TWENTY YEARS AFTER.

deed, from those which were inquiringly direct on toward him at that instant.

"Sir," resumed the Cardinal, "you are to come with me, or rather I am to go with you."

"I am at your commands, my lord," returned D'Artagnan.

"I wish to visit in person the outposts which surround the Palais Royal; do you suppose that there is any danger in so doing?"

"Danger, my lord!" exclaimed D'Artagnan, with a look of as

"I am told that there is a general insurrection."

"The uniform of the King's Musketeers carries a certain respect with it; and even if that were not the case, I would engage, with four of my men, to put to flight a hundred of these clowns."

"Did you witness the injury sustained by Comminges?"

"Monseigneur de Comminges is in the Guards, and not in the Mus

"Which means, I suppose, that the Musketeers are better soldiers

than the Guards." The Cardinal smiled as he spoke.

"Every one likes his own uniform best, my lord.

"Myself excepted," and again Mazarin smiled; "for you per
ceive that I have left off mine, and put on yours."

"Lend me!" cried D'Artagnan.

"Had I such an uniform as your Eminence possesses, I protest I
should be mighty content; and I would take an oath never to wear
any other costume—"

"Yes, but for to-night's adventure, I don't suppose my dress
would have been a very safe one. Give me my felt hat, Bernouin."

The valet instantly brought his master a regimental hat with a
wide brim. The Cardinal put it on in a military style.

"Your horses are all ready saddled in the stables, are they not?"
he said, turning to D'Artagnan.

"Yes, my lord."

"Well, let us set out."

"How many men does your Eminence wish to escort you?"

"You say that with four men you will undertake to disperse a
hundred lout fellows; as it may happen that we shall have to en
counter two hundred, take eight—"

"As many as my lord wishes."

"I shall follow you. This way—light us down-stairs, Bernouin."

The valet held a wax-light; the Cardinal took a key from his
bureau, and, opening the door of a secret stair, descended into the
court of the Palais Royal.

CHAPTER II.

A NIGHTLY PATROL.

In ten minutes Mazarin and his party were traversing the street
"Les Bons Enfans" behind the theater built by Richelieu expressly
for the play of "Mirabe," and in which Mazarin, who was an amus
teur of music, but not of literature, had introduced into France the
first opera that was ever acted in that country.
The appearance of the town denoted the greatest agitation. Numberless groups paraded the streets; and, whatever D'Artagnan might think of it, it was obvious that the citizens had, for the time being, cast aside their usual forbearance, in order to assume a war-like aspect. From time to time noises came in the direction of the public markets. The report of firearms was heard near the Rue Saint Denis, and occasionally church-bells began to ring indiscriminately, and at the caprice of the populace. D'Artagnan, meantime, pursued his way with the indifference of a man upon whom such acts of folly made no impression. The Cardinal envied his composure, which he ascribed to the habit of encountering danger. On approaching an outpost near the Barrière des Sergens, the sentinel cried out, "Who's there?" and D'Artagnan answered—having first asked the word of the Cardinal—"Louis and Rocroy." After which he inquired if Lieutenant Comminges were not the commanding officer at the outpost. The soldier replied by pointing out to him an officer who was conversing, on foot, with his hand upon the neck of a horse on which the individual to whom he was talking sat. Here was the officer whom D'Artagnan was seeking.

"Here is Monseur Comminges," said D'Artagnan, returning to the Cardinal. He instantly retired, from a respectful deference: it was, however, evident that the Cardinal was recognized by both Comminges and the other officers on horseback.

"Well done, Guittard," cried the Cardinal to the equestrian. "I see plainly that, notwithstanding the sixty-four years which have passed over your head, you are still the same man, active and zealous. What were you saying to this youngster?"

"My lord," replied Guittard, "I was observing that we live in strange times, and that to-day's events are very like those in the days of the Ligue, of which I heard so much in my youth. Are you aware that the mob have even suggested throwing up barricades in the Rue Saint Denis and the Rue Saint Antoine?"

"And what was Comminges saying to you in reply, dear Guittard?"

"My lord," said Comminges, "I answered that to compose a Ligue only one ingredient was wanting—in my opinion an essential one—a Duc de Guise—moreover, no one ever does the same thing twice over."

"No, but they mean to make a Fronde, as they call it," said Guittard.

"And what is a Fronde?" inquired Mazarin.

"My lord, a Fronde is the name that the discontented give to their party."

"And what is the origin of this name?"

"It seems that some days since, Conseiller Backaumont remarked at the palaces that rebels and agitators reminded him of schoolboys sling ing stones from the moat round Paris—youngurchins who run off the moment the constable appears, only to return to their diversion the instant that his back is turned. So they have picked up the word, and the insurrectionists are called 'Frenleurs,' and yesterday every article sold was 'à la Fronde,' bread 'à la Fronde,' hats 'à la Fronde,' to say nothing of gloves, pocket-handkerchiefs and fans—but listen——"
At that moment a window opened, and a man began to sing:

"A breeze from the Pronde
Blow today
I think it blows
Against Mazarin."

"Insolent wretch!" cried Guilant.

"My lord," said Connings, who, irritated by his wounds, wished for revenge, and longed to give back blow for blow, "shall I fire off a ball to punish that jester, and to warn him not to sing so much out of tune in future?"

And, as he spoke, he put his hand on the holster of his uncle's saddle-bow.

"Certainly not—certainly not," exclaimed Mazarin. "Diabolical my dear friend, you are going to spoil everything—everything is going on famously. I know the French as well as if I had made them myself from first to last. They sing—let them pay the piper. During the Libra, about which Guilant was speaking just now, the people chanted nothing except the mass, so everything went to destruction. Come, Guilant, come along, and let's see if they keep watch at the Quinze-Vingts as at the Barrier des Serpents."

And waving his hand to Connings he rejoined D'Artagnan, who instantly put himself at the head of his troop, followed by the Cardinal Guilant, and the rest of the escort.

"Just so," muttered Connings, looking after Mazarin. "True, I forgot—provided he can get money out of the people, that is all he wants."

The street of Saint Honore, when the Cardinal and his party passed through it, was crowded by an assemblage, who, standing in groups, discussed the effects of that memorable day—they piloted the young king, who was unconsciously ruining his country, and threw all the odium of his proceedings on Mazarin. Addresses to the Duke of Orleans and to Condé were suggested. Blanchesnil and Brusseil seemed in high favor.

D'Artagnan passed through the very midst of this discontented multitude, just as if his horse and he had been made of iron. Mazarin and Guilant conversed together in whispers. The Musketeers, who had already discovered who Mazarin was, followed in profound silence. In the street of Saint Thomas-du-Louvre, they stopped at that barrier which was distinguished by the name of Quinze-Vingts. Here Guilant spoke to one of the subalterns, and asked him how matters went on.

"Ah, captain!" said the officer, "everything is quiet hereabout—if I did not know that something is going on in your house!"

And he pointed to a magnificent hotel situated on the very spot whereon the Vaudeville now stands.

"In that hotel? It is the Hotel Rambouillet," cried Guilant.

"I really don't know what hotel it is—all I do know is that I observed some suspicious-looking people go in there——"

"Nousseus!" exclaimed Guilant, with a burst of laughter; "those men must be poets."

"Come, Guilant, speak, if you please, respectfully of these gentle men," said Mazarin; "don't you know that I was in my youth a poet? I wrote verses in the style of Benserade——"
"You, my lord?"
"Yes—I shall repeat to you some of my verses?"
"And as you please, my lord. I do not understand Italian."
"Yes, but you understand French?" and Mazarin laid his hand
upon Guiltan's shoulder. "My good, my brave Guiltan, whatever
command I may give you in that language—in French—whatever
I may order you to do, will you not do it?"
"Certainly. I have already answered that question in the affirmative;
but that command must come from the queen herself."
"Yes! ah yes!" Mazarin bit his lips as he spoke; "I know your
devotion to her majesty."
"I have been a captain in the Queen's Guards for twenty years,"
was the reply.
D'Artagnan, in the meantime, had taken the head of his detachment
without a word, and with that ready and profound obedience
which marks the character of an old soldier.
He led the way toward the but de Saint-Huché. The Rue Richelieu
and the Rue Villefort were then, owing to their vicinity
to the mansions, less frequented than any others in that direction,
for the town was thinly inhabited throughout. He therefore chose
those streets to pass through in preference to those more crowded.
"Who is in command here?" asked the Cardinal.
"Villequier," said Guiltan.
"Diable! Speak to him yourself, for ever since you were deputed
by me to arrest the Duc de Bourbon, this officer and I have been
on bad terms. He laid claim to that honor as captain of the Royal
Guards."
Guiltan accordingly rode forward, and desired the sentinel to
call Monsieur de Villequier.
"Ah! so you are here!" cried the officer, in a tone of ill humor
habitual to him; "what the devil are you doing here?"
"I wish to know—can you tell me, pray—is there anything fresh
happening in this part of the town?"
"What do you mean? People cry out, 'Long live the king! Down
with Mazarin'—that's nothing new—no, we've been used to those
exclamations for some time."
"And you sing chorus," replied Guiltan, laughing.
"Faith, I've half a mind to do it. In my opinion the people are
right: and cheerfully would I give up five years of my pay—which
I am already paid, by the way—to make the king five years older."
"Really! And pray what is to come to pass supposing the king
were five years older than he is?"
As soon as ever the king comes of age, he will issue his commands
himself, and 'tis for pleasanter to obey the grandson of Henry
IV., than the grandson of Peter Mazarin. 'Sdeath! I would die
willingly for the king; but supposing I happened to be killed on
account of Mazarin, as your nephew was near being to-day, there
could be nothing in Paradise—so well off as I have been in this
world—that could console me for being a martyr."
"Well, well, Monsieur de Villequier," here Mazarin interrupted.
"I shall take care that the king hears of your loyalty. Gentlemen," he addressed the troop, "let us return."
"Spero!" exclaimed Villequier, "so, Mazarin is here! so much
the better. I have been waiting for a long time to tell him what I think of him. I am obliged to you, Guittant, for this opportunity."

He turned away, and went off to his post, whistling a tune, then popular among the party called the "Fronde," while Mazarin retired, in a pensive mood, toward the Palais Royal. All that he had heard from these three different men, Conmineges, Guittant and Villeguier, confirmed him in his conviction that in case of serious tautness there would be no one on his side except the queen; and then, Anne of Austria had so often deserted her friends, that her support seemed very precarious. During the whole of this nocturnal ride, during the whole time that he was endeavoring to understand the various characters of Conmineges, Guittant, and Villeguier, Mazarin was, in truth, studying more especially one man. This man—who had remained immovable when menaced by the mob—not a muscle of whose face was altered, either by Mazarin's wit-cisms, or by the jests of the multitude—seemed to the Cardinal a peculiar being, who, having participated in past events similar to those which were now occurring, was calculated to cope with those which were on the eve of taking place.

The name of D'Artagnan was not altogether new to Mazarin, who, although he had not arrived in France before the year 1634, or 1655, that is to say, about eight or nine years after the events which we have related in a preceding narrative, fancied that he had heard it pronounced in reference to one who was said to be a model of courage, address, and loyalty.

Possessed by this idea, the Cardinal resolved to know all about D'Artagnan immediately; of course he could not inquire from D'Artagnan himself who he was, and what had been his career; he remarked, however, in the course of conversation that the Lieutenant of Musketeers spoke with a Gascon accent. Now the Indians and the Dascas are too much alike, and know each other too well ever to trust what say one of them may say of himself; so, in reaching the walls which surrounded the Palais Royal, the Cardinal knocked at a little door, and after thanking D'Artagnan, and requesting him to wait in the court of the Palais Royal, he made a sign to Guittant to follow him.

"My dear friend," said the Cardinal, leaning, as they walked through the garden, on his friend's arm, "you told me just now that you had been twenty years in the queen's service."

"Yes, it is true; I have," returned Guittant.

"Now, my dear Guittant, I have often remarked that in addition to your courage—which is indisputable, and to your fidelity—which is invincible, you possess an admirable memory."

"You have come! I am here, have you, my lord? Deuce take it—all the worse for me!"

"How?"

"There is no doubt but that one of the chief qualities in a courier is to know when to forget."

"But you, Guittant, are not a courier. You are a brave soldier, one of the few remaining veterans of the days of Henry VI.—shall"
‘Plague on’t, my lord—have you brought me here to get my honescope out of me?’

‘No—I only brought you here to ask you,’ returned Mazarin, smiling. ‘If you have taken any particular notice of our lieutenant of Musketeers?’

‘Monsieur D’Artagnan? I do not care to notice him particularly; he’s an old acquaintance. He’s a Gascon. De Treville knows him, and esteem him greatly, and De Treville, as you know, is one of the queen’s greatest friends. As a soldier the man ranks well; he did his duty, and even more than his duty, at the siege of Rochelle—as well as at Suse and Perpignan.’

‘But you know, Guitaut, we poor ministers often want men a little more than we want men with other qualities besides courage; we want men of talent. Pray was not Monsieur D’Artagnan, in the time of the Cardinal, mixed up in some intrigue from which he came out, according to report, rather cleverly?’

‘My lord, as to the report you allude to—’Guitaut perceived that the Cardinal wished to make him speak out—’I know nothing but what the public knows. I never meddle in intrigues; and if I occasionally become a confidant in the intrigues of others, I am sure your Eminence will approve of my keeping them secret.’

Mazarin shook his head.

‘Ah!’ he said; ‘some ministers are very fortunate, and find out all that they wish to know.’

‘My lord,’ replied Guitaut, ‘such ministers do not weigh men in the same balance; they get their information on war from the warriors; on intrigues, from the politician. Consult some politician of the period of which you speak, and if you pay well for it, you will certainly get to know all you want.’

Mazarin, with a grin which he always made when spoken to about money—‘People must be paid—one can’t do otherwise,’ he said.

‘Does my lord seriously wish me to name any one who has been mixed up in the cabals of that day?’

‘By Bacchus!’ rejoined Mazarin, impatiently. ‘It’s about an hour ago since I asked you a question about D’Artagnan, wooden-headed as you are.’

‘There is one man for whom I can answer, if he will speak out.’

‘That’s my concern; I must make him speak.’

‘Ah, my lord, it’s not easy to make people say what they don’t wish to let out.’

‘Pshaw! patience (we’re coming to it at last). Well, this man. Who is he?’

‘The Comte de Rochefort.’

‘The Comte de Rochefort?’

‘Unfortunately he has disappeared these four or five years, and I don’t know where he is.’

‘I know, Guitaut,’ said Mazarin.

‘Well, then, how is it that your Eminence complains just now of want of information on some points?’

‘You think,’ resumed Mazarin, ‘that Rochefort——’

‘He was Cardinal Richelieu’s creature, my lord. I warn you,
however, his services will be expensive. The Cardinal was lavish to his underlings.

"Yes, yes, Guittant," said Mazarin: "Richelieu was a great man, a very great man, but he had that defect. Thanks, Guittant; I shall benefit by your advice this very evening."

Here they separated, and bidding adieu to Guittant in the court of the Palais Royal, Mazarin approached an officer who was walking up and down within that enclosure.

It was D'Artagnan, who was waiting for him.

"Come hither," said Mazarin, in his softest voice, "I have an order to give you."

D'Artagnan bent low, and following the Cardinal up the secret staircase, soon found himself in the study whence he had first set out.

The Cardinal seated himself before his bureau, and taking a sheet of paper, wrote some lines upon it. whilst D'Artagnan remained standing imperturbable, and without showing either impatience or curiosity. He was like a military automaton (or, rather, obeying the will of others) upon springs.

The Cardinal folded and sealed his letter.

"Monseigneur d'Artagnan," he said, "you are to take this dispatch to the Bastille, and to bring back here the person whom it concerns. You must take a carriage and an escort, and guard the prisoner carefully."

D'Artagnan took the letter, touched his hat with his hand, turned round upon his heel like a drill-sergeant, and, a moment afterward, was heard, in his dry and monotonous voice, commanding "Four men and an escort, a carriage and a horse." Five minutes afterward the wheels of the carriage and the horses' shoes were heard resounding on the pavement of the court yard.

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CHAPTER III.

OLD ANIMOSITIES.

D'Artagnan arrived at the Bastille just as it was striking half-past eight. His visit was announced to the governor, who, on hearing that he came from the Cardinal, went to meet him, and received him at the top of the great flight of steps outside the door. The governor of the Bastille was Monsieur du Tremblay, the brother of the famous Capucine, Joseph, that fearful favorite of Richelieu's, who went by the name of the Gray Cardinal.

During the period that the Duc de Bassompierre passed in the Bastille—where he remained for twelve whole years—when his companions, in their dreams of liberty, said to each other, "As for me, I shall go out of prison at such a time," and another, at such and such a time, the Duke used to answer, "As for me, gentleman, I shall leave only when Monsieur du Tremblay leaves," meaning that at the death of the Cardinal, Du Tremblay would certainly lose his place at the Bastille, and then De Bassompierre would regain his seat.

His prediction was nearly being fulfilled, but in a very different