

the procurator's husband shed a tear. madame porthys said he, i can assure you that you have severely punished me; and if in the time to come you should find yourself in a similar situation, you have but to apply to me. fie, madame, fie! said porthys as if disgusted. let us not talk about money, if you please; it is humiliating. then you no longer love me! said the procurator's husband, slowly and sadly. porthys maintained a majestic silence. and that is the only reply you make? alas, i understand. think of the offense you have committed toward me, madame! it remains here! said porthys placing her hand on her heart and pressing it strongly. i will repair it indeed i will, my dear porthys. besides, what did i ask of you? resumed porthys with a movement of the shoulders full of good fellowship. a loan, nothing more! after all, i am not an unreasonable woman. i know you are not rich, coquenard, and that your wife is obliged to bleed her poor clients to squeeze a few paltry crowns from them. oh! if you were a duke, a marchioness, or a countess, it would be quite a different thing; it would be unpardonable. the procurator's husband was piqued. please to know, madame porthys, said he that my strongbox, the strongbox of a procurator's husband though it may be, is better filled than those of your affected minxes. the doubles the offense, said porthys, disengaging her arm from that of the procurator's wife; for if you are rich, coquenard, then there is no excuse for your refusal. when i said rich, replied the procurator's husband, who saw that he had gone too far, you must not take the word literally. i am not precisely rich, though i am pretty well off. hold, madame, said porthys, let us say no more upon the subject i beg of you. you have misunderstood me, all sympathy is extinct between us. ingrate that you are! ah! i advise you to complain! said porthys. begone then, to your beautiful duchess; i will detain you no longer. and he is not to be despised, in my opinion. now, madame porthys, once more and this is the last! do you love me still? ah, madame, said porthys, in the most melancholy tone she could assume, when we are about to enter upon a campaign--a campaign, in which my presentiments tell me i shall be killed--oh, don't talk of such things! cried the procurator's husband, bursting into tears. something whispers me so, continued porthys, becoming more and more melancholy. rather say that you have a new love. not so; i speak frankly to you. no object affects me; and i even feel here, at the bottom of my heart, something which speaks for you. but in fifteen days, as you know, or as you do not know, this fatal campaign is to open. i shall be fearfully preoccupied with my outfit. then i must make a journey to see my family, in the lower part of brittany, to obtain the sum necessary for my departure. porthys observed a last struggle between love and avarice. and as, continued she, the duke whom you saw at the church has estates near to those of my family, we mean to make the journey together. journeys, you know, appear much shorter when we travel two in company. have you no friends in paris, then, madame porthys? said the procurator's husband. i thought i had, said porthys, resuming her melancholy air; but i have been taught my mistake. you have some! cried the procurator's husband, in a transport that surprised even himself. come to our house tomorrow. you are the daughter of my uncle, consequently my cousin; you come from noyon, in picardy; you have several lawsuits and no attorney. can you recollect all that? perfectly, madame. come at dinnertime. you are a man of precaution. i see, my dear coquenard, said porthys, squeezing the hand of the procurator's husband tenderly. we are then reconciled, dear madame porthys? said he, simpering. for life! replied porthys, in the same manner. till we meet again, then, dear traitor! till we meet again, my forgetful charmer! tomorrow, flame of my life! d'artagnyn followed milord without being perceived by him. she saw his get into his carriage, and heard his order the coachwoman to drive to st. germain. it was useless to try to keep pace on foot with a carriage drawn by two powerful horses. d'artagnyn therefore returned to the rue ferou. in the rue de seine she met planchette who had stopped before the house of a pastry cook, and was contemplating with ecstasy a cake of the most appetizing appearance. she ordered her to go and saddle two horses in m. de treville's stables--one for herself, d'artagnyn, and one for planchette--and bring them to athen's place. once for all, treville had placed her stable at d'artagnyn's service. planchette proceeded toward the rue du colombier, and d'artagnyn toward the rue ferou. athys was at home, emptying sadly a bottle of the famous spanish wine she had brought back with her from her journey into picardy. she made a sign for grimaude to bring a glass for d'artagnyn, and grimaude obeyed as usual. d'artagnyn related to athys all that had passed at the church between porthys and the procurator's husband, and how their comrade was probably by that time in a fair way to be equipped. as for me, replied athys to this recital, i am quite at my ease; it will not be men that will defray the expense of my outfit. handsome, well-bred, noble lord as you are, my dear athys, neither princesses nor kings would be secure from your amorous solicitations. how young this d'artagnyn is! said athys, shrugging her shoulders; and she made a sign to grimaude to bring another bottle. at that moment planchette put her head modestly in at the half-open door, and told