did my best to make them drunk. Then the curate forbade me to quit my uniform, and the Jesuit entreated me to get him made a Musketeer.'

'Without a thesis?' cried d'Artagnan, 'without a thesis? I demand the suppression of the thesis.'

'Since then,' continued Aramis, 'I have lived very agreeably. I have begun a poem in verses of one syllable. That is rather difficult, but the merit in all things consists in the difficulty. The matter is gallant. I will read you the first canto. It has four hundred lines, and lasts a minute.'

'My faith, my dear Aramis,' said d'Artagnan, who detested verses almost as much as he did Latin, 'add to the merit of the difficulty that of the brevity, and you are sure that your poem will at least have two merits.'

'You will see,' continued Aramis, 'that it breathes irreproachable passion. And so, my friends, we return to Paris? Bravo! I am ready. We are going to rejoin that good fellow, Porthos. So much the better. You can't think how I have missed him, the great simpleton. To see him so self-satisfied reconciles me with myself. He would not sell his horse; not for a kingdom! I think I can see him now, mounted upon his superb animal and seated in his handsome saddle. I am sure he will look like the Great Mogul!'

They made a halt for an hour to refresh their horses. Aramis discharged his bill, placed Bazin in the cart with his comrades, and they set forward to join Porthos.

They found him up, less pale than when d'Artagnan left him after his first visit, and seated at a table on which, though he was alone, was spread enough for four persons. This dinner consisted of meats nicely dressed, choice wines, and superb fruit.

'Ah, *pardieu!*' said he, rising, 'you come in the nick of time, gentlemen. I was just beginning the soup, and you will dine with me.'

'Oh, oh!' said d'Artagnan, 'Mousqueton has not caught these bottles with his lasso. Besides, here is a piquant *fricandeau* and a fillet of beef.'

'I am recruiting myself,' said Porthos, 'I am recruiting myself. Nothing weakens a man more than these devilish strains. Did you ever suffer from a strain, Athos?'

'Never! Though I remember, in our affair of the Rue Férou, I received a sword wound which at the end of fifteen or eighteen days produced the same effect.'

'But this dinner was not intended for you alone, Porthos?' said Aramis.

'No,' said Porthos, 'I expected some gentlemen of the neighbourhood, who have just sent me word they could not come. You will take their places and I shall not lose by the exchange. *Holà*, Mousqueton, seats, and order double the bottles!'

'Do you know what we are eating here?' said Athos, at the end of ten minutes.

'*Pardieu!*' replied d'Artagnan, 'for my part, I am eating veal garnished with shrimps and vegetables.'

'And I some lamb chops,' said Porthos.

'And I a plain chicken,' said Aramis.

'You are all mistaken, gentlemen,' answered Athos, gravely; 'you are eating horse.'

'Eating what?' said d'Artagnan.

'Horse!' said Aramis, with a grimace of disgust.

Porthos alone made no reply.

'Yes, horse. Are we not eating a horse, Porthos? And perhaps his saddle, therewith.'

'No, gentlemen, I have kept the harness,' said Porthos.

'My faith,' said Aramis, 'we are all alike. One would think we had tipped the wink.'

'What could I do?' said Porthos. 'This horse made my visitors ashamed of theirs, and I don't like to humiliate people.'

'Then your duchess is still at the waters?' asked d'Artagnan.

'Still,' replied Porthos. 'And, my faith, the governor of the province—one of the gentlemen I expected today—seemed to have such a wish for him, that I gave him to him.'

'Gave him?' cried d'Artagnan.

'My God, yes, *gave*, that is the word,' said Porthos; 'for the animal was worth at least a hundred and fifty louis, and the stingy fellow would only give me eighty.'

'Without the saddle?' said Aramis.

'Yes, without the saddle.'

'You will observe, gentlemen,' said Athos, 'that Porthos has made the best bargain of any of us.'

And then commenced a roar of laughter in which they all joined, to the astonishment of poor Porthos; but when he was informed of the cause of their hilarity, he shared it vociferously according to his custom.

'There is one comfort, we are all in cash,' said d'Artagnan.

'Well, for my part,' said Athos, 'I found Aramis's Spanish wine so good that I sent on a hamper of sixty bottles of it in the wagon with the lackeys. That has weakened my purse.'

'And I,' said Aramis, 'imagined that I had given almost my last sou to the church of Montdidier and the Jesuits of Amiens, with whom I had made engagements which I ought to have kept. I have ordered Masses for myself, and for you, gentlemen, which will be said, gentlemen, for which I have not the least doubt you will be marvellously benefited.'

'And I,' said Porthos, 'do you think my strain cost me nothing?—without reckoning Mousqueton's wound, for which I had to have the surgeon twice a day, and who charged me double on account of that foolish Mousqueton having allowed himself a ball in a part which people generally only show to an apothecary; so I advised him to try never to get wounded there any more.'

'Ay, ay!' said Athos, exchanging a smile with d'Artagnan and Aramis, 'it is very clear you acted nobly with regard to the poor lad; that is like a good master.'

'In short,' said Porthos, 'when all my expenses are paid, I shall have, at most, thirty crowns left.'

'And I about ten pistoles,' said Aramis.

'Well, then it appears that we are the Crœsuses of the society. How much have you left of your hundred pistoles, d'Artagnan?'

'Of my hundred pistoles? Why, in the first place I gave you fifty.'

'You think so?'

'*Pardieu!*'

'Ah, that is true. I recollect.'

'Then I paid the host six.'

'What a brute of a host! Why did you give him six pistoles?'

'You told me to give them to him.'

'It is true; I am too good-natured. In brief, how much remains?'

'Twenty-five pistoles,' said d'Artagnan.

'And I,' said Athos, taking some small change from his pocket, 'I— '

of Planchet and Grimaud, and the two lackeys started on foot, carrying the saddles on their heads.

However ill our two friends were mounted, they were soon far in advance of their servants, and arrived at Crèvecœur. From a distance they perceived Aramis, seated in a melancholy manner at his window, looking out, like Sister Anne, at the dust in the horizon.

'*Holà*, Aramis! What the devil are you doing there?' cried the two friends.

'Ah, is that you, d'Artagnan, and you, Athos?' said the young man. 'I was reflecting upon the rapidity with which the blessings of this world leave us. My English horse, which has just disappeared amid a cloud of dust, has furnished me with a living image of the fragility of the things of the earth. Life itself may be resolved into three words: *Erat, est, fuit*.'

'Which means— ' said d'Artagnan, who began to suspect the truth.

'Which means that I have just been duped—sixty louis for a horse which by the manner of his gait can do at least five leagues an hour.'

D'Artagnan and Athos laughed aloud.

'My dear d'Artagnan,' said Aramis, 'don't be too angry with me, I beg. Necessity has no law; besides, I am the person punished, as that rascally horsedealer has robbed me of fifty louis, at least. Ah, you fellows are good managers! You ride on our lackey's horses, and have your own gallant steeds led along carefully by hand, at short stages.'

At the same instant a market cart, which some minutes before had appeared upon the Amiens road, pulled up at the inn, and Planchet and Grimaud came out of it with the saddles on their heads. The cart was returning empty to Paris, and the two lackeys had agreed, for their transport, to slake the wagoner's thirst along the route.

'What is this?' said Aramis, on seeing them arrive. 'Nothing but saddles?'

'Now do you understand?' said Athos.

'My friends, that's exactly like me! I retained my harness by instinct. *Holà*, Bazin! Bring my new saddle and carry it along with those of these gentlemen.'

'And what have you done with your ecclesiastics?' asked d'Artagnan.

'My dear fellow, I invited them to a dinner the next day,' replied Aramis. 'They have some capital wine here—please to observe that in passing. I

'Well, then, I repeat, you are wrong. What is the use of one horse for us two? I could not ride behind. We should look like the two sons of Aymon, who had lost their brother. You cannot think of humiliating me by prancing along by my side on that magnificent charger. For my part, I should not hesitate a moment; I should take the hundred pistoles. We want money for our return to Paris.'

'I am much attached to that horse, Athos.'

'And there again you are wrong. A horse slips and injures a joint; a horse stumbles and breaks his knees to the bone; a horse eats out of a manger in which a glandered horse has eaten. There is a horse, while on the contrary, the hundred pistoles feed their master.'

'But how shall we get back?'

'Upon our lackey's horses, *pardieu*. Anybody may see by our bearing that we are people of condition.'

'Pretty figures we shall cut on ponies while Aramis and Porthos caracole on their steeds.'

'Aramis! Porthos!' cried Athos, and laughed aloud.

'What is it?' asked d'Artagnan, who did not at all comprehend the hilarity of his friend.

'Nothing, nothing! Go on!'

'Your advice, then?'

'To take the hundred pistoles, d'Artagnan. With the hundred pistoles we can live well to the end of the month. We have undergone a great deal of fatigue, remember, and a little rest will do no harm.'

'I rest? Oh, no, Athos. Once in Paris, I shall prosecute my search for that unfortunate woman!'

'Well, you may be assured that your horse will not be half so serviceable to you for that purpose as good golden louis. Take the hundred pistoles, my friend; take the hundred pistoles!'

D'Artagnan only required one reason to be satisfied. This last reason appeared convincing. Besides, he feared that by resisting longer he should appear selfish in the eyes of Athos. He acquiesced, therefore, and chose the hundred pistoles, which the Englishman paid down on the spot.

They then determined to depart. Peace with the landlord, in addition to Athos's old horse, cost six pistoles. D'Artagnan and Athos took the nags

'You? Nothing!'

'My faith! So little that it is not worth reckoning with the general stock.'

'Now, then, let us calculate how much we posses in all.'

'Porthos?'

'Thirty crowns.'

'Aramis?'

'Ten pistoles.'

'And you, d'Artagnan?'

'Twenty-five.'

'That makes in all?' said Athos.

'Four hundred and seventy-five livres,' said d'Artagnan, who reckoned like Archimedes.

'On our arrival in Paris, we shall still have four hundred, besides the harnesses,' said Porthos.

'But our troop horses?' said Aramis.

'Well, of the four horses of our lackeys we will make two for the masters, for which we will draw lots. With the four hundred livres we will make the half of one for one of the unmounted, and then we will give the turnings out of our pockets to d'Artagnan, who has a steady hand, and will go and play in the first gaming house we come to. There!'

'Let us dine, then,' said Porthos; 'it is getting cold.'

The friends, at ease with regard to the future, did honour to the repast, the remains of which were abandoned to Mousqueton, Bazin, Planchet, and Grimaud.

On arriving in Paris, d'Artagnan found a letter from M. de Tréville, which informed him that, at his request, the king had promised that he should enter the company of the Musketeers.

As this was the height of d'Artagnan's worldly ambition—apart, be it well understood, from his desire of finding Mme. Bonacieux—he ran, full of joy, to seek his comrades, whom he had left only half an hour before, but whom he found very sad and deeply preoccupied. They were assembled in council at the residence of Athos, which always indicated an event of some gravity. M. de Tréville had intimated to them his Majesty's fixed intention to open the campaign on the first of May, and they must immediately prepare their outfits.

The four philosophers looked at one another in a state of bewilderment. M. de Tréville never jested in matters relating to discipline.

'And what do you reckon your outfit will cost?' said d'Artagnan.

'Oh, we can scarcely say. We have made our calculations with Spartan economy, and we each require fifteen hundred livres.'

'Four times fifteen makes sixty—six thousand livres,' said Athos.

'It seems to me,' said d'Artagnan, 'with a thousand livres each—I do not speak as a Spartan, but as a procurator— '

This word *procurator* roused Porthos. 'Stop,' said he, 'I have an idea.'

'Well, that's something, for I have not the shadow of one,' said Athos coolly; 'but as to d'Artagnan, gentlemen, the idea of belonging to *ours* has driven him out of his senses. A thousand livres! For my part, I declare I want two thousand.'

'Four times two makes eight,' then said Aramis; 'it is eight thousand that we want to complete our outfits, toward which, it is true, we have already the saddles.'

'Besides,' said Athos, waiting till d'Artagnan, who went to thank Monsieur de Tréville, had shut the door, 'besides, there is that beautiful ring which beams from the finger of our friend. What the devil! D'Artagnan is too good a comrade to leave his brothers in embarrassment while he wears the ransom of a king on his finger.'

himself with saying, 'That's a sad throw, comrade; you will have the horses fully equipped, monsieur.'

The Englishman, quite triumphant, did not even give himself the trouble to shake the dice. He threw them on the table without looking at them, so sure was he of victory; d'Artagnan turned aside to conceal his ill humour.

'Hold, hold, hold!' said Athos, wit his quiet tone; 'that throw of the dice is extraordinary. I have not seen such a one four times in my life. Two aces!'

The Englishman looked, and was seized with astonishment. D'Artagnan looked, and was seized with pleasure.

'Yes,' continued Athos, 'four times only; once at the house of Monsieur Créquy; another time at my own house in the country, in my château at—when I had a château; a third time at Monsieur de Tréville's where it surprised us all; and the fourth time at a cabaret, where it fell to my lot, and where I lost a hundred louis and a supper on it.'

'Then Monsieur takes his horse back again,' said the Englishman.

'Certainly,' said d'Artagnan.

'Then there is no revenge?'

'Our conditions said, "No revenge," you will please to recollect.'

'That is true; the horse shall be restored to your lackey, monsieur.'

'A moment,' said Athos; 'with your permission, monsieur, I wish to speak a word with my friend.'

'Say on.'

Athos drew d'Artagnan aside.

'Well, Tempter, what more do you want with me?' said d'Artagnan. 'You want me to throw again, do you not?'

'No, I would wish you to reflect.'

'On what?'

'You mean to take your horse?'

'Without doubt.'

'You are wrong, then. I would take the hundred pistoles. You know you have staked the harnesses against the horse or a hundred pistoles, at your choice.'

'Yes.'

'And I have no inclination to play.'

'Swear to nothing. You have not played for a long time, I said; you ought, then, to have a good hand.'

'Well, what then?'

'Well; the Englishman and his companion are still here. I remarked that he regretted the horse furniture very much. You appear to think much of your horse. In your place I would stake the furniture against the horse.'

'But he will not wish for only one harness.'

'Stake both, *pardieu!* I am not selfish, as you are.'

'You would do so?' said d'Artagnan, undecided, so strongly did the confidence of Athos begin to prevail, in spite of himself.

'On my honour, in one single throw.'

'But having lost the horses, I am particularly anxious to preserve the harnesses.'

'Stake your diamond, then.'

'This? That's another matter. Never, never!'

'The devil!' said Athos. 'I would propose to you to stake Planchet, but as that has already been done, the Englishman would not, perhaps, be willing.'

'Decidedly, my dear Athos,' said d'Artagnan, 'I should like better not to risk anything.'

'That's a pity,' said Athos, coolly. 'The Englishman is overflowing with pistoles. Good Lord, try one throw! One throw is soon made!'

'And if I lose?'

'You will win.'

'But if I lose?'

'Well, you will surrender the harnesses.'

'Have with you for one throw!' said d'Artagnan.

Athos went in quest of the Englishman, whom he found in the stable, examining the harnesses with a greedy eye. The opportunity was good. He proposed the conditions—the two harnesses, either against one horse or a hundred pistoles. The Englishman calculated fast; the two harnesses were worth three hundred pistoles. He consented.

D'Artagnan threw the dice with a trembling hand, and turned up the number three; his paleness terrified Athos, who, however, consented

Chapter XXIX

Hunting for the Equipments

THE most preoccupied of the four friends was certainly d'Artagnan, although he, in his quality of Guardsman, would be much more easily equipped than Messieurs the Musketeers, who were all of high rank; but our Gascon cadet was, as may have been observed, of a provident and almost avaricious character, and with that (explain the contradiction) so vain as almost to rival Porthos. To this preoccupation of his vanity, d'Artagnan at this moment joined an uneasiness much less selfish. Notwithstanding all his inquiries respecting Mme. Bonacieux, he could obtain no intelligence of her. M. de Tréville had spoken of her to the queen. The queen was ignorant where the mercer's young wife was, but had promised to have her sought for; but this promise was very vague and did not at all reassure d'Artagnan.

Athos did not leave his chamber; he made up his mind not to take a single step to equip himself.

'We have still fifteen days before us,' said he to his friends, 'well, if at the end of a fortnight I have found nothing, or rather if nothing has come to find me, as I, too good a Catholic to kill myself with a pistol bullet, I will seek a good quarrel with four of his Eminence's Guards or with eight Englishmen, and I will fight until one of them has killed me, which, considering the number, cannot fail to happen. It will then be said of me that I died for the king; so that I shall have performed my duty without the expense of an outfit.'

Porthos continued to walk about with his hands behind him, tossing his head and repeating, 'I shall follow up on my idea.'

Aramis, anxious and negligently dressed, said nothing.

It may be seen by these disastrous details that desolation reigned in the community.

The lackeys on their part, like the coursers of Hippolytus, shared the sadness of their masters. Mousqueton collected a store of crusts; Bazin, who had always been inclined to devotion, never quit the churches; Planchet watched the flight of flies; and Grimaud, whom the general distress could not induce to break the silence imposed by his master, heaved sighs enough to soften the stones.

The three friends—for, as we have said, Athos had sworn not to stir a foot to equip himself—went out early in the morning, and returned late at night. They wandered about the streets, looking at the pavement as if to see whether the passengers had not left a purse behind them. They might have been supposed to be following tracks, so observant were they wherever they went. When they met they looked desolately at one another, as much as to say, 'Have you found anything?'

However, as Porthos had first found an idea, and had thought of it earnestly afterward, he was the first to act. He was a man of execution, this worthy Porthos. D'Artagnan perceived him one day walking toward the church of St. Leu, and followed him instinctively. He entered, after having twisted his moustache and elongated his imperial, which always announced on his part the most triumphant resolutions. As d'Artagnan took some precautions to conceal himself, Porthos believed he had not been seen. D'Artagnan entered behind him. Porthos went and leaned against the side of a pillar. D'Artagnan, still unperceived, supported himself against the other side.

There happened to be a sermon, which made the church very full of people. Porthos took advantage of this circumstance to ogle the women. Thanks to the cares of Mousqueton, the exterior was far from announcing the distress of the interior. His hat was a little napless, his feather was a little faded, his gold lace was a little tarnished, his laces were a trifle frayed; but in the obscurity of the church these things were not seen, and Porthos was still the handsome Porthos.

D'Artagnan observed, on the bench nearest to the pillar against which Porthos leaned, a sort of ripe beauty, rather yellow and rather dry, but erect and haughty under her black hood. The eyes of Porthos were furtively cast upon this lady, and then roved about at large over the nave.

'No, I do not jest, *mordieu!* I should like to have seen you in my place! I had been fifteen days without seeing a human face, and had been left to brutalize myself in the company of bottles.'

'That was no reason for staking my diamond!' replied d'Artagnan, closing his hand with a nervous spasm.

'Hear the end. Ten parts of a hundred pistoles each, in ten throws, without revenge; in thirteen throws I had lost all—in thirteen throws. The number thirteen was always fatal to me; it was on the thirteenth of July that— '

'*Ventrebleu!*' cried d'Artagnan, rising from the table, the story of the present day making him forget that of the preceding one.

'Patience!' said Athos; 'I had a plan. The Englishman was an original; I had seen him conversing that morning with Grimaud, and Grimaud had told me that he had made him proposals to enter into his service. I staked Grimaud, the silent Grimaud, divided into ten portions.'

'Well, what next?' said d'Artagnan, laughing in spite of himself.

'Grimaud himself, understand; and with the ten parts of Grimaud, which are not worth a ducatoon, I regained the diamond. Tell me, now, if persistence is not a virtue?'

'My faith! But this is droll,' cried d'Artagnan, consoled, and holding his sides with laughter.

'You may guess, finding the luck turned, that I again staked the diamond.'

'The devil!' said d'Artagnan, becoming angry again.

'I won back your harness, then your horse, then my harness, then my horse, and then I lost again. In brief, I regained your harness and then mine. That's where we are. That was a superb throw, so I left off there.'

D'Artagnan breathed as if the whole hostelry had been removed from his breast.

'Then the diamond is safe?' said he, timidly.

'Intact, my dear friend; besides the harness of your Bucephalus and mine.'

'But what is the use of harnesses without horses?'

'I have an idea about them.'

'Athos, you make me shudder.'

'Listen to me. You have not played for a long time, d'Artagnan.'

'Yes; but you stopped at the idea, I hope?'

'No; for I put it in execution that very minute.'

'And the consequence?' said d'Artagnan, in great anxiety.

'I threw, and I lost.'

'What, my horse?'

'Your horse, seven against eight; a point short—you know the proverb.'

'Athos, you are not in your right senses, I swear.'

'My dear lad, that was yesterday, when I was telling you silly stories, it was proper to tell me that, and not this morning. I lost him then, with all his appointments and furniture.'

'Really, this is frightful.'

'Stop a minute; you don't know all yet. I should make an excellent gambler if I were not too hot-headed; but I was hot-headed, just as if I had been drinking. Well, I was not hot-headed then— '

'Well, but what else could you play for? You had nothing left?'

'Oh, yes, my friend; there was still that diamond left which sparkles on your finger, and which I had observed yesterday.'

'This diamond!' said d'Artagnan, placing his hand eagerly on his ring.

'And as I am a connoisseur in such things, having had a few of my own once, I estimated it at a thousand pistoles.'

'I hope,' said d'Artagnan, half dead with fright, 'you made no mention of my diamond?'

'On the contrary, my dear friend, this diamond became our only resource; with it I might regain our horses and their harnesses, and even money to pay our expenses on the road.'

'Athos, you make me tremble!' cried d'Artagnan.

'I mentioned your diamond then to my adversary, who had likewise remarked it. What the devil, my dear, do you think you can wear a star from heaven on your finger, and nobody observe it? Impossible!'

'Go on, go on, my dear fellow!' said d'Artagnan; 'for upon my honour, you will kill me with your indifference.'

'We divided, then, this diamond into ten parts of a hundred pistoles each.'

'You are laughing at me, and want to try me!' said d'Artagnan, whom anger began to take by the hair, as Minerva takes Achilles, in the *Iliad*.

On her side the lady, who from time to time blushed, darted with the rapidity of lightning a glance toward the inconstant Porthos; and then immediately the eyes of Porthos wandered anxiously. It was plain that this mode of proceeding piqued the lady in the black hood, for she bit her lips till they bled, scratched the end of her nose, and could not sit still in her seat.

Porthos, seeing this, retwisted his moustache, elongated his imperial a second time, and began to make signals to a beautiful lady who was near the choir, and who not only was a beautiful lady, but still further, no doubt, a great lady—for she had behind her a Negro boy who had brought the cushion on which she knelt, and a female servant who held the emblazoned bag in which was placed the book from which she read the Mass.

The lady with the black hood followed through all their wanderings the looks of Porthos, and perceived that they rested upon the lady with the velvet cushion, the little Negro, and the maid-servant.

During this time Porthos played close. It was almost imperceptible motions of his eyes, fingers placed upon the lips, little assassinating smiles, which really did assassinate the disdained beauty.

Then she cried, 'Ahem!' under cover of the *mea culpa*, striking her breast so vigorously that everybody, even the lady with the red cushion, turned round toward her. Porthos paid no attention. Nevertheless, he understood it all, but was deaf.

The lady with the red cushion produced a great effect—for she was very handsome—upon the lady with the black hood, who saw in her a rival really to be dreaded; a great effect upon Porthos, who thought her much prettier than the lady with the black hood; a great effect upon d'Artagnan, who recognized in her the lady of Meung, of Calais, and of Dover, whom his persecutor, the man with the scar, had saluted by the name of Milady.

D'Artagnan, without losing sight of the lady of the red cushion, continued to watch the proceedings of Porthos, which amused him greatly. He guessed that the lady of the black hood was the procurator's wife of the Rue aux Ours, which was the more probable from the church of St. Leu being not far from that locality.

He guessed, likewise, by induction, that Porthos was taking his revenge for the defeat of Chantilly, when the procurator's wife had proved so refractory with respect to her purse.

Amid all this, d'Artagnan remarked also that not one countenance responded to the gallantries of Porthos. There were only chimeras and illusions; but for real love, for true jealousy, is there any reality except illusions and chimeras?

The sermon over, the procurator's wife advanced toward the holy font. Porthos went before her, and instead of a finger, dipped his whole hand in. The procurator's wife smiled, thinking that it was for her Porthos had put himself to this trouble; but she was cruelly and promptly undeceived. When she was only about three steps from him, he turned his head round, fixing his eyes steadfastly upon the lady with the red cushion, who had risen and was approaching, followed by her black boy and her woman.

When the lady of the red cushion came close to Porthos, Porthos drew his dripping hand from the font. The fair worshipper touched the great hand of Porthos with her delicate fingers, smiled, made the sign of the cross, and left the church.

This was too much for the procurator's wife; she doubted not there was an intrigue between this lady and Porthos. If she had been a great lady she would have fainted; but as she was only a procurator's wife, she contented herself saying to the Musketeer with concentrated fury, 'Eh, Monsieur Porthos, you don't offer me any holy water?'

Porthos, at the sound of that voice, started like a man awakened from a sleep of a hundred years.

'Ma-madame!' cried he; 'is that you? How is your husband, our dear Monsieur Coquenard? Is he still as stingy as ever? Where can my eyes have been not to have seen you during the two hours of the sermon?'

'I was within two paces of you, monsieur,' replied the procurator's wife; 'but you did not perceive me because you had no eyes but for the pretty lady to whom you just now gave the holy water.'

Porthos pretended to be confused. 'Ah,' said he, 'you have remarked— '

'I must have been blind not to have seen.'

'Yes,' said Porthos, 'that is a duchess of my acquaintance whom I have great trouble to meet on account of the jealousy of her husband, and who

'You are mistaken; I rode him nearly ten leagues in less than an hour and a half, and he appeared no more distressed than if he had only made the tour of the Place St. Sulpice.'

'Ah, you begin to awaken my regret.'

'Regret?'

'Yes; I have parted with him.'

'How?'

'Why, here is the simple fact. This morning I awoke at six o'clock. You were still fast asleep, and I did not know what to do with myself; I was still stupid from our yesterday's debauch. As I came into the public room, I saw one of our Englishman bargaining with a dealer for a horse, his own having died yesterday from bleeding. I drew near, and found he was bidding a hundred pistoles for a chestnut nag. "*Pardieu*," said I, "my good gentleman, I have a horse to sell, too." "Ay, and a very fine one! I saw him yesterday; your friend's lackey was leading him." "Do you think he is worth a hundred pistoles?" "Yes! Will you sell him to me for that sum?" "No; but I will play for him." "What?" "At dice." No sooner said than done, and I lost the horse. Ah, ah! But please to observe I won back the equipage,' cried Athos.

D'Artagnan looked much disconcerted.

'This vexes you?' said Athos.

'Well, I must confess it does,' replied d'Artagnan. 'That horse was to have identified us in the day of battle. It was a pledge, a remembrance. Athos, you have done wrong.'

'But, my dear friend, put yourself in my place,' replied the Musketeer. 'I was hipped to death; and still further, upon my honour, I don't like English horses. If it is only to be recognized, why the saddle will suffice for that; it is quite remarkable enough. As to the horse, we can easily find some excuse for its disappearance. Why the devil! A horse is mortal; suppose mine had had the glanders or the farcy?'

D'Artagnan did not smile.

'It vexes me greatly,' continued Athos, 'that you attach so much importance to these animals, for I am not yet at the end of my story.'

'What else have you done.'

'After having lost my own horse, nine against ten—see how near—I formed an idea of staking yours.'