were two means of gaining his object—to search him on the spot, or to carry him away, making a buckler of his body, and search him in the trench.

D'Aragnan preferred the second means, and lifted the assassin onto his shoulders at the moment the enemy fired.

A slight shock, the dull noise of three balls which penetrated the flesh, a last cry, a convulsion of agony, proved to d'Aragnan that the would-be assassin had saved his life.

D'Aragnan regained the trench, and threw the corpse beside the wounded man, who was as pale as death.

Then he began to search. A leather pocketbook, a purse, in which was evidently a part of the sum which the bandit had received, with a dice box and dice, completed the possessions of the dead man.

He left the box and dice where they fell, threw the purse to the wounded man, and eagerly opened the pocketbook.

Among some unimportant papers he found the following letter, that which he had sought at the risk of his life: 'Since you have lost sight of that woman and she is now in safety in the convent, which you should never have allowed her to reach, try, at least, not to miss the man. If you do, you know that my hand stretches far, and that you shall pay very dearly for the hundred louis you have from me.'

No signature. Nevertheless it was plain the letter came from Mlady. He consequently kept it as a piece of evidence, and being in safety behind the angle of the trench, he began to interrogate the wounded man. He confessed that he had undertaken with his comrade—the same who was killed—to carry off a young woman who was to leave Paris by the *Barrière de La Villette*; but having stopped to drink at a cabaret, they had missed the carriage by ten minutes.

'But what were you to do with that woman?' asked d'Aragnan, with anguish.

'We were to have conveyed her to a hôtel in the *Place Royale*,' said the wounded man.

like you. I understand why you accepted it, and I grant you my pardon; but upon one condition.'

'What is that?' said the soldier, uneasy at perceiving that all was not over.

'That you will go and fetch me the letter your comrade has in his pocket.'

'But,' cried the bandit, 'that is only another way of killing me. How can I go and fetch that letter under the fire of the bastion?'

'You must nevertheless make up your mind to go and get it, or I swear you shall die by my hand.'

'Pardon, monsieur; pity! In the name of that young lady you love, and whom you perhaps believe dead but who is not!' cried the bandit, throwing himself upon his knees and leaning upon his hand—for he began to lose his strength with his blood.

'And how do you know there is a young woman whom I love, and that I believed that woman dead?' asked d'Arragnan.

'By that letter which my comrade has in his pocket.'

'You see, then,' said d'Arragnan, 'that I must have that letter. So no more delay, no more hesitation; or else whatever may be my repugnance to soiling my sword a second time with the blood of a wretch like you, I swear by my faith as an honest man —' and at these words d'Arragnan made so fierce a gesture that the wounded man sprang up.

'Stop, stop!' cried he, regaining strength by force of terror. 'I will go—I will go!'

D'Arragnan took the soldier's arquebus, made him go on before him, and urged him toward his companion by pricking him behind with his sword.

It was a frightful thing to see this wretch, leaving a long track of blood on the ground he passed over, pale with approaching death, trying to drag himself along without being seen to the body of his accomplice, which lay twenty paces from him.

Terror was so strongly painted on his face, covered with a cold sweat, that d'Arragnan took pity on him, and casting upon him a look of contempt, 'Stop,' said he, 'I will show you the difference between a man of courage and such a coward as you. Stay where you are; I will go myself.'

## Chapter XLIII

### The Sign of the Red Dovecot



MEANWHILE the king, who, with more reason than the cardinal, showed his hatred for Buckingham, although scarcely arrived was in such a haste to meet the enemy that he commanded every disposition to be made to drive the English from the Isle of Ré, and afterward to press the siege of La Rochelle; but notwithstanding his earnest wish, he was delayed by the dissensions which broke out between MM. Bassompierre and Schomberg, against the Duc d'Angoulême.

MM. Bassompierre and Schomberg were marshals of France, and claimed their right of commanding the army under the orders of the king; but the cardinal, who feared that Bassompierre, a Huguenot at heart, might press but feebly the English and Rochellais, his brothers in religion, supported the Duc d'Angoulême, whom the king, at his instigation, had named lieutenant general. The result was that to prevent MM. Bassompierre and Schomberg from deserting the army, a separate command had to be given to each. Bassompierre took up his quarters on the north of the city, between Leu and Dompiere; the Duc d'Angoulême on the east, from Dompiere to Perigny; and M. de Schomberg on the south, from Perigny to Angoutin.

The quarters of Monsieur were at Dompiere; the quarters of the king were sometimes at Estrée, sometimes at Jartie; the cardinal's quarters were upon the downs, at the bridge of La Pierre, in a simple house without any entrenchment. So that Monsieur watched Bassompierre; the king, the Duc d'Angoulême; and the cardinal, M. de Schomberg.

As soon as this organization was established, they set about driving the English from the Isle.

The juncture was favourable. The English, who require, above everything, good living in order to be good soldiers, only eating salt meat and bad biscuit, had many invalids in their camp. Still further, the sea, very rough at this period of the year all along the sea coast, destroyed every day some little vessel; and the shore, from the point of l'Aiguillon to the trenches, was at every tide literally covered with the wrecks of pinnacles, *roberges*, and feluccas. The result was that even if the king's troops remained quietly in their camp, it was evident that some day or other, Buckingham, who only continued in the Isle from obstinacy, would be obliged to raise the siege.

But as M. de Toiras gave information that everything was preparing in the enemy's camp for a fresh assault, the king judged that it would be best to put an end to the affair, and gave the necessary orders for a decisive action.

As it is not our intention to give a journal of the siege, but on the contrary only to describe such of the events of it as are connected with the story we are relating, we will content ourselves with saying in two words that the expedition succeeded, to the great astonishment of the king and the great glory of the cardinal. The English, repulsed foot by foot, beaten in all encounters, and defeated in the passage of the Isle of Loie, were obliged to re-embark, leaving on the field of battle two thousand men, among whom were five colonels, three lieutenant colonels, two hundred and fifty captains, twenty gentlemen of rank, four pieces of cannon, and sixty flags, which were taken to Paris by Claude de St. Simon, and suspended with great pomp in the arches of Notre Dame.

Te Deums were chanted in camp, and afterward throughout France.

The cardinal was left free to carry on the siege, without having, at least at the present, anything to fear on the part of the English.

But it must be acknowledged, this response was but momentary. An envoy of the Duke of Buckingham, named Montague, was taken, and proof was obtained of a league between the German Empire, Spain, England, and Lorraine. This league was directed against France.

Still further, in Buckingham's lodging, which he had been forced to abandon more precipitately than he expected, papers were found which

The assassins comprehended that if they fled toward the camp without having killed their man, they should be accused by him; therefore their first idea was to join the enemy. One of them took his gun by the barrel, and used it as he would a club. He aimed a terrible blow at d'Aragnan, who avoided it by springing to one side; but by this movement he left a passage free to the bandit, who darted off toward the bastion. As the Rochellais who guarded the bastion were ignorant of the intentions of the man they saw coming toward them, they fired upon him, and he fell, struck by a ball which broke his shoulder.

Meantime d'Aragnan had thrown himself upon the other soldier, attacking him with his sword. The conflict was not long; the wretch had nothing to defend himself with but his discharged arquebus. The sword of the Guardsman slipped along the barrel of the now-useless weapon, and passed through the thigh of the assassin, who fell.

D'Aragnan immediately placed the point of his sword at his throat.

'Oh, do not kill me!' cried the bandit. 'Pardon, pardon, my officer, and I will tell you all.'

'Is your secret of enough importance to me to spare your life for it?' asked the young man, withholding his arm.

'Yes; if you think existence worth anything to a man of twenty, as you are, and who may hope for everything, being handsome and brave, as you are.'

'Wretch,' cried d'Aragnan, 'speak quickly! Who employed you to assassinate me?'

'A woman whom I don't know, but who is called Milady.'

'But if you don't know this woman, how do you know her name?'

'My comrade knows her, and called her so. It was with him she agreed, and not with me; he even has in his pocket a letter from that person, who attaches great importance to you, as I have heard him say.'

'But how did you become concerned in this villainous affair?'

'He proposed to me to undertake it with him, and I agreed.'

'And how much did she give you for this fine enterprise?'

'A hundred louis.'

'Well, come!' said the young man, laughing, 'she thinks I am worth something. A hundred louis? Well, that was a temptation for two wretches