The Three Musketeers

By Alexandre Dumas

1 THE THREE PRESENTS OF D'ARTAGNAN THE ELDER

On the first Monday of the month of April, 1625, the market town of Meung, in which the author of ROMANCE OF THE ROSE was born, appeared to be in as perfect a state of revolution as if the Huguenots had just made a second La Rochelle of it. Many citizens, seeing the women flying toward the High Street, leaving their children crying at the open doors, hastened to don the cuirass, and supporting their somewhat uncertain courage with a musket or a partisan, directed their steps toward the hostelry of the Jolly Miller, before which was gathered, increasing every minute, a compact group, vociferous and full of curiosity.

In those times panics were common, and few days passed without some city or other registering in its archives an event of this kind. There were nobles, who made war against each other; there was the king, who made war against the cardinal; there was Spain, which made war against the king. Then, in addition to these concealed or public, secret or open wars, there were robbers, mendicants, Huguenots, wolves, and scoundrels, who made war upon everybody. The citizens always took up arms readily against thieves, wolves or scoundrels, often against nobles or Huguenots, sometimes against the king, but never against cardinal or

Spain. It resulted, then, from this habit that on the said first Monday of April, 1625, the citizens, on hearing the clamor, and seeing neither the red-and-yellow standard nor the livery of the Duc de Richelieu, rushed toward the hostel of the Jolly Miller. When arrived there, the cause of the hubbub was apparent to all.

A young man—we can sketch his portrait at a dash. Imagine to yourself a Don Quixote of eighteen; a Don Quixote without his corselet, without his coat of mail, without his cuisses; a Don Quixote clothed in a woolen doublet, the blue color of which had faded into a nameless shade between lees of wine and a heavenly azure; face long and brown; high cheek bones, a sign of sagacity; the maxillary muscles enormously developed, an infallible sign by which a Gascon may always be detected, even without his cap—and our young man wore a cap set off with a sort of feather; the eye open and intelligent; the nose hooked, but finely chiseled. Too big for a youth, too small for a grown man, an experienced eye might have taken him for a farmer's son upon a journey had it not been for the long sword which, dangling from a leather baldric, hit against the calves of its owner as he walked, and against the rough side of his steed when he was on horseback.

For our young man had a steed which was the observed of all observers. It was a Bearn pony, from twelve to fourteen years old, yellow in his hide, without a hair in his tail, but not without windgalls on his legs, which, though going with his head lower than his knees, rendering a martingale quite unnecessary, contrived nevertheless to perform his

eight leagues a day. Unfortunately, the qualities of this horse were so well concealed under his strange-colored hide and his unaccountable gait, that at a time when everybody was a connoisseur in horseflesh, the appearance of the aforesaid pony at Meung—which place he had entered about a quarter of an hour before, by the gate of Beaugency—produced an unfavorable feeling, which extended to his rider.

And this feeling had been more painfully perceived by young d'Artagnan—for so was the Don Quixote of this second Rosinante named—from his not being able to conceal from himself the ridiculous appearance that such a steed gave him, good horseman as he was. He had sighed deeply, therefore, when accepting the gift of the pony from M. d'Artagnan the elder. He was not ignorant that such a beast was worth at least twenty livres; and the words which had accompanied the present were above all price.

'My son,' said the old Gascon gentleman, in that pure Bearn PATOIS of which Henry IV could never rid himself, 'this horse was born in the house of your father about thirteen years ago, and has remained in it ever since, which ought to make you love it. Never sell it; allow it to die tranquilly and honorably of old age, and if you make a campaign with it, take as much care of it as you would of an old servant. At court, provided you have ever the honor to go there,' continued M. d'Artagnan the elder, '—an honor to which, remember, your ancient nobility gives you the right—sustain worthily your name of gentleman, which has been worthily borne by your ancestors for five hundred years, both for your own sake and the sake of those who belong to you. By

the latter I mean your relatives and friends. Endure nothing from anyone except Monsieur the Cardinal and the king. It is by his courage, please observe, by his courage alone, that a gentleman can make his way nowadays. Whoever hesitates for a second perhaps allows the bait to escape which during that exact second fortune held out to him. You are young. You ought to be brave for two reasons: the first is that you are a Gascon, and the second is that you are my son. Never fear quarrels, but seek adventures. I have taught you how to handle a sword; you have thews of iron, a wrist of steel. Fight on all occasions. Fight the more for duels being forbidden, since consequently there is twice as much courage in fighting. I have nothing to give you, my son, but fifteen crowns, my horse, and the counsels you have just heard. Your mother will add to them a recipe for a certain balsam, which she had from a Bohemian and which has the miraculous virtue of curing all wounds that do not reach the heart. Take advantage of all, and live happily and long. I have but one word to add, and that is to propose an example to you— not mine, for I myself have never appeared at court, and have only taken part in religious wars as a volunteer; I speak of Monsieur de Treville, who was formerly my neighbor, and who had the honor to be, as a child, the play-fellow of our king, Louis XIII, whom God preserve! Sometimes their play degenerated into battles, and in these battles the king was not always the stronger. The blows which he received increased greatly his esteem and friendship for Monsieur de Treville. Afterward, Monsieur de Treville fought with others: in his first journey to Paris, five times; from the death of the late

king till the young one came of age, without reckoning wars and sieges, seven times; and from that date up to the present day, a hundred times, perhaps! So that in spite of edicts, ordinances, and decrees, there he is, captain of the Musketeers; that is to say, chief of a legion of Caesars, whom the king holds in great esteem and whom the cardinal dreads—he who dreads nothing, as it is said. Still further, Monsieur de Treville gains ten thousand crowns a year; he is therefore a great noble. He began as you begin. Go to him with this letter, and make him your model in order that you may do as he has done.'

Upon which M. d'Artagnan the elder girded his own sword round his son, kissed him tenderly on both cheeks, and gave him his benediction.

On leaving the paternal chamber, the young man found his mother, who was waiting for him with the famous recipe of which the counsels we have just repeated would necessitate frequent employment. The adieux were on this side longer and more tender than they had been on the other—not that M. d'Artagnan did not love his son, who was his only offspring, but M. d'Artagnan was a man, and he would have considered it unworthy of a man to give way to his feelings; whereas Mme. d'Artagnan was a woman, and still more, a mother. She wept abundantly; and—let us speak it to the praise of M. d'Artagnan the younger—notwithstanding the efforts he made to remain firm, as a future Musketeer ought, nature prevailed, and he shed many tears, of which he succeeded with great difficulty in concealing the half.

The same day the young man set forward on his journey,

furnished with the three paternal gifts, which consisted, as we have said, of fifteen crowns, the horse, and the letter for M. de Treville— the counsels being thrown into the bargain.

With such a VADE MECUM d'Artagnan was morally and physically an exact copy of the hero of Cervantes, to whom we so happily compared him when our duty of an historian placed us under the necessity of sketching his portrait. Don Quixote took windmills for giants, and sheep for armies; d'Artagnan took every smile for an insult, and every look as a provocation—whence it resulted that from Tarbes to Meung his fist was constantly doubled, or his hand on the hilt of his sword; and yet the fist did not descend upon any jaw, nor did the sword issue from its scabbard. It was not that the sight of the wretched pony did not excite numerous smiles on the countenances of passers-by; but as against the side of this pony rattled a sword of respectable length, and as over this sword gleamed an eye rather ferocious than haughty, these passers-by repressed their hilarity, or if hilarity prevailed over prudence, they endeavored to laugh only on one side, like the masks of the ancients. D'Artagnan, then, remained majestic and intact in his susceptibility, till he came to this unlucky city of Meung.

But there, as he was alighting from his horse at the gate of the Jolly Miller, without anyone—host, waiter, or hostler—coming to hold his stirrup or take his horse, d'Artagnan spied, though an open window on the ground floor, a gentleman, well-made and of good carriage, although of rather a stern countenance, talking with two persons who appeared

to listen to him with respect. d'Artagnan fancied quite naturally, according to his custom, that he must be the object of their conversation, and listened. This time d'Artagnan was only in part mistaken; he himself was not in question, but his horse was. The gentleman appeared to be enumerating all his qualities to his auditors; and, as I have said, the auditors seeming to have great deference for the narrator, they every moment burst into fits of laughter. Now, as a half-smile was sufficient to awaken the irascibility of the young man, the effect produced upon him by this vociferous mirth may be easily imagined.

Nevertheless, d'Artagnan was desirous of examining the appearance of this impertinent personage who ridiculed him. He fixed his haughty eye upon the stranger, and perceived a man of from forty to forty-five years of age, with black and piercing eyes, pale complexion, a strongly marked nose, and a black and well-shaped mustache. He was dressed in a doublet and hose of a violet color, with aiguillettes of the same color, without any other ornaments than the customary slashes, through which the shirt appeared. This doublet and hose, though new, were creased, like traveling clothes for a long time packed in a portmanteau. d'Artagnan made all these remarks with the rapidity of a most minute observer, and doubtless from an instinctive feeling that this stranger was destined to have a great influence over his future life.

Now, as at the moment in which d'Artagnan fixed his eyes upon the gentleman in the violet doublet, the gentleman made one of his most knowing and profound remarks

respecting the Bearnese pony, his two auditors laughed even louder than before, and he himself, though contrary to his custom, allowed a pale smile (if I may allowed to use such an expression) to stray over his countenance. This time there could be no doubt; d'Artagnan was really insulted. Full, then, of this conviction, he pulled his cap down over his eyes, and endeavoring to copy some of the court airs he had picked up in Gascony among young traveling nobles, he advanced with one hand on the hilt of his sword and the other resting on his hip. Unfortunately, as he advanced, his anger increased at every step; and instead of the proper and lofty speech he had prepared as a prelude to his challenge, he found nothing at the tip of his tongue but a gross personality, which he accompanied with a furious gesture.

'I say, sir, you sir, who are hiding yourself behind that shutter—yes, you, sir, tell me what you are laughing at, and we will laugh together!'

The gentleman raised his eyes slowly from the nag to his cavalier, as if he required some time to ascertain whether it could be to him that such strange reproaches were addressed; then, when he could not possibly entertain any doubt of the matter, his eyebrows slightly bent, and with an accent of irony and insolence impossible to be described, he replied to d'Artagnan, 'I was not speaking to you, sir.'

'But I am speaking to you!' replied the young man, additionally exasperated with this mixture of insolence and good manners, of politeness and scorn.

The stranger looked at him again with a slight smile, and retiring from the window, came out of the hostelry with a

slow step, and placed himself before the horse, within two paces of d'Artagnan. His quiet manner and the ironical expression of his countenance redoubled the mirth of the persons with whom he had been talking, and who still remained at the window.

D'Artagnan, seeing him approach, drew his sword a foot out of the scabbard.

'This horse is decidedly, or rather has been in his youth, a buttercup,' resumed the stranger, continuing the remarks he had begun, and addressing himself to his auditors at the window, without paying the least attention to the exasperation of d'Artagnan, who, however placed himself between him and them. 'It is a color very well known in botany, but till the present time very rare among horses.'

'There are people who laugh at the horse that would not dare to laugh at the master,' cried the young emulator of the furious Treville.

'I do not often laugh, sir,' replied the stranger, 'as you may perceive by the expression of my countenance; but nevertheless I retain the privilege of laughing when I please.'

'And I,' cried d'Artagnan, 'will allow no man to laugh when it displeases me!'

'Indeed, sir,' continued the stranger, more calm than ever; 'well, that is perfectly right!' and turning on his heel, was about to re-enter the hostelry by the front gate, beneath which d'Artagnan on arriving had observed a saddled horse.

But, d'Artagnan was not of a character to allow a man to escape him thus who had the insolence to ridicule him.

He drew his sword entirely from the scabbard, and followed him, crying, 'Turn, turn, Master Joker, lest I strike you behind!'

'Strike me!' said the other, turning on his heels, and surveying the young man with as much astonishment as contempt. 'Why, my good fellow, you must be mad!' Then, in a suppressed tone, as if speaking to himself, 'This is annoying,' continued he. 'What a godsend this would be for his Majesty, who is seeking everywhere for brave fellows to recruit for his Musketeers!'

He had scarcely finished, when d'Artagnan made such a furious lunge at him that if he had not sprung nimbly backward, it is probable he would have jested for the last time. The stranger, then perceiving that the matter went beyond raillery, drew his sword, saluted his adversary, and seriously placed himself on guard. But at the same moment, his two auditors, accompanied by the host, fell upon d'Artagnan with sticks, shovels and tongs. This caused so rapid and complete a diversion from the attack that d'Artagnan's adversary, while the latter turned round to face this shower of blows, sheathed his sword with the same precision, and instead of an actor, which he had nearly been, became a spectator of the fight—a part in which he acquitted himself with his usual impassiveness, muttering, nevertheless, 'A plague upon these Gascons! Replace him on his orange horse, and let him begone!'

'Not before I have killed you, poltroon!' cried d'Artagnan, making the best face possible, and never retreating one step before his three assailants, who continued to shower blows

upon him.

'Another gasconade!' murmured the gentleman. 'By my honor, these Gascons are incorrigible! Keep up the dance, then, since he will have it so. When he is tired, he will perhaps tell us that he has had enough of it.'

But the stranger knew not the headstrong personage he had to do with; d'Artagnan was not the man ever to cry for quarter. The fight was therefore prolonged for some seconds; but at length d'Artagnan dropped his sword, which was broken in two pieces by the blow of a stick. Another blow full upon his forehead at the same moment brought him to the ground, covered with blood and almost fainting.

It was at this moment that people came flocking to the scene of action from all sides. The host, fearful of consequences, with the help of his servants carried the wounded man into the kitchen, where some trifling attentions were bestowed upon him.

As to the gentleman, he resumed his place at the window, and surveyed the crowd with a certain impatience, evidently annoyed by their remaining undispersed.

'Well, how is it with this madman?' exclaimed he, turning round as the noise of the door announced the entrance of the host, who came in to inquire if he was unhurt.

'Your excellency is safe and sound?' asked the host.

'Oh, yes! Perfectly safe and sound, my good host; and I wish to know what has become of our young man.'

'He is better,' said the host, 'he fainted quite away.'

'Indeed!' said the gentleman.

'But before he fainted, he collected all his strength to challenge you, and to defy you while challenging you.'

'Why, this fellow must be the devil in person!' cried the stranger.

'Oh, no, your Excellency, he is not the devil,' replied the host, with a grin of contempt; 'for during his fainting we rummaged his valise and found nothing but a clean shirt and eleven crowns— which however, did not prevent his saying, as he was fainting, that if such a thing had happened in Paris, you should have cause to repent of it at a later period.'

'Then,' said the stranger coolly, 'he must be some prince in disguise.'

'I have told you this, good sir,' resumed the host, 'in order that you may be on your guard.'

'Did he name no one in his passion?'

'Yes; he struck his pocket and said, 'We shall see what Monsieur de Treville will think of this insult offered to his protege.''

'Monsieur de Treville?' said the stranger, becoming attentive, 'he put his hand upon his pocket while pronouncing the name of Monsieur de Treville? Now, my dear host, while your young man was insensible, you did not fail, I am quite sure, to ascertain what that pocket contained. What was there in it?'

'A letter addressed to Monsieur de Treville, captain of the Musketeers.'

'Indeed!'

'Exactly as I have the honor to tell your Excellency.'

The host, who was not endowed with great perspicacity, did not observe the expression which his words had given to the physiognomy of the stranger. The latter rose from the front of the window, upon the sill of which he had leaned with his elbow, and knitted his brow like a man disquieted.

'The devil!' murmured he, between his teeth. 'Can Treville have set this Gascon upon me? He is very young; but a sword thrust is a sword thrust, whatever be the age of him who gives it, and a youth is less to be suspected than an older man,' and the stranger fell into a reverie which lasted some minutes. 'A weak obstacle is sometimes sufficient to overthrow a great design.

'Host,' said he, 'could you not contrive to get rid of this frantic boy for me? In conscience, I cannot kill him; and yet,' added he, with a coldly menacing expression, 'he annoys me. Where is he?'

'In my wife's chamber, on the first flight, where they are dressing his wounds.'

'His things and his bag are with him? Has he taken off his doublet?'

'On the contrary, everything is in the kitchen. But if he annoys you, this young fool—'

'To be sure he does. He causes a disturbance in your hostelry, which respectable people cannot put up with. Go; make out my bill and notify my servant.'

'What, monsieur, will you leave us so soon?'

'You know that very well, as I gave my order to saddle my horse. Have they not obeyed me?'

'It is done; as your Excellency may have observed, your

horse is in the great gateway, ready saddled for your departure.'

'That is well; do as I have directed you, then.'

'What the devil!' said the host to himself. 'Can he be afraid of this boy?' But an imperious glance from the stranger stopped him short; he bowed humbly and retired.

'It is not necessary for Milady* to be seen by this fellow,' continued the stranger. 'She will soon pass; she is already late. I had better get on horseback, and go and meet her. I should like, however, to know what this letter addressed to Treville contains.'

*We are well aware that this term, milady, is only properly used when followed by a family name. But we find it thus in the manuscript, and we do not choose to take upon ourselves to alter it.

And the stranger, muttering to himself, directed his steps toward the kitchen.

In the meantime, the host, who entertained no doubt that it was the presence of the young man that drove the stranger from his hostelry, re-ascended to his wife's chamber, and found d'Artagnan just recovering his senses. Giving him to understand that the police would deal with him pretty severely for having sought a quarrel with a great lord—for the opinion of the host the stranger could be nothing less than a great lord—he insisted that notwithstanding his weakness d'Artagnan should get up and depart as quickly as possible. D'Artagnan, half stupefied, without his doublet, and with his head bound up in a linen cloth, arose then, and urged by the host, began to descend the stairs; but on arriving at

'This insolent boy chastises others,' cried he; 'and I hope that this time he whom he ought to chastise will not escape him as before.'

'Will not escape him?' replied the stranger, knitting his brow.

'No; before a woman you would dare not fly, I presume?'

'Remember,' said Milady, seeing the stranger lay his hand on his sword, 'the least delay may ruin everything.'

'You are right,' cried the gentleman; 'begone then, on your part, and I will depart as quickly on mine.' And bowing to the lady, sprang into his saddle, while her coachman applied his whip vigorously to his horses. The two interlocutors thus separated, taking opposite directions, at full gallop.

'Pay him, booby!' cried the stranger to his servant, without checking the speed of his horse; and the man, after throwing two or three silver pieces at the foot of mine host, galloped after his master.

'Base coward! false gentleman!' cried d'Artagnan, springing forward, in his turn, after the servant. But his wound had rendered him too weak to support such an exertion. Scarcely had he gone ten steps when his ears began to tingle, a faintness seized him, a cloud of blood passed over his eyes, and he fell in the middle of the street, crying still, 'Coward! coward! coward!'

'He is a coward, indeed,' grumbled the host, drawing near to d'Artagnan, and endeavoring by this little flattery to make up matters with the young man, as the heron of the fable did with the snail he had despised the evening before.

'Yes, a base coward,' murmured d'Artagnan; 'but she—she was very beautiful.'

'What she?' demanded the host.

'Milady,' faltered d'Artagnan, and fainted a second time.

'Ah, it's all one,' said the host; 'I have lost two customers, but this one remains, of whom I am pretty certain for some days to come. There will be eleven crowns gained.'

It is to be remembered that eleven crowns was just the sum that remained in d'Artagnan's purse.

The host had reckoned upon eleven days of confinement at a crown a day, but he had reckoned without his guest. On the following morning at five o'clock d'Artagnan arose, and descending to the kitchen without help, asked, among other ingredients the list of which has not come down to us, for some oil, some wine, and some rosemary, and with his mother's recipe in his hand composed a balsam, with which he anointed his numerous wounds, replacing his bandages himself, and positively refusing the assistance of any doctor, d'Artagnan walked about that same evening, and was almost cured by the morrow.

But when the time came to pay for his rosemary, this oil, and the wine, the only expense the master had incurred, as he had preserved a strict abstinence—while on the contrary, the yellow horse, by the account of the hostler at least, had eaten three times as much as a horse of his size could reasonably supposed to have done—d'Artagnan found nothing in his pocket but his little old velvet purse with the eleven crowns it contained; for as to the letter addressed to M. de Treville, it had disappeared.

The young man commenced his search for the letter with the greatest patience, turning out his pockets of all kinds over and over again, rummaging and rerummaging in his valise, and opening and reopening his purse; but when he found that he had come to the conviction that the letter was not to be found, he flew, for the third time, into such a rage as was near costing him a fresh consumption of wine, oil, and rosemary—for upon seeing this hotheaded youth become exasperated and threaten to destroy everything in the establishment if his letter were not found, the host seized a spit, his wife a broom handle, and the servants the same sticks they had used the day before.

'My letter of recommendation!' cried d'Artagnan, 'my letter of recommendation! or, the holy blood, I will spit you all like ortolans!'

Unfortunately, there was one circumstance which created a powerful obstacle to the accomplishment of this threat; which was, as we have related, that his sword had been in his first conflict broken in two, and which he had entirely forgotten. Hence, it resulted when d'Artagnan proceeded to draw his sword in earnest, he found himself purely and simply armed with a stump of a sword about eight or ten inches in length, which the host had carefully placed in the scabbard. As to the rest of the blade, the master had slyly put that on one side to make himself a larding pin.

But this deception would probably not have stopped our fiery young man if the host had not reflected that the reclamation which his guest made was perfectly just.

'But, after all,' said he, lowering the point of his spit,

'where is this letter?'

'Yes, where is this letter?' cried d'Artagnan. 'In the first place, I warn you that that letter is for Monsieur de Treville, and it must be found, he will know how to find it.'

His threat completed the intimidation of the host. After the king and the cardinal, M. de Treville was the man whose name was perhaps most frequently repeated by the military, and even by citizens. There was, to be sure, Father Joseph, but his name was never pronounced but with a subdued voice, such was the terror inspired by his Gray Eminence, as the cardinal's familiar was called.

Throwing down his spit, and ordering his wife to do the same with her broom handle, and the servants with their sticks, he set the first example of commencing an earnest search for the lost letter.

'Does the letter contain anything valuable?' demanded the host, after a few minutes of useless investigation.

'Zounds! I think it does indeed!' cried the Gascon, who reckoned upon this letter for making his way at court. 'It contained my fortune!'

'Bills upon Spain?' asked the disturbed host.

'Bills upon his Majesty's private treasury,' answered d'Artagnan, who, reckoning upon entering into the king's service in consequence of this recommendation, believed he could make this somewhat hazardous reply without telling of a falsehood.

'The devil!' cried the host, at his wit's end.

'But it's of no importance,' continued d'Artagnan, with natural assurance; 'it's of no importance. The money is

plain to Monsieur de Treville, and Monsieur de Treville will complain to the king.' He then drew two crowns majestically from his purse and gave them to the host, who accompanied him, cap in hand, to the gate, and remounted his yellow horse, which bore him without any further accident to the gate of St. Antoine at Paris, where his owner sold him for three crowns, which was a very good price, considering that d'Artagnan had ridden him hard during the last stage. Thus the dealer to whom d'Artagnan sold him for the nine livres did not conceal from the young man that he only gave that enormous sum for him on the account of the originality of his color.

Thus d'Artagnan entered Paris on foot, carrying his little packet under his arm, and walked about till he found an apartment to be let on terms suited to the scantiness of his means. This chamber was a sort of garret, situated in the Rue des Fossoyeurs, near the Luxembourg.

As soon as the earnest money was paid, d'Artagnan took possession of his lodging, and passed the remainder of the day in sewing onto his doublet and hose some ornamental braiding which his mother had taken off an almost-new doublet of the elder M. d'Artagnan, and which she had given her son secretly. Next he went to the Quai de Feraille to have a new blade put to his sword, and then returned toward the Louvre, inquiring of the first Musketeer he met for the situation of the hotel of M. de Treville, which proved to be in the Rue du Vieux-Colombier; that is to say, in the immediate vicinity of the chamber hired by d'Artagnan—a circumstance which appeared to furnish a happy augury for

the success of his journey.

After this, satisfied with the way in which he had conducted himself at Meung, without remorse for the past, confident in the present, and full of hope for the future, he retired to bed and slept the sleep of the brave.

This sleep, provincial as it was, brought him to nine o'clock in the morning; at which hour he rose, in order to repair to the residence of M. de Treville, the third personage in the kingdom, in the paternal estimation.

2 THE ANTECHAMBER OF M. DE TREVILLE

M. de Troisville, as his family was still called in Gascony, or M. de Treville, as he has ended by styling himself in Paris, had really commenced life as d'Artagnan now did; that is to say, without a sou in his pocket, but with a fund of audacity, shrewdness, and intelligence which makes the poorest Gascon gentleman often derive more in his hope from the paternal inheritance than the richest Perigordian or Berrichan gentleman derives in reality from his. His insolent bravery, his still more insolent success at a time when blows poured down like hail, had borne him to the top of that difficult ladder called Court Favor, which he had climbed four steps at a time.

He was the friend of the king, who honored highly, as everyone knows, the memory of his father, Henry IV. The father of M. de Treville had served him so faithfully in his wars against the league that in default of money—a thing to which the Bearnais was accustomed all his life, and who constantly paid his debts with that of which he never stood in need of borrowing, that is to say, with ready wit—in default of money, we repeat, he authorized him, after the reduction of Paris, to assume for his arms a golden lion passant upon gules, with the motto FIDELIS ET FORTIS. This

was a great matter in the way of honor, but very little in the way of wealth; so that when the illustrious companion of the great Henry died, the only inheritance he was able to leave his son was his sword and his motto. Thanks to this double gift and the spotless name that accompanied it, M. de Treville was admitted into the household of the young prince where he made such good use of his sword, and was so faithful to his motto, that Louis XIII, one of the good blades of his kingdom, was accustomed to say that if he had a friend who was about to fight, he would advise him to choose as a second, himself first, and Treville next—or even, perhaps, before himself.

Thus Louis XIII had a real liking for Treville—a royal liking, a self-interested liking, it is true, but still a liking. At that unhappy period it was an important consideration to be surrounded by such men as Treville. Many might take for their device the epithet STRONG, which formed the second part of his motto, but very few gentlemen could lay claim to the FAITHFUL, which constituted the first. Treville was one of these latter. His was one of those rare organizations, endowed with an obedient intelligence like that of the dog; with a blind valor, a quick eye, and a prompt hand; to whom sight appeared only to be given to see if the king were dissatisfied with anyone, and the hand to strike this displeasing personage, whether a Besme, a Maurevers, a Poltiot de Mere, or a Vitry. In short, up to this period nothing had been wanting to Treville but opportunity; but he was ever on the watch for it, and he faithfully promised himself that he would not fail to seize it by its three hairs

whenever it came within reach of his hand. At last Louis XIII made Treville the captain of his Musketeers, who were to Louis XIII in devotedness, or rather in fanaticism, what his Ordinaries had been to Henry III, and his Scotch Guard to Louis XI.

On his part, the cardinal was not behind the king in this respect. When he saw the formidable and chosen body with which Louis XIII had surrounded himself, this second, or rather this first king of France, became desirous that he, too, should have his guard. He had his Musketeers therefore, as Louis XIII had his, and these two powerful rivals vied with each other in procuring, not only from all the provinces of France, but even from all foreign states, the most celebrated swordsmen. It was not uncommon for Richelieu and Louis XIII to dispute over their evening game of chess upon the merits of their servants. Each boasted the bearing and the courage of his own people. While exclaiming loudly against duels and brawls, they excited them secretly to quarrel, deriving an immoderate satisfaction or genuine regret from the success or defeat of their own combatants. We learn this from the memoirs of a man who was concerned in some few of these defeats and in many of these victories.

Treville had grasped the weak side of his master; and it was to this address that he owed the long and constant favor of a king who has not left the reputation behind him of being very faithful in his friendships. He paraded his Musketeers before the Cardinal Armand Duplessis with an insolent air which made the gray moustache of his Eminence curl with ire. Treville understood admirably the war method of that

period, in which he who could not live at the expense of the enemy must live at the expense of his compatriots. His soldiers formed a legion of devil-may-care fellows, perfectly undisciplined toward all but himself.

Loose, half-drunk, imposing, the king's Musketeers, or rather M. de Treville's, spread themselves about in the cabarets, in the public walks, and the public sports, shouting, twisting their mustaches, clanking their swords, and taking great pleasure in annoying the Guards of the cardinal whenever they could fall in with them; then drawing in the open streets, as if it were the best of all possible sports; sometimes killed, but sure in that case to be both wept and avenged; often killing others, but then certain of not rotting in prison, M. de Treville being there to claim them. Thus M. de Treville was praised to the highest note by these men, who adored him, and who, ruffians as they were, trembled before him like scholars before their master, obedient to his least word, and ready to sacrifice themselves to wash out the smallest insult.

M. de Treville employed this powerful weapon for the king, in the first place, and the friends of the king—and then for himself and his own friends. For the rest, in the memoirs of this period, which has left so many memoirs, one does not find this worthy gentleman blamed even by his enemies; and he had many such among men of the pen as well as among men of the sword. In no instance, let us say, was this worthy gentleman accused of deriving personal advantage from the cooperation of his minions. Endowed with a rare genius for intrigue which rendered him the equal of the

ablest intriguers, he remained an honest man. Still further, in spite of sword thrusts which weaken, and painful exercises which fatigue, he had become one of the most gallant frequenters of revels, one of the most insinuating lady's men, one of the softest whisperers of interesting nothings of his day; the BONNES FORTUNES of de Treville were talked of as those of M. de Bassompierre had been talked of twenty years before, and that was not saying a little. The captain of the Musketeers was therefore admired, feared, and loved; and this constitutes the zenith of human fortune.

Louis XIV absorbed all the smaller stars of his court in his own vast radiance; but his father, a sun PLURIBUS IMPAR, left his personal splendor to each of his favorites, his individual value to each of his courtiers. In addition to the leeves of the king and the cardinal, there might be reckoned in Paris at that time more than two hundred smaller but still noteworthy leeves. Among these two hundred leeves, that of Treville was one of the most sought.

The court of his hotel, situated in the Rue du Vieux-Colombier, resembled a camp from by six o'clock in the morning in summer and eight o'clock in winter. From fifty to sixty Musketeers, who appeared to replace one another in order always to present an imposing number, paraded constantly, armed to the teeth and ready for anything. On one of those immense staircases, upon whose space modern civilization would build a whole house, ascended and descended the office seekers of Paris, who ran after any sort of favor—gentlemen from the provinces anxious to be enrolled, and servants in all sorts of liveries, bringing

and carrying messages between their masters and M. de Treville. In the antechamber, upon long circular benches, reposed the elect; that is to say, those who were called. In this apartment a continued buzzing prevailed from morning till night, while M. de Treville, in his office contiguous to this antechamber, received visits, listened to complaints, gave his orders, and like the king in his balcony at the Louvre, had only to place himself at the window to review both his men and arms.

The day on which d'Artagnan presented himself the assemblage was imposing, particularly for a provincial just arriving from his province. It is true that this provincial was a Gascon; and that, particularly at this period, the compatriots of d'Artagnan had the reputation of not being easily intimidated. When he had once passed the massive door covered with long square-headed nails, he fell into the midst of a troop of swordsmen, who crossed one another in their passage, calling out, quarreling, and playing tricks one with another. In order to make one's way amid these turbulent and conflicting waves, it was necessary to be an officer, a great noble, or a pretty woman.

It was, then, into the midst of this tumult and disorder that our young man advanced with a beating heat, ranging his long rapier up his lanky leg, and keeping one hand on the edge of his cap, with that half-smile of the embarrassed a provincial who wishes to put on a good face. When he had passed one group he began to breathe more freely; but he could not help observing that they turned round to look at him, and for the first time in his life d'Artagnan, who had

till that day entertained a very good opinion of himself, felt ridiculous.

Arrived at the staircase, it was still worse. There were four Musketeers on the bottom steps, amusing themselves with the following exercise, while ten or twelve of their comrades waited upon the landing place to take their turn in the sport.

One of them, stationed upon the top stair, naked sword in hand, prevented, or at least endeavored to prevent, the three others from ascending.

These three others fenced against him with their agile swords.

D'Artagnan at first took these weapons for foils, and believed them to be buttoned; but he soon perceived by certain scratches that every weapon was pointed and sharpened, and that at each of these scratches not only the spectators, but even the actors themselves, laughed like so many madmen.

He who at the moment occupied the upper step kept his adversaries marvelously in check. A circle was formed around them. The conditions required that at every hit the man touched should quit the game, yielding his turn for the benefit of the adversary who had hit him. In five minutes three were slightly wounded, one on the hand, another on the ear, by the defender of the stair, who himself remained intact—a piece of skill which was worth to him, according to the rules agreed upon, three turns of favor.

However difficult it might be, or rather as he pretended it was, to astonish our young traveler, this pastime really

astonished him. He had seen in his province—that land in which heads become so easily heated—a few of the preliminaries of duels; but the daring of these four fencers appeared to him the strongest he had ever heard of even in Gascony. He believed himself transported into that famous country of giants into which Gulliver afterward went and was so frightened; and yet he had not gained the goal, for there were still the landing place and the antechamber.

On the landing they were no longer fighting, but amused themselves with stories about women, and in the antechamber, with stories about the court. On the landing d'Artagnan blushed; in the antechamber he trembled. His warm and fickle imagination, which in Gascony had rendered formidable to young chambermaids, and even sometimes their mistresses, had never dreamed, even in moments of delirium, of half the amorous wonders or a quarter of the feats of gallantry which were here set forth in connection with names the best known and with details the least concealed. But if his morals were shocked on the landing, his respect for the cardinal was scandalized in the antechamber. There, to his great astonishment, d'Artagnan heard the policy which made all Europe tremble criticized aloud and openly, as well as the private life of the cardinal, which so many great nobles had been punished for trying to pry into. That great man who was so revered by d'Artagnan the elder served as an object of ridicule to the Musketeers of Treville, who cracked their jokes upon his bandy legs and his crooked back. Some sang ballads about Mme. d'Aguillon, his mistress, and Mme. Cambalet, his niece; while others formed

parties and plans to annoy the pages and guards of the cardinal duke—all things which appeared to d'Artagnan monstrous impossibilities.

Nevertheless, when the name of the king was now and then uttered unthinkingly amid all these cardinal jests, a sort of gag seemed to close for a moment on all these jeering mouths. They looked hesitatingly around them, and appeared to doubt the thickness of the partition between them and the office of M. de Treville; but a fresh allusion soon brought back the conversation to his Eminence, and then the laughter recovered its loudness and the light was not withheld from any of his actions.

'Certes, these fellows will all either be imprisoned or hanged,' thought the terrified d'Artagnan, 'and I, no doubt, with them; for from the moment I have either listened to or heard them, I shall be held as an accomplice. What would my good father say, who so strongly pointed out to me the respect due to the cardinal, if he knew I was in the society of such pagans?'

We have no need, therefore, to say that d'Artagnan dared not join in the conversation, only he looked with all his eyes and listened with all his ears, stretching his five senses so as to lose nothing; and despite his confidence on the paternal admonitions, he felt himself carried by his tastes and led by his instincts to praise rather than to blame the unheard-of things which were taking place.

Although he was a perfect stranger in the court of M. de Treville's courtiers, and this his first appearance in that place, he was at length noticed, and somebody came and

asked him what he wanted. At this demand d'Artagnan gave his name very modestly, emphasized the title of compatriot, and begged the servant who had put the question to him to request a moment's audience of M. de Treville—a request which the other, with an air of protection, promised to transmit in due season.

D'Artagnan, a little recovered from his first surprise, had now leisure to study costumes and physiognomy.

The center of the most animated group was a Musketeer of great height and haughty countenance, dressed in a costume so peculiar as to attract general attention. He did not wear the uniform cloak—which was not obligatory at that epoch of less liberty but more independence—but a cerulean-blue doublet, a little faded and worn, and over this a magnificent baldric, worked in gold, which shone like water ripples in the sun. A long cloak of crimson velvet fell in graceful folds from his shoulders, disclosing in front the splendid baldric, from which was suspended a gigantic rapier. This Musketeer had just come off guard, complained of having a cold, and coughed from time to time affectedly. It was for this reason, as he said to those around him, that he had put on his cloak; and while he spoke with a lofty air and twisted his mustache disdainfully, all admired his embroidered baldric, and d'Artagnan more than anyone.

'What would you have?' said the Musketeer. 'This fashion is coming in. It is a folly, I admit, but still it is the fashion. Besides, one must lay out one's inheritance somehow.'

'Ah, Porthos!' cried one of his companions, 'don't try to make us believe you obtained that baldric by paternal gen-

erosity. It was given to you by that veiled lady I met you with the other Sunday, near the gate St. Honor.'

'No, upon honor and by the faith of a gentleman, I bought it with the contents of my own purse,' answered he whom they designated by the name Porthos.

'Yes; about in the same manner,' said another Musketeer, 'that I bought this new purse with what my mistress put into the old one.'

'It's true, though,' said Porthos; 'and the proof is that I paid twelve pistoles for it.'

The wonder was increased, though the doubt continued to exist.

'Is it not true, Aramis?' said Porthos, turning toward another Musketeer.

This other Musketeer formed a perfect contrast to his interrogator, who had just designated him by the name of Aramis. He was a stout man, of about twoor three-and-twenty, with an open, ingenuous countenance, a black, mild eye, and cheeks rosy and downy as an autumn peach. His delicate mustache marked a perfectly straight line upon his upper lip; he appeared to dread to lower his hands lest their veins should swell, and he pinched the tips of his ears from time to time to preserve their delicate pink transparency. Habitually he spoke little and slowly, bowed frequently, laughed without noise, showing his teeth, which were fine and of which, as the rest of his person, he appeared to take great care. He answered the appeal of his friend by an affirmative nod of the head.

This affirmation appeared to dispel all doubts with re-

gard to the baldric. They continued to admire it, but said no more about it; and with a rapid change of thought, the conversation passed suddenly to another subject.

'What do you think of the story Chalais's esquire relates?' asked another Musketeer, without addressing anyone in particular, but on the contrary speaking to everybody.

'And what does he say?' asked Porthos, in a self-sufficient tone.

'He relates that he met at Brussels Rochefort, the AME DAMNEE of the cardinal disguised as a Capuchin, and that this cursed Rochefort, thanks to his disguise, had tricked Monsieur de Laigues, like a ninny as he is.'

'A ninny, indeed!' said Porthos; 'but is the matter certain?'

'I had it from Aramis,' replied the Musketeer.

'Indeed?'

'Why, you knew it, Porthos,' said Aramis. 'I told you of it yesterday. Let us say no more about it.'

'Say no more about it? That's YOUR opinion!' replied Porthos.

'Say no more about it! PESTE! You come to your conclusions quickly. What! The cardinal sets a spy upon a gentleman, has his letters stolen from him by means of a traitor, a brigand, a rascal-has, with the help of this spy and thanks to this correspondence, Chalais's throat cut, under the stupid pretext that he wanted to kill the king and marry Monsieur to the queen! Nobody knew a word of this enigma. You unraveled it yesterday to the great satisfaction of all; and while we are still gaping with wonder at the news,

you come and tell us today, 'Let us say no more about it."

'Well, then, let us talk about it, since you desire it,' replied Aramis, patiently.

'This Rochefort,' cried Porthos, 'if I were the esquire of poor Chalais, should pass a minute or two very uncomfortably with me.'

'And you—you would pass rather a sad quarter-hour with the Red Duke,' replied Aramis.

'Oh, the Red Duke! Bravo! Bravo! The Red Duke!' cried Porthos, clapping his hands and nodding his head. 'The Red Duke is capital. I'll circulate that saying, be assured, my dear fellow. Who says this Aramis is not a wit? What a misfortune it is you did not follow your first vocation; what a delicious abbe you would have made!'

'Oh, it's only a temporary postponement,' replied Aramis; 'I shall be one someday. You very well know, Porthos, that I continue to study theology for that purpose.'

'He will be one, as he says,' cried Porthos; 'he will be one, sooner or later.'

'Sooner.' said Aramis.

'He only waits for one thing to determine him to resume his cassock, which hangs behind his uniform,' said another Musketeer.

'What is he waiting for?' asked another.

'Only till the queen has given an heir to the crown of France.'

'No jesting upon that subject, gentlemen,' said Porthos; 'thank God the queen is still of an age to give one!'

'They say that Monsieur de Buckingham is in France,'

replied Aramis, with a significant smile which gave to this sentence, apparently so simple, a tolerably scandalous meaning.

'Aramis, my good friend, this time you are wrong,' interrupted Porthos. 'Your wit is always leading you beyond bounds; if Monsieur de Treville heard you, you would repent of speaking thus.'

'Are you going to give me a lesson, Porthos?' cried Aramis, from whose usually mild eye a flash passed like lightning.

'My dear fellow, be a Musketeer or an abbe. Be one or the other, but not both,' replied Porthos. 'You know what Athos told you the other day; you eat at everybody's mess. Ah, don't be angry, I beg of you, that would be useless; you know what is agreed upon between you, Athos and me. You go to Madame d'Aguillon's, and you pay your court to her; you go to Madame de Bois-Tracy's, the cousin of Madame de Chevreuse, and you pass for being far advanced in the good graces of that lady. Oh, good Lord! Don't trouble yourself to reveal your good luck; no one asks for your secret-all the world knows your discretion. But since you possess that virtue, why the devil don't you make use of it with respect to her Majesty? Let whoever likes talk of the king and the cardinal, and how he likes; but the queen is sacred, and if anyone speaks of her, let it be respectfully.'

'Porthos, you are as vain as Narcissus; I plainly tell you so,' replied Aramis. 'You know I hate moralizing, except when it is done by Athos. As to you, good sir, you wear too magnificent a baldric to be strong on that head. I will be an

abbe if it suits me. In the meanwhile I am a Musketeer; in that quality I say what I please, and at this moment it pleases me to say that you weary me.'

'Aramis!'

'Porthos!'

'Gentlemen! Gentlemen!' cried the surrounding group.

'Monsieur de Treville awaits Monsieur d'Artagnan,' cried a servant, throwing open the door of the cabinet.

At this announcement, during which the door remained open, everyone became mute, and amid the general silence the young man crossed part of the length of the antechamber, and entered the apartment of the captain of the Musketeers, congratulating himself with all his heart at having so narrowly escaped the end of this strange quarrel.

3 THE AUDIENCE

M. DE TREVILLE was at the moment in rather ill-humor, nevertheless he saluted the young man politely, who bowed to the very ground; and he smiled on receiving d'Artagnan's response, the Bearnese accent of which recalled to him at the same time his youth and his country—a double remembrance which makes a man smile at all ages; but stepping toward the antechamber and making a sign to d'Artagnan with his hand, as if to ask his permission to finish with others before he began with him, he called three times, with a louder voice at each time, so that he ran through the intervening tones between the imperative accent and the angry accent.

'Athos! Porthos! Aramis!'

The two Musketeers with whom we have already made acquaintance, and who answered to the last of these three names, immediately quitted the group of which they had formed a part, and advanced toward the cabinet, the door of which closed after them as soon as they had entered. Their appearance, although it was not quite at ease, excited by its carelessness, at once full of dignity and submission, the admiration of d'Artagnan, who beheld in these two men demigods, and in their leader an Olympian Jupiter, armed with all his thunders.

When the two Musketeers had entered; when the door

was closed behind them; when the buzzing murmur of the antechamber, to which the summons which had been made had doubtless furnished fresh food, had recommenced; when M. de Treville had three or four times paced in silence, and with a frowning brow, the whole length of his cabinet, passing each time before Porthos and Aramis, who were as upright and silent as if on parade—he stopped all at once full in front of them, and covering them from head to foot with an angry look, 'Do you know what the king said to me,' cried he, 'and that no longer ago than yesterday evening—do you know, gentlemen?'

'No,' replied the two Musketeers, after a moment's silence, 'no, sir, we do not.'

'But I hope that you will do us the honor to tell us,' added Aramis, in his politest tone and with his most graceful bow.

'He told me that he should henceforth recruit his Musketeers from among the Guards of Monsieur the Cardinal.'

'The Guards of the cardinal! And why so?' asked Porthos, warmly.

'Because he plainly perceives that his piquette* stands in need of being enlivened by a mixture of good wine.'

*A watered liquor, made from the second pressing of the grape.

The two Musketeers reddened to the whites of their eyes. d'Artagnan did not know where he was, and wished himself a hundred feet underground.

'Yes, yes,' continued M. de Treville, growing warmer as he spoke, 'and his majesty was right; for, upon my honor,

it is true that the Musketeers make but a miserable figure at court. The cardinal related yesterday while playing with the king, with an air of condolence very displeasing to me, that the day before yesterday those DAMNED MUSKETEERS, those DAREDEVILS—he dwelt upon those words with an ironical tone still more displeasing to me—those BRAGGARTS, added he, glancing at me with his tigercat's eye, had made a riot in the Rue Ferou in a cabaret, and that a party of his Guards (I thought he was going to laugh in my face) had been forced to arrest the rioters! MORBLEU! You must know something about it. Arrest Musketeers! You were among them—you were! Don't deny it; you were recognized, and the cardinal named you. But it's all my fault; yes, it's all my fault, because it is myself who selects my men. You, Aramis, why the devil did you ask me for a uniform when you would have been so much better in a cassock? And you, Porthos, do you only wear such a fine golden baldric to suspend a sword of straw from it? And Athos—I don't see Athos. Where is he?'

'Ill—'

'Very ill, say you? And of what malady?'

'It is feared that it may be the smallpox, sir,' replied Porthos, desirous of taking his turn in the conversation; 'and what is serious is that it will certainly spoil his face.'

'The smallpox! That's a great story to tell me, Porthos! Sick of the smallpox at his age! No, no; but wounded without doubt, killed, perhaps. Ah, if I knew! S'blood! Messieurs Musketeers, I will not have this haunting of bad places, this quarreling in the streets, this swordplay at the crossways;

and above all, I will not have occasion given for the cardinal's Guards, who are brave, quiet, skillful men who never put themselves in a position to be arrested, and who, besides, never allow themselves to be arrested, to laugh at you! I am sure of it—they would prefer dying on the spot to being arrested or taking back a step. To save yourselves, to scamper away, to flee—that is good for the king's Musketeers!'

Porthos and Aramis trembled with rage. They could willingly have strangled M. de Treville, if, at the bottom of all this, they had not felt it was the great love he bore them which made him speak thus. They stamped upon the carpet with their feet; they bit their lips till the blood came, and grasped the hilts of their swords with all their might. All without had heard, as we have said, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis called, and had guessed, from M. de Treville's tone of voice, that he was very angry about something. Ten curious heads were glued to the tapestry and became pale with fury; for their ears, closely applied to the door, did not lose a syllable of what he said, while their mouths repeated as he went on, the insulting expressions of the captain to all the people in the antechamber. In an instant, from the door of the cabinet to the street gate, the whole hotel was boiling.

'Ah! The king's Musketeers are arrested by the Guards of the cardinal, are they?' continued M. de Treville, as furious at heart as his soldiers, but emphasizing his words and plunging them, one by one, so to say, like so many blows of a stiletto, into the bosoms of his auditors. 'What! Six of his Eminence's Guards arrest six of his Majesty's Musketeers! MORBLEU! My part is taken! I will go straight to the lou-

vre; I will give in my resignation as captain of the king's Musketeers to take a lieutenancy in the cardinal's Guards, and if he refuses me, MORBLEU! I will turn abbe.'

At these words, the murmur without became an explosion; nothing was to be heard but oaths and blasphemies. The MORBLEUS, the SANG DIEUS, the MORTS TOUTS LES DIABLES, crossed one another in the air. D'Artagnan looked for some tapestry behind which he might hide himself, and felt an immense inclination to crawl under the table.

'Well, my Captain,' said Porthos, quite beside himself, 'the truth is that we were six against six. But we were not captured by fair means; and before we had time to draw our swords, two of our party were dead, and Athos, grievously wounded, was very little better. For you know Athos. Well, Captain, he endeavored twice to get up, and fell again twice. And we did not surrender—no! They dragged us away by force. On the way we escaped. As for Athos, they believed him to be dead, and left him very quiet on the field of battle, not thinking it worth the trouble to carry him away. That's the whole story. What the devil, Captain, one cannot win all one's battles! The great Pompey lost that of Pharsalia; and Francis the First, who was, as I have heard say, as good as other folks, nevertheless lost the Battle of Pavia.'

'And I have the honor of assuring you that I killed one of them with his own sword,' said Aramis; 'for mine was broken at the first parry. Killed him, or poniarded him, sir, as is most agreeable to you.'

'I did not know that,' replied M. de Treville, in a somewhat

softened tone. 'The cardinal exaggerated, as I perceive.'

'But pray, sir,' continued Aramis, who, seeing his captain become appeased, ventured to risk a prayer, 'do not say that Athos is wounded. He would be in despair if that should come to the ears of the king; and as the wound is very serious, seeing that after crossing the shoulder it penetrates into the chest, it is to be feared—'

At this instant the tapestry was raised and a noble and handsome head, but frightfully pale, appeared under the fringe.

'Athos!' cried the two Musketeers.

'Athos!' repeated M. de Treville himself.

'You have sent for me, sir,' said Athos to M. de Treville, in a feeble yet perfectly calm voice, 'you have sent for me, as my comrades inform me, and I have hastened to receive your orders. I am here; what do you want with me?'

And at these words, the Musketeer, in irreproachable costume, belted as usual, with a tolerably firm step, entered the cabinet. M. de Treville, moved to the bottom of his heart by this proof of courage, sprang toward him.

'I was about to say to these gentlemen,' added he, 'that I forbid my Musketeers to expose their lives needlessly; for brave men are very dear to the king, and the king knows that his Musketeers are the bravest on the earth. Your hand, Athos!'

And without waiting for the answer of the newcomer to this proof of affection, M. de Treville seized his right hand and pressed it with all his might, without perceiving that Athos, whatever might be his self-command, allowed a

one spoke, harangued, and vociferated, swearing, cursing, and consigning the cardinal and his Guards to all the devils.

An instant after, Porthos and Aramis re-entered, the surgeon and M. de Treville alone remaining with the wounded.

At length, M. de Treville himself returned. The injured man had recovered his senses. The surgeon declared that the situation of the Musketeer had nothing in it to render his friends uneasy, his weakness having been purely and simply caused by loss of blood.

Then M. de Treville made a sign with his hand, and all retired except d'Artagnan, who did not forget that he had an audience, and with the tenacity of a Gascon remained in his place.

When all had gone out and the door was closed, M. de Treville, on turning round, found himself alone with the young man. The event which had occurred had in some degree broken the thread of his ideas. He inquired what was the will of his persevering visitor. d'Artagnan then repeated his name, and in an instant recovering all his remembrances of the present and the past, M. de Treville grasped the situation.

'Pardon me,' said he, smiling, 'pardon me my dear compatriot, but I had wholly forgotten you. But what help is there for it! A captain is nothing but a father of a family, charged with even a greater responsibility than the father of an ordinary family. Soldiers are big children; but as I maintain that the orders of the king, and more particularly the

orders of the cardinal, should be executed—'

D'Artagnan could not restrain a smile. By this smile M. de Treville judged that he had not to deal with a fool, and changing the conversation, came straight to the point.

'I respected your father very much,' said he. 'What can I do for the son? Tell me quickly; my time is not my own.'

'Monsieur,' said d'Artagnan, 'on quitting Tarbes and coming hither, it was my intention to request of you, in remembrance of the friendship which you have not forgotten, the uniform of a Musketeer; but after all that I have seen during the last two hours, I comprehend that such a favor is enormous, and tremble lest I should not merit it.'

'It is indeed a favor, young man,' replied M. de Treville, 'but it may not be so far beyond your hopes as you believe, or rather as you appear to believe. But his majesty's decision is always necessary; and I inform you with regret that no one becomes a Musketeer without the preliminary ordeal of several campaigns, certain brilliant actions, or a service of two years in some other regiment less favored than ours.'

D'Artagnan bowed without replying, feeling his desire to don the Musketeer's uniform vastly increased by the great difficulties which preceded the attainment of it.

'But,' continued M. de Treville, fixing upon his compatriot a look so piercing that it might be said he wished to read the thoughts of his heart, 'on account of my old companion, your father, as I have said, I will do something for you, young man. Our recruits from Bearn are not generally very rich, and I have no reason to think matters have much changed in this respect since I left the province. I dare say

you have not brought too large a stock of money with you?'

D'Artagnan drew himself up with a proud air which plainly said, 'I ask alms of no man.'

'Oh, that's very well, young man,' continued M. de Treville, 'that's all very well. I know these airs; I myself came to Paris with four crowns in my purse, and would have fought with anyone who dared to tell me I was not in a condition to purchase the Louvre.'

D'Artagnan's bearing became still more imposing. Thanks to the sale of his horse, he commenced his career with four more crowns than M. de Treville possessed at the commencement of his.

'You ought, I say, then, to husband the means you have, however large the sum may be; but you ought also to endeavor to perfect yourself in the exercises becoming a gentleman. I will write a letter today to the Director of the Royal Academy, and tomorrow he will admit you without any expense to yourself. Do not refuse this little service. Our best-born and richest gentlemen sometimes solicit it without being able to obtain it. You will learn horsemanship, swordsmanship in all its branches, and dancing. You will make some desirable acquaintances; and from time to time you can call upon me, just to tell me how you are getting on, and to say whether I can be of further service to you.'

D'Artagnan, stranger as he was to all the manners of a court, could not but perceive a little coldness in this reception.

'Alas, sir,' said he, 'I cannot but perceive how sadly I miss the letter of introduction which my father gave me to pres-

ent to you.'

'I certainly am surprised,' replied M. de Treville, 'that you should undertake so long a journey without that necessary passport, the sole resource of us poor Bearnese.'

'I had one, sir, and, thank God, such as I could wish,' cried d'Artagnan; 'but it was perfidiously stolen from me.'

He then related the adventure of Meung, described the unknown gentleman with the greatest minuteness, and all with a warmth and truthfulness that delighted M. de Treville.

'This is all very strange,' said M. de Treville, after meditating a minute; 'you mentioned my name, then, aloud?'

'Yes, sir, I certainly committed that imprudence; but why should I have done otherwise? A name like yours must be as a buckler to me on my way. Judge if I should not put myself under its protection.'

Flattery was at that period very current, and M. de Treville loved incense as well as a king, or even a cardinal. He could not refrain from a smile of visible satisfaction; but this smile soon disappeared, and returning to the adventure of Meung, 'Tell me,' continued he, 'had not this gentlemen a slight scar on his cheek?'

'Yes, such a one as would be made by the grazing of a ball.'

'Was he not a fine-looking man?'

'Yes.'

'Of lofty stature.'

'Yes.'

'Of complexion and brown hair?'

'Yes, yes, that is he; how is it, sir, that you are acquainted with this man? If I ever find him again—and I will find him, I swear, were it in hell!'

'He was waiting for a woman,' continued Treville.

'He departed immediately after having conversed for a minute with her whom he awaited.'

'You know not the subject of their conversation?'

'He gave her a box, told her not to open it except in London.'

'Was this woman English?'

'He called her Milady.'

'It is he; it must be he!' murmured Treville. 'I believed him still at Brussels.'

'Oh, sir, if you know who this man is,' cried d'Artagnan, 'tell me who he is, and whence he is. I will then release you from all your promises—even that of procuring my admission into the Musketeers; for before everything, I wish to avenge myself.'

'Beware, young man!' cried Treville. 'If you see him coming on one side of the street, pass by on the other. Do not cast yourself against such a rock; he would break you like glass.'

'That will not prevent me,' replied d'Artagnan, 'if ever I find him.'

'In the meantime,' said Treville, 'seek him not—if I have a right to advise you.'

All at once the captain stopped, as if struck by a sudden suspicion. This great hatred which the young traveler manifested so loudly for this man, who—a rather improb-

able thing—had stolen his father's letter from him—was there not some perfidy concealed under this hatred? Might not this young man be sent by his Eminence? Might he not have come for the purpose of laying a snare for him? This pretended d'Artagnan—was he not an emissary of the cardinal, whom the cardinal sought to introduce into Treville's house, to place near him, to win his confidence, and afterward to ruin him as had been done in a thousand other instances? He fixed his eyes upon d'Artagnan even more earnestly than before. He was moderately reassured however, by the aspect of that countenance, full of astute intelligence and affected humility. 'I know he is a Gascon,' reflected he, 'but he may be one for the cardinal as well as for me. Let us try him.'

'My friend,' said he, slowly, 'I wish, as the son of an ancient friend—for I consider this story of the lost letter perfectly true—I wish, I say, in order to repair the coldness you may have remarked in my reception of you, to discover to you the secrets of our policy. The king and the cardinal are the best of friends; their apparent bickerings are only feints to deceive fools. I am not willing that a compatriot, a handsome cavalier, a brave youth, quite fit to make his way, should become the dupe of all these artifices and fall into the snare after the example of so many others who have been ruined by it. Be assured that I am devoted to both these all-powerful masters, and that my earnest endeavors have no other aim than the service of the king, and also the cardinal—one of the most illustrious geniuses that France has ever produced.

'Now, young man, regulate your conduct accordingly; and if you entertain, whether from your family, your relations, or even from your instincts, any of these enmities which we see constantly breaking out against the cardinal, bid me adieu and let us separate. I will aid you in many ways, but without attaching you to my person. I hope that my frankness at least will make you my friend; for you are the only young man to whom I have hitherto spoken as I have done to you.'

Treville said to himself: 'If the cardinal has set this young fox upon me, he will certainly not have failed—he, who knows how bitterly I execrate him—to tell his spy that the best means of making his court to me is to rail at him. Therefore, in spite of all my protestations, if it be as I suspect, my cunning gossip will assure me that he holds his Eminence in horror.'

It, however, proved otherwise. D'Artagnan answered, with the greatest simplicity: 'I came to Paris with exactly such intentions. My father advised me to stoop to nobody but the king, the cardinal, and yourself—whom he considered the first three personages in France.'

D'Artagnan added M. de Treville to the others, as may be perceived; but he thought this addition would do no harm.

'I have the greatest veneration for the cardinal,' continued he, 'and the most profound respect for his actions. So much the better for me, sir, if you speak to me, as you say, with frankness—for then you will do me the honor to esteem the resemblance of our opinions; but if you have entertained any doubt, as naturally you may, I feel that I am

ruining myself by speaking the truth. But I still trust you will not esteem me the less for it, and that is my object beyond all others.'

M. de Treville was surprised to the greatest degree. So much penetration, so much frankness, created admiration, but did not entirely remove his suspicions. The more this young man was superior to others, the more he was to be dreaded if he meant to deceive him; 'You are an honest youth; but at the present moment I can only do for you that which I just now offered. My hotel will be always open to you. Hereafter, being able to ask for me at all hours, and consequently to take advantage of all opportunities, you will probably obtain that which you desire.'

'That is to say,' replied d'Artagnan, 'that you will wait until I have proved myself worthy of it. Well, be assured,' added he, with the familiarity of a Gascon, 'you shall not wait long.' And he bowed in order to retire, and as if he considered the future in his own hands.

'But wait a minute,' said M. de Treville, stopping him. 'I promised you a letter for the director of the Academy. Are you too proud to accept it, young gentleman?'

'No, sir,' said d'Artagnan; 'and I will guard it so carefully that I will be sworn it shall arrive at its address, and woe be to him who shall attempt to take it from me!'

M. de Treville smiled at this flourish; and leaving his young man compatriot in the embrasure of the window, where they had talked together, he seated himself at a table in order to write the promised letter of recommendation. While he was doing this, d'Artagnan, having no better em-

ployment, amused himself with beating a march upon the window and with looking at the Musketeers, who went away, one after another, following them with his eyes until they disappeared.

M. de Treville, after having written the letter, sealed it, and rising, approached the young man in order to give it to him. But at the very moment when d'Artagnan stretched out his hand to receive it, M. de Treville was highly astonished to see his protege make a sudden spring, become crimson with passion, and rush from the cabinet crying, 'S'blood, he shall not escape me this time!'

'And who?' asked M. de Treville.

'He, my thief!' replied d'Artagnan. 'Ah, the traitor!' and he disappeared.

'The devil take the madman!' murmured M. de Treville, 'unless,' added he, 'this is a cunning mode of escaping, seeing that he had failed in his purpose!'

4 THE SHOULDER OF ATHOS, THE BALDRIC OF PORTHOS AND THE

HANDKERCHIEF OF ARAMIS

D'Artagnan, in a state of fury, crossed the antechamber at three bounds, and was darting toward the stairs, which he reckoned upon descending four at a time, when, in his heedless course, he ran head foremost against a Musketeer who was coming out of one of M. de Treville's private rooms, and striking his shoulder violently, made him utter a cry, or rather a howl.

'Excuse me,' said d'Artagnan, endeavoring to resume his course, 'excuse me, but I am in a hurry.'

Scarcely had he descended the first stair, when a hand of iron seized him by the belt and stopped him.

'You are in a hurry?' said the Musketeer, as pale as a sheet. 'Under that pretense you run against me! You say. 'Excuse me,' and you believe that is sufficient? Not at all my young man. Do you fancy because you have heard Monsieur de Treville speak to us a little cavalierly today that other people are to treat us as he speaks to us? Undeceive yourself, com-

rade, you are not Monsieur de Treville.'

'My faith!' replied d'Artagnan, recognizing Athos, who, after the dressing performed by the doctor, was returning to his own apartment. 'I did not do it intentionally, and not doing it intentionally, I said 'Excuse me.' It appears to me that this is quite enough. I repeat to you, however, and this time on my word of honor—I think perhaps too often—that I am in haste, great haste. Leave your hold, then, I beg of you, and let me go where my business calls me.'

'Monsieur,' said Athos, letting him go, 'you are not polite; it is easy to perceive that you come from a distance.'

D'Artagnan had already strode down three or four stairs, but at Athos's last remark he stopped short.

'MORBLEU, monsieur!' said he, 'however far I may come, it is not you who can give me a lesson in good manners, I warn you.'

'Perhaps,' said Athos.

'Ah! If I were not in such haste, and if I were not running after someone,' said d'Artagnan.

'Monsieur Man-in-a-hurry, you can find me without running—ME, you understand?'

'And where, I pray you?'

'Near the Carmes-Deschaux.'

'At what hour?'

'About noon.'

'About noon? That will do; I will be there.'

'Endeavor not to make me wait; for at quarter past twelve I will cut off your ears as you run.'

'Good!' cried d'Artagnan, 'I will be there ten minutes be-

fore twelve.' And he set off running as if the devil possessed him, hoping that he might yet find the stranger, whose slow pace could not have carried him far.

But at the street gate, Porthos was talking with the soldier on guard. Between the two talkers there was just enough room for a man to pass. D'Artagnan thought it would suffice for him, and he sprang forward like a dart between them. But d'Artagnan had reckoned without the wind. As he was about to pass, the wind blew out Porthos's long cloak, and d'Artagnan rushed straight into the middle of it. Without doubt, Porthos had reasons for not abandoning this part of his vestments, for instead of quitting his hold on the flap in his hand, he pulled it toward him, so that d'Artagnan rolled himself up in the velvet by a movement of rotation explained by the persistency of Porthos.

D'Artagnan, hearing the Musketeer swear, wished to escape from the cloak, which blinded him, and sought to find his way from under the folds of it. He was particularly anxious to avoid marring the freshness of the magnificent baldric we are acquainted with; but on timidly opening his eyes, he found himself with his nose fixed between the two shoulders of Porthos—that is to say, exactly upon the baldric.

Alas, like most things in this world which have nothing in their favor but appearances, the baldric was glittering with gold in the front, but was nothing but simple buff behind. Vainglorious as he was, Porthos could not afford to have a baldric wholly of gold, but had at least half. One could comprehend the necessity of the cold and the urgency

of the cloak.

'Bless me!' cried Porthos, making strong efforts to disembarrass himself of d'Artagnan, who was wriggling about his back; 'you must be mad to run against people in this manner.'

'Excuse me,' said d'Artagnan, reappearing under the shoulder of the giant, 'but I am in such haste—I was running after someone and—'

'And do you always forget your eyes when you run?' asked Porthos.

'No,' replied d'Artagnan, piqued, 'and thanks to my eyes, I can see what other people cannot see.'

Whether Porthos understood him or did not understand him, giving way to his anger, 'Monsieur,' said he, 'you stand a chance of getting chastised if you rub Musketeers in this fashion.'

'Chastised, Monsieur!' said d'Artagnan, 'the expression is strong.'

'It is one that becomes a man accustomed to look his enemies in the face.'

'Ah, PARDIEU! I know full well that you don't turn your back to yours.'

And the young man, delighted with his joke, went away laughing loudly.

Porthos foamed with rage, and made a movement to rush after d'Artagnan.

'Presently, presently,' cried the latter, 'when you haven't your cloak on.'

'At one o'clock, then, behind the Luxembourg.'

'Very well, at one o'clock, then,' replied d'Artagnan, turning the angle of the street.

But neither in the street he had passed through, nor in the one which his eager glance pervaded, could he see anyone; however slowly the stranger had walked, he was gone on his way, or perhaps had entered some house. D'Artagnan inquired of everyone he met with, went down to the ferry, came up again by the Rue de Seine, and the Red Cross; but nothing, absolutely nothing! This chase was, however, advantageous to him in one sense, for in proportion as the perspiration broke from his forehead, his heart began to cool.

He began to reflect upon the events that had passed; they were numerous and inauspicious. It was scarcely eleven o'clock in the morning, and yet this morning had already brought him into disgrace with M. de Treville, who could not fail to think the manner in which d'Artagnan had left him a little cavalier.

Besides this, he had drawn upon himself two good duels with two men, each capable of killing three d'Artagnans—with two Musketeers, in short, with two of those beings whom he esteemed so greatly that he placed them in his mind and heart above all other men.

The outlook was sad. Sure of being killed by Athos, it may easily be understood that the young man was not very uneasy about Porthos. As hope, however, is the last thing extinguished in the heart of man, he finished by hoping that he might survive, even though with terrible wounds, in both these duels; and in case of surviving, he made the fol-

lowing reprehensions upon his own conduct:

'What a madcap I was, and what a stupid fellow I am! That brave and unfortunate Athos was wounded on that very shoulder against which I must run head foremost, like a ram. The only thing that astonishes me is that he did not strike me dead at once. He had good cause to do so; the pain I gave him must have been atrocious. As to Porthos—oh, as to Porthos, faith, that's a droll affair!'

And in spite of himself, the young man began to laugh aloud, looking round carefully, however, to see that his solitary laugh, without a cause in the eyes of passers-by, offended no one.

'As to Porthos, that is certainly droll; but I am not the less a giddy fool. Are people to be run against without warning? No! And have I any right to go and peep under their cloaks to see what is not there? He would have pardoned me, he would certainly have pardoned me, if I had not said anything to him about that cursed baldric—in ambiguous words, it is true, but rather drolly ambiguous. Ah, cursed Gascon that I am, I get from one hobble into another. Friend d'Artagnan,' continued he, speaking to himself with all the amenity that he thought due himself, 'if you escape, of which there is not much chance, I would advise you to practice perfect politeness for the future. You must henceforth be admired and quoted as a model of it. To be obliging and polite does not necessarily make a man a coward. Look at Aramis, now; Aramis is mildness and grace personified. Well, did anybody ever dream of calling Aramis a coward? No, certainly not, and from this moment I will endeavor to

model myself after him. Ah! That's strange! Here he is!'

D'Artagnan, walking and soliloquizing, had arrived within a few steps of the hotel d'Arguillon and in front of that hotel perceived Aramis, chatting gaily with three gentlemen; but as he had not forgotten that it was in presence of this young man that M. de Treville had been so angry in the morning, and as a witness of the rebuke the Musketeers had received was not likely to be at all agreeable, he pretended not to see him. D'Artagnan, on the contrary, quite full of his plans of conciliation and courtesy, approached the young men with a profound bow, accompanied by a most gracious smile. All four, besides, immediately broke off their conversation.

D'Artagnan was not so dull as not to perceive that he was one too many; but he was not sufficiently broken into the fashions of the gay world to know how to extricate himself gallantly from a false position, like that of a man who begins to mingle with people he is scarcely acquainted with and in a conversation that does not concern him. He was seeking in his mind, then, for the least awkward means of retreat, when he remarked that Aramis had let his handkerchief fall, and by mistake, no doubt, had placed his foot upon it. This appeared to be a favorable opportunity to repair his intrusion. He stooped, and with the most gracious air he could assume, drew the handkerchief from under the foot of the Musketeer in spite of the efforts the latter made to detain it, and holding it out to him, said, 'I believe, monsieur, that this is a handkerchief you would be sorry to lose?'

The handkerchief was indeed richly embroidered, and

had a coronet and arms at one of its corners. Aramis blushed excessively, and snatched rather than took the handkerchief from the hand of the Gascon.

'Ah, ah!' cried one of the Guards, 'will you persist in saying, most discreet Aramis, that you are not on good terms with Madame de Bois-Tracy, when that gracious lady has the kindness to lend you one of her handkerchiefs?'

Aramis darted at d'Artagnan one of those looks which inform a man that he has acquired a mortal enemy. Then, resuming his mild air, 'You are deceived, gentlemen,' said he, 'this handkerchief is not mine, and I cannot fancy why Monsieur has taken it into his head to offer it to me rather than to one of you; and as a proof of what I say, here is mine in my pocket.'

So saying, he pulled out his own handkerchief, likewise a very elegant handkerchief, and of fine cambric—though cambric was dear at the period—but a handkerchief without embroidery and without arms, only ornamented with a single cipher, that of its proprietor.

This time d'Artagnan was not hasty. He perceived his mistake; but the friends of Aramis were not at all convinced by his denial, and one of them addressed the young Musketeer with affected seriousness. 'If it were as you pretend it is,' said he, 'I should be forced, my dear Aramis, to reclaim it myself; for, as you very well know, Bois-Tracy is an intimate friend of mine, and I cannot allow the property of his wife to be sported as a trophy.'

'You make the demand badly,' replied Aramis; 'and while acknowledging the justice of your reclamation, I refuse it on

account of the form.'

'The fact is,' hazarded d'Artagnan, timidly, 'I did not see the handkerchief fall from the pocket of Monsieur Aramis. He had his foot upon it, that is all; and I thought from having his foot upon it the handkerchief was his.'

'And you were deceived, my dear sir,' replied Aramis, coldly, very little sensible to the reparation. Then turning toward that one of the guards who had declared himself the friend of BoisTracy, 'Besides,' continued he, 'I have reflected, my dear intimate of Bois-Tracy, that I am not less tenderly his friend than you can possibly be; so that decidedly this handkerchief is as likely to have fallen from your pocket as mine.'

'No, upon my honor!' cried his Majesty's Guardsman.

'You are about to swear upon your honor and I upon my word, and then it will be pretty evident that one of us will have lied. Now, here, Montaran, we will do better than that—let each take a half.'

'Of the handkerchief?'

'Yes.'

'Perfectly just,' cried the other two Guardsmen, 'the judgment of King Solomon! Aramis, you certainly are full of wisdom!'

The young men burst into a laugh, and as may be supposed, the affair had no other sequel. In a moment or two the conversation ceased, and the three Guardsmen and the Musketeer, after having cordially shaken hands, separated, the Guardsmen going one way and Aramis another.

'Now is my time to make peace with this gallant man,'

said d'Artagnan to himself, having stood on one side during the whole of the latter part of the conversation; and with this good feeling drawing near to Aramis, who was departing without paying any attention to him, 'Monsieur,' said he, 'you will excuse me, I hope.'

'Ah, monsieur,' interrupted Aramis, 'permit me to observe to you that you have not acted in this affair as a gallant man ought.'

'What, monsieur!' cried d'Artagnan, 'and do you suppose—'

'I suppose, monsieur that you are not a fool, and that you knew very well, although coming from Gascony, that people do not tread upon handkerchiefs without a reason. What the devil! Paris is not paved with cambric!'

'Monsieur, you act wrongly in endeavoring to mortify me,' said d'Artagnan, in whom the natural quarrelsome spirit began to speak more loudly than his pacific resolutions. 'I am from Gascony, it is true; and since you know it, there is no occasion to tell you that Gascons are not very patient, so that when they have begged to be excused once, were it even for a folly, they are convinced that they have done already at least as much again as they ought to have done.'

'Monsieur, what I say to you about the matter,' said Aramis, 'is not for the sake of seeking a quarrel. Thank God, I am not a bravo! And being a Musketeer but for a time, I only fight when I am forced to do so, and always with great repugnance; but this time the affair is serious, for here is a lady compromised by you.'

'By US, you mean!' cried d'Artagnan.

'Why did you so maladroitly restore me the handkerchief?'

'Why did you so awkwardly let it fall?'

'I have said, monsieur, and I repeat, that the handkerchief did not fall from my pocket.'

'And thereby you have lied twice, monsieur, for I saw it fall.'

'Ah, you take it with that tone, do you, Master Gascon? Well, I will teach you how to behave yourself.'

'And I will send you back to your Mass book, Master Abbe. Draw, if you please, and instantly—'

'Not so, if you please, my good friend—not here, at least. Do you not perceive that we are opposite the Hotel d'Arguillon, which is full of the cardinal's creatures? How do I know that this is not his Eminence who has honored you with the commission to procure my head? Now, I entertain a ridiculous partiality for my head, it seems to suit my shoulders so correctly. I wish to kill you, be at rest as to that, but to kill you quietly in a snug, remote place, where you will not be able to boast of your death to anybody.'

'I agree, monsieur; but do not be too confident. Take your handkerchief; whether it belongs to you or another, you may perhaps stand in need of it.'

'Monsieur is a Gascon?' asked Aramis.

'Yes. Monsieur does not postpone an interview through prudence?'

'Prudence, monsieur, is a virtue sufficiently useless to Musketeers, I know, but indispensable to churchmen; and

as I am only a Musketeer provisionally, I hold it good to be prudent. At two o'clock I shall have the honor of expecting you at the hotel of Monsieur de Treville. There I will indicate to you the best place and time.'

The two young men bowed and separated, Aramis ascending the street which led to the Luxembourg, while d'Artagnan, perceiving the appointed hour was approaching, took the road to the Carmes-Deschaux, saying to himself, 'Decidedly I can't draw back; but at least, if I am killed, I shall be killed by a Musketeer.'

nothing; that letter was everything. I would rather have lost a thousand pistoles than have lost it.' He would not have risked more if he had said twenty thousand; but a certain juvenile modesty restrained him.

A ray of light all at once broke upon the mind of the host as he was giving himself to the devil upon finding nothing.

'That letter is not lost!' cried he.

'What!' cried d'Artagnan.

'No, it has been stolen from you.'

'Stolen? By whom?'

'By the gentleman who was here yesterday. He came down into the kitchen, where your doublet was. He remained there some time alone. I would lay a wager he has stolen it.'

'Do you think so?' answered d'Artagnan, but little convinced, as he knew better than anyone else how entirely personal the value of this letter was, and was nothing in it likely to tempt cupidity. The fact was that none of his servants, none of the travelers present, could have gained anything by being possessed of this paper.

'Do you say,' resumed d'Artagnan, 'that you suspect that impertinent gentleman?'

'I tell you I am sure of it,' continued the host. 'When I informed him that your lordship was the protege of Monsieur de Treville, and that you even had a letter for that illustrious gentleman, he appeared to be very much disturbed, and asked me where that letter was, and immediately came down into the kitchen, where he knew your doublet was.'

'Then that's my thief,' replied d'Artagnan. 'I will com-

slight murmur of pain to escape him, and if possible, grew paler than he was before.

The door had remained open, so strong was the excitement produced by the arrival of Athos, whose wound, though kept as a secret, was known to all. A burst of satisfaction hailed the last words of the captain; and two or three heads, carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, appeared through the openings of the tapestry. M. de Treville was about to reprehend this breach of the rules of etiquette, when he felt the hand of Athos, who had rallied all his energies to contend against pain, at length overcome by it, fell upon the floor as if he were dead.

'A surgeon!' cried M. de Treville, 'mine! The king's! The best! A surgeon! Or, s'blood, my brave Athos will die!'

At the cries of M. de Treville, the whole assemblage rushed into the cabinet, he not thinking to shut the door against anyone, and all crowded round the wounded man. But all this eager attention might have been useless if the doctor so loudly called for had not chanced to be in the hotel. He pushed through the crowd, approached Athos, still insensible, and as all this noise and commotion inconvenienced him greatly, he required, as the first and most urgent thing, that the Musketeer should be carried into an adjoining chamber. Immediately M. de Treville opened and pointed the way to Porthos and Aramis, who bore their comrade in their arms. Behind this group walked the surgeon; and behind the surgeon the door closed.

The cabinet of M. de Treville, generally held so sacred, became in an instant the annex of the antechamber. Every-