civil war, like a flame; but we—we shall remain; I have a presentiment that we shall."

"Yes," replied D'Artagnan. "Let us still be Musketeers, and let us retain as our colors that famous napkin of the basion Saint Gervais—on which the great Cardinal had three fleur-de-lis embroidered."

"Be it so," cried Aramis. "Cardinalists, or Frondeurs, what matters it—let us meet again our capital seconds at a duel—our devoted friends in business—our merry companions in pleasure."

"And whenever," added Athos, "we meet in battle, at this word, 'Place Royale!' let us put our swords into our left hands, and shake hands with the right, even in the very thick of the carnage."

"You speak charmingly," said Porthos.

"And are the first of men!" added D'Artagnan. "You excite us all."

Athos smiled with ineffable pleasure.

"'Tis then all settled. Gentlemen, your hands—are you not pretty good Christians?"

"Égal!" said D'Artagnan. "by Heaven—yes."

"We should be so on this occasion, if only to be faithful to our oath," said Aramis.

"Ah, I'm ready to do what you will," cried Porthos; "to swear by Mahomet, devil take me if I've ever been so happy at this moment."

And he wiped his eyes, still moist.

"Has not one of you a cross?" asked Athos.

Aramis smiled, and drew from his vest a cross of diamonds, which was hung round his neck by a cross of pearls. "Here is one," he said.

"Well," resumed Athos, "swear on this cross, which, in spite of its material, is still a cross; swear to be united in spite of everything, and forever, and may this oath bind us to each other—and even, also, our descendants! Does this oath satisfy you?"

"Yes," said they all with one accord.

"Ah, traitor!" muttered D'Artagnan to himself, leaning toward Aramis, and whispering in his ear, "you have made us swear on the cruxifix of a Frondeur."

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CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FERRY OVER THE OISE.

We hope that the reader has not quite forgotten the young traveler whom we left on the road to Flanders. In losing sight of his guardian, whom he had quitted, gazing after him in front of the royal Basilica, Raoul spurred on his horse, in order not only to escape from his own melancholy reflections, but also to hide from Olivier the emotion which his face might betray.

One hour's rapid progress, however, sufficed to disperse the gloomy fancies which had clouded the young man's bright anticipations; and the hitherto unknown pleasure of freedom—a pleasure which has it sweetness even for those who have never suffered from de-
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pendence—seemed to glid for Raoul, not only both heaven and earth, but especially that blue distant horizon of life which we call the future.

Nevertheless, after several attempts at conversation with Olivier, he foresaw that many long days passed thus would be very dull, and the count's agreeable voice, his gentle and persuasive eloquence, recurred to his mind, at the various towns through which they journeyed, and about which he had no longer any one to give him those interesting details which he would have drawn from Athos, the most amusing and the best informed of guides. Another recollection contributed also to sadden Raoul: on their arrival at Sommed, he had perceived, hidden among a screen of poplars, a little chateau, which so vividly recalled that of La Valliere to his mind that he had halted for nearly ten minutes to gaze at it, and had remanled his journey with a sigh, too abstracted even to reply to Olivier's respectful inquiry about the cause of this fixed attention. The aspect of external objects is often a mysterious guide communicating with the fibers of memory, which, in spite of us, will arouse them at times; this thread, like that of Ariadne, when once unraveled, will conduct one through a labyrinth of thought, in which one loses one's self in endeavoring to follow that phantom of the past which is called recollection.

Now the sight of this chateau had taken Raoul back fifty leagues westward, and had caused him to review his life from the moment when he had taken leave of little Louise to that in which he had seen her for the first time; and every branch of oak, every weather-cock seen on a roof of tiles, reminded him that, instead of returning to the friends of his childhood, every instant removed him further from them, and that perhaps he had even left them forever.

With a full heart, and burning head, he desired Olivier to lead on the horses to a little inn, which he observed by the wayside within gun-shot range, a little in advance of the place they had reached.

As for himself, he dismounted and remanled under a beautiful group of chestnuts in flower, among which were murmuring multitudes of bees, and bade Olivier send the host to him with writing-paper and ink to be placed on a table which he had chosen; conveniently ready for writing. Olivier obeyed and continued his road; while Raoul remained sitting with his elbow leaning on the table, from time to time gently shaking the flowers from his head, which fell upon him like snow, and gazing vaguely on the pretty landscape before him dotted over with green fields and groups of trees.

Raoul had been there about ten minutes, during five of which he was lost in reverie, when there appeared within the circle comprised in his wandering gaze a rubicund figure, who, with a gampain round his body, another under his arm, and a white cap upon his head, approached him, holding paper, pen, and ink in hand.

"Ah! ah!" said the apparition, "every gentleman seems to have the same fancy, for, not a quarter of an hour ago, a young lad, mounted like you, as tall as you, and about your age, halted before this clump of trees, and had this table and this chair brought here, and dined here—with an old gentleman who seemed to be his tutor—upon a pie, of which they haven't left a mouthful, and a bottle of Macons wine, of which they haven't left a drop; but fortunately we
have still got some of the same wine, and some of the same pie left, and if your worship will only give your orders——"

"No, friend," replied Raoul, smiling, "I am obliged to you, but at this moment I want nothing but the things for which I have asked——only I shall be very glad if the ink proves black, and the pen good: upon these conditions, I will pay for the pen the price of the bottle, and for the ink the price of the pie."

"Very well, sir," said the host. "I'll give the pie and the bottle of wine to your servant, and in this way you will have the pen and ink into the bargain."

"Do as you like," said Raoul, who was beginning his apprenticeship with that particular class of society, who, when there were robbers on the high roads, were connected with them, and who, since highwaymen no longer exist, have advantageously supplied their place.

The host, his mind quite at ease about his bill, placed pen, ink, and paper upon the table. By a lucky chance the pen was tolerably good, and Raoul began to write. The host remained standing in front of him, looking with a kind of involuntary admiration at his handsome face, combining both gravity and sweetness of expression. Beauty has always been, and always will be, all powerful.

"He's not a guest like the other one here just now," observed mine host to Olivaire, who had rejoined his master to see if he wanted anything, "and your young master has no appetite."

"My master had appetite enough three days ago; but what can one do if he lost it the day before yesterday?"

And Olivaire and the host took their way together toward the inn. Olivaire, according to the custom of guests contested with their plates, relating to the tavern-keeper all that he thought he could say about the young gentleman, and Raoul wrote on thus:

"Sir,—After a four hours' march I stop to write to you, for I miss you every moment, and I am always on the point of turning my head as if to reply when you speak to me. I was so bewildered by your departure, and so overcome with grief at our separation, that I lost very feebly expressed all the affection and the gratitude that I feel toward you. You will forgive me, sir, for your heart is of such a generous nature, that you can well understand all that passed in mine. I entreat you to write to me, for you form a part of my existence, and, if I may venture to tell you so, I also feel anxious about your undertaking, on which I did not dare to question you, since you had told me nothing. I have, therefore, as you see, great need to hear from you. Now, that you are no longer beside me, I am afraid every moment of erring. You sustained me powerfully, sir, and I protest to you that to-day I feel very lonely. Will you have the goodness, sir, should you receive news from Blota, to send me a few lines about my little friend Madame de la Vallicone, about whose health, when we left, some anxiety was felt? You can understand, honored and dear guardian, how precious and indispensable to me is the remembrance of the time that I have passed with you. I hope that you will sometimes, too, think of me, and if at certain hours you should miss me, if you should feel any slight regret at
my absence, I shall be overwhelmed with joy at the thought that you have appreciated my affecion and my devotion for yourself; and that I have been able to prove them to you whilst I had the happiness of living with you."

After finishing this letter, Raoul felt more composed; he looked well around him to see if Olivain and the host were not watching him, whilst he impressed a kiss upon the paper, a note and touching caress, which the heart of Athos might well divine on opening the letter.

During this time Olivain had finished his bottle and eaten his pie; the horses also were refreshed. Raoul motioned to the host to approach, threw a crown down on the table, mounted his horse, and posted his letter at Saintes. The rest that had been thus afforded to men and horses enabled them to continue their journey without stopping. At Yerberie, Raoul desired Olivain to make some inquiry about the young man who was preceding them; he had been observed to pass only three quarters of an hour previously, but he was well-mounted, at the tavern keeper had already said, and rode at a rapid pace.

"Let us try to overtake this gentleman," said Raoul to Olivain; "like ourselves he is on his way to join the army, and may prove agreeable company."

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when Raoul arrived at Compiègne; there he dined heartily, and again inquired about the young gentleman who was in advance of them. He had stopped, like Raoul, at the hotel of the Bell and Bottle, the best at Compiègne, and had started again on his journey, saying that he should sleep at Noyon.

"Well, let us sleep at Noyon," said Raoul.

"Sir," replied Olivain, respectfully, "allow me to remark, that we have already much fatigued the horses this morning. I think it would be well to sleep here, and to start again very early to-morrow. Eighteen leagues is enough for the first stage."

"The Comte de la Perre wished me to hasten on," replied Raoul, "that I might join the princes on the morning of the fourth day; let us push on, then, to Noyon. It will be a siege similar to those that we traveled from Blois to Paris. We shall arrive at eight o'clock. The horses will have a long night's rest, and at five o'clock to-morrow morning we can be again on the road."

Olivain dared offer no opposition to this determination; but he followed his master, grumbling.

"Go on, go on," said he, between his teeth, "extend your ardor the first day; to-morrow, instead of journeying twenty miles, you will do ten; the day after to-morrow, five, and in three days you will be in bed. There you must rest; all these young people are such braggers."

It was easy to see that Olivain had not been taught in the school of the Planches and the Grimants. Raoul really felt tired; but he was desirous of testing his strength, and, brought up in the principles of Athos, and certain of having heard him speak a thousand times of stages of twenty-five leagues, he did not wish to fall short of his model D'Artagnan, that man of Iron, who seemed to be
made of nerve and muscle only, had struck him with admiration. Therefore, in spite of all Olivier’s remarks, he continued to urge on his steed more and more, and following a pleasant little path, leading to a ferry, and which he had been assured shortened the journey by the distance of one league, he arrived at the summit of a hill, and perceived the river flowing before him. A little troop of men on horseback were waiting on the edge of the stream, ready to embark. Raoul did not doubt this was the gentleman and his escort; he called out to him, but he was too distant to be heard; then, in spite of the weariness of his horse, he made it gallop; but the rising ground soon deprived him of the sight of the travelers, and when he had again attained a new height, the ferry-boat had left the shore and was making for the opposite bank. Raoul, seeing that he could not arrive in time to cross the ferry with the travelers, halted to wait for Olivier. At this moment a shriek was heard which seemed to come from the river. Raoul turned toward the side whence the cry had sounded, and shaded his eyes from the glare of the setting sun with his hand.

"Olivier!" he exclaimed, "what do I see below there?"

A second scream, more piercing than the first, now sounded.

"Oh, sir!" cried Olivier, "the rope which holds the ferry-boat has broken, and the boat is drifting away. But what do I see in the water? something struggling."

"Oh, yes," exclaimed Raoul, fixing his glance on one point in the stream, splendidly illuminated by the setting sun, "a horse, a rider!"

"They are sinking!" cried Olivier in his turn.

It was true, and Raoul was convinced that some accident had befallen, and that a man was drowning; he gave his horse its head, struck its spurs into its sides, and following a pleasant little path, leading to the ferry, crossed the river, scattering to a distance waves of white foam.

"Ah, sir!" cried Olivier, "what are you doing? Good God!"

Raoul was directing his horse toward the unhappy man in danger. This was, in fact, a custom familiar to him. Having been brought up on the banks of the Loire, he might have been said to have been bred on its waves; a hundred times he had crossed it on horseback; a thousand times he had spurred across. Athos, foreseeing the period when he should make a soldier of the viscount, had induced him to all these kinds of undertakings.

"Oh, heavens!" continued Olivier, in despair, "what would the count say if he only saw you?"

"The count would do as I do," replied Raoul, urging his horse vigorously forward.

"But I—" but I," cried Olivier, pale and disconsolate, rushing about on the shore, "how shall I cross?"

"Leap, coward," cried Raoul, swimming on; then addressing the traveler, who was struggling twenty yards in advance of him,

"Courage, sir," said he, "courage, we are coming to your aid."

Olivier advanced, retired, then made his horse rear,—turned it, and then, struck to the core by shame, leapt as Raoul had done, only repeating:
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"I am a dead man; we are lost!"

In the meantime, the ferry-boat floated away, carried down by the stream, and the shrieks of those whom it contained resounded more and more. A man with gray hair had thrown himself from the boat into the river, and was swimming vigorously toward the person who was drowning; but being obliged to go against the current he advanced but slowly. Raoul continued his way, and was visibly gaining the shore; but the horse and its rider, of whom he did not lose sight, were evidently sinking. The nostrils of the horse were no longer above water, and the rider, who had lost the reins in struggling, fell with his head back and his arms extended. One moment longer, and all had disappeared.

"Courage," cried Raoul, "courage!"

"Too late!" murmured the young man, "too late!"

The water passed over his head, and stifled his voice in his mouth.

Raoul sprang from his horse, to which he left the charge of his own preservation, and in three or four strokes was at the gentleman's side; he seized the horse at once by the curbs, and raised its head above water; the animal then breathed more freely, and, as if it comprehended that they had come to his aid, redoubled its efforts. Raoul at the same time seized one of the young man's hands, and placed it on the man, at which it grasped with the tenacity of a drowning man. Thus, sure that the rider would not release his hold, Raoul now only directed his attention to the horse, which he guided to the opposite bank, helping it to cut through the water, and encouraging it with words.

All at once the horse stumbled against a ridge, and then placed its foot on the sand.

"Saved!" exclaimed the man with gray hair, who sprang on land in his turn.

"Saved!" mechanically repeated the young gentleman, releasing the man, and sliding from the saddle into Raoul's arms; Raoul was but ten yards from the shore; he bore the fainting man there, and laying him down on the grass, unfastened the buttons of his coat, and unshoed his boots. A moment later the gray-headed man was beside him. Olivain managed in his turn to land, after crossing himself repeatedly and the people in the ferry-boat guided themselves as well as they were able toward the bank, with the aid of a hook which chanced to be in the boat.

Thanks to the attention of Raoul, and the man who accompanied the young gentleman, the color gradually returned to the pale cheeks of the dying man, who opened two eyes at first bewildered, but who soon fixed his glance upon the person who had saved him.

"Ah, sir," he exclaimed, "it was you I wanted; without you I was a dead man—three dead."

"But one recovers, sir, as you see," replied Raoul, "and we shall but have had a bath."

"Oh! sir, what gratitude I feel," exclaimed the man with gray hair.

"Ah, there you are, my good D'Arnalges. I have given you a great fright, have I not? but it is your own fault; you were my tutor, why did you not teach me to swim better?"
“Oh, sir,” replied the old man, “had any misfortune happened to you, I should never have dared to have shown myself to the marshal again.”

“But how did the accident happen?” asked Raoul.

“Oh, sir, in the most natural manner possible,” replied he to whom they had given the title of count. “We were about a third of the way across the river when the cord of the ferry-boat broke. Alarmed by the cries and the gestures of the boatmen, my horse sprang into the water. I swim badly, and dared not throw myself into the river. Instead of aiding the movements of my horse, I paralysed them; and I was just going to drown myself, with the best grace in the world, when you arrived just in time to pull me out of the water; therefore, sir, if you will agree, henceforth we are friends in life until death.”

“Sir,” replied Raoul, bowing, “I am entirely at your service, I assure you.”

“I am called the Count de Guiche,” continued the young man, “my father is the Marshal de Grammont; and now that you know who I am, do me the honor to inform me who you are.”

“I am the Viscount de Brayebonne,” answered Raoul, blushing at being unable to name his father, as the Count de Guiche had done.

“Viscount, your countenance, your goodness, and your courage incline me toward you; my gratitude is already due to you—shake hands—I ask your friendship.”

“Sir,” said Raoul, returning the count’s pressure of the hand, “I like you already from my heart; pray regard me as a devoted friend, I beseech you.”

“And now, where are you going, viscount?” inquired De Guiche.

“To the army, under the prince, count.”

“And I, too!” exclaimed the young man, in a transport of joy.

“Oh, so much the better; we shall fire off the first pistol shot together.”

“It is well—he friends,” said the tutor; “young as you both are, you were perhaps born under the same star, and were destined to meet. And now,” continued he, “you must change your clothes; your servants, to whom I gave directions the moment they had left the ferry-boat, ought to be already at the inn. Linen and wine are both being warmed—come.”

The young men had no objection to make to this proposition; on the contrary, they thought it an excellent one.

They mounted again at once, whilst looks of admiration passed between them. They were indeed two elegant horsemen, with figures slight and upright—two noble faces, with open foreheads—bright and proud looks—loyal and intelligent smiles.

De Guiche might have been about eighteen years of age; but he was scarcely taller than Raoul, who was only fifteen.

CHAPTER XXX.
SKIRMISHING.

Turn half at Noyon was short; every one there being wrapt in profound sleep Raoul had desired to be awakened should Grimaud