however, his services will be expensive. The Cardinal was lavish
to his underlings.

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

Here they separated, and Guitanton, 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 autocrat (or, rather, obeying
the will of others) upon springs.

The Cardinal folded and sealed his letter.

"Monsieur d'Artagnan," he said, "you are to take this dispatch
to the Bastile, 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 after-
ward the wheels of the carriage and the horses' shoes were heard
reverberating on the pavement of the court yard.

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CHAPTER III.

OLD ANIMOSITIES.

D'Artagnan arrived at the Bastile just as it was striking half-
past eight. His visit was announced to the governor, who, on hear-
ing 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 gov-
ernor of the Bastile was Monsieur du Tremblay, the brother of the
famous Capetitude, Joseph, that fearful favorite of Richelieu's, who
went by the name of the Gray Cardinal.

During the period that the Due de Bassompierre passed in the
Bastile—where he remained for twelve whole years—when his com-
patrons, 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 Bastile, and then De Bassompierre would regain his
seat.

His prediction was nearly being fulfilled, but in a very different
way to that which Da Bassompierre supposed; for after the death of Richelieu, everything went on, contrary to expectation, in the same way as before; and Bassompierre had little chance of leaving his prison.

Monsieur de Treville received D'Artagnan with extreme politeness, and invited him to sit down with him to supper, of which he was himself about to partake.

"I should be delighted to do so," was the reply; "but if I am not mistaken, the words 'In haste,' are written on the envelope of the letter which I brought."

"You are right," said Du Treville. "Holloa, major, tell them to order number 23 to come down-stairs."

The unhappy wretch who entered into the Bastille ceased, as he crossed the threshold, to be a man, and became a number.

D'Artagnan shuddered at the noise of the keys; he therefore remained on horseback, having no inclination to dismount, and sat looking at the bars, at the thick strong windows, and the immense walls which he had hitherto only seen from the other side of the moat, and by which he had, for twenty years, been awe-struck.

A bell sounded.

"I must leave you," said Du Treville: "I am sent for to sign the release of a prisoner. I shall be happy to meet you again, sir."

"May the devil smite me if I return thy wish!" murmured D'Artagnan, smiling as he pronounced the imprecation; "I declare I feel quite ill, after only being five minutes in the court yard. Go to—go to! I should rather die upon straw, than board up five hundred a year by being governor of the Bastille."

He had scarcely finished this soliloquy before the prisoner arrived. On seeing him D'Artagnan could hardly suppress an exclamation of surprise. The prisoner did not seem, however, to recognize the Musketeer.

"Gentlemen," thus D'Artagnan addressed the four Musketeers, "I am ordered to exercise the greatest possible care in guarding the prisoner; and, since there are no locks to the carriage, I shall sit beside him. Monsieur de Hillaubonne, lead my horse by the bridle, if you please." As he spoke, he dismounted, gave the bridle of his horse to the Musketeer, and placing himself by the side of the prisoner, said, in a voice perfectly composed, "To the Palais Royal, at a full trot."

The carriage drove on, and D'Artagnan, availing himself of the darkness in the archway under which they were passing, threw himself into the arms of the prisoner.

"Rochefort!" he exclaimed; "you—is it you? you, indeed? I am not mistaken?"

"D'Artagnan!" cried Rochefort.

"Ah! my poor friend!" resumed D'Artagnan, "Not having seen you for four or five years, I concluded that you were dead."

"I' faith," said Rochefort, "there's no great difference. I think, between a dead man and one who has been buried alive; now, I have been buried alive, or very nearly so."

"And for what crime are you imprisoned in the Bastile?"

"Do you wish me to speak the truth to you?"

"Yes."
"Well, then, I don't know,"
"Have you any suspicion of me, Rochefort?"
"No! on the honor of a gentleman; but I cannot be imprisoned for the reason alleged; it is impossible."
"What reason?" asked D'Artagnan.
"For stealing; you—Rochefort—you are laughing at me. It is impossible that it could have been that, my dear Rochefort, which was alleged against you; it is a mere pretext; but you will, perhaps, soon know on what account you have been in prison."
"Ah, indeed! I forgot to ask you—where are you taking me?"
"To the Cardinal."
"What does he want with me?"
"I do not know. I did not even know that you were the person whom I was sent to fetch."
"Impossible!—yer—a favorite of the minister!"
"A favorite? no, indeed!" cried D'Artagnan. "Ah, my poor friend I am just as poor a Gascon as when I saw you at Meung, twenty-two years ago, you know; ah!" and he concluded his speech with a deep sigh.
"Nevertheless, you come as one in authority."
"Because I happened to be in the ante-chamber when the Cardinal called me, just by chance. I am still a lieutenant in the Musketeers, and have been so these twenty years."
"Then no misfortune has happened to you?"
"And what misfortune could happen to me? To quote some Latin verses which I have forgotten, or rather never knew well, 'the thunder-bolt never falls on the valleys,' and I am a valley, dear Rochefort, and one of the lowest that can be."
"Then Mazarin is still Mazarin?"
"The same as ever, my friend; it is said that he is married to the queen."
"Married?"
"If not her husband, he is unquestionably her lover."
"You surprise me; to resist Buckingham, and yield to Mazarin,"
"Just like the women," replied D'Artagnan, coolly.
"Like women—but not like queens."
"Equal queens are the weakest of their sex, when we come to such matters as these."

The count then made several minute inquiries after his friend. The Duc de Beaufort, was he still in prison? To this D'Artagnan answered in the affirmative.
"And," said the prisoner, "what talk is there of war with Spain?"
"With Spain—no," answered D'Artagnan; "but with Paris."
"What do you mean?" cried Rochefort.
"Do you hear the guns, pray? The citizens are amusing themselves in the meantime."
"And you—do you really think that anything could be done with these bourgeois?"
"Yes, they might do well if they had any leader to unite them in one body."
"How miserable not to be free!"
"Don't be downcast. Since Mazarin has sent for you, it is be
cause he wants you. I congratulate you! Many a long year has
passed since any one has wanted to employ me; so you see in what
a situation I am."

"Make your complaints known: that's my advice."

"Lies, Rochefort; let's make a compact. We are friends, are
we not?"

"Equal! I bear the traces of our friendship—three cuts from
your sword."

"Well, if you should be restored to favor, don't forget me."

"On the honor of a Rochefort; but you must do the like for me."

"There's my hand—I promise."

"Therefore, whenever you find any opportunity of saying some-
thing in my behalf——"

"I shall say it; and you?"

"I shall do the same."

"A propos, are we to speak about your friends as well—Athos,
Porthos, and Aramis? or have you forgotten them?"

"Almost."

"What's become of them?"

"I don't know; we separated, as you know. They are alive, and
that's all I can say about them; from time to time I hear of them
indirectly, but in what part of the world they are, devil take me if I
know. No, on my honor; I have not a friend in the world but
you, Rochefort."

"And the illustrious—what's the name of the lad whom I made
a sergeant in Piedmont's regiment?"

"Planchet!"

"The illustrious Planchet. What's become of him?"

"I shouldn't wonder if he is not at the head of the mob at this
very moment. He married a woman who keeps a confectioner's
shop in the Rue des Lombards; for he's a lad that was always fond
of sweetmeats; he's now a citizen of Paris. You'll see that that
queer fellow will be a sheriff before I shall be a captain."

"Come, dear D'Artagnan, look up a little—courage. It is when
one is lowest on the wheel of fortune that the wheel turns round
and raises us. This evening your destiny begins to change."

"Amen!" exclaimed D'Artagnan, stopping the carriage.
He got out, and remounted his steed, not wishing to arrive at the
gate of the Palais Royal in the same carriage with the prisoner.
In a few minutes the party entered the court-yard, and D'Artag-
nan led the prisoner up the great staircase, and across the corridor
and ante-chamber.

As he stopped at the door of the Cardinal's study, D'Artagnan
was about to be announced, when Rochefort slapped him on his
shoulder.

"D'Artagnan, let me confess to you what I've been thinking
about during the whole of my drive, as I looked out upon the par-
ties of citizens, who perpetually crossed our path, and looked at you
and your four men, with their lambeaux."

"Speak out," answered D'Artagnan.

"I had only to cry out 'Help!' for you and your companions to
be cut to pieces, and then I should have been free."
"Why didn't you do it?" asked the lieutenant.
"Come, then!" cried Rochefort. "We were friends! Ah! Had any one but you been there—I don't say——"

D'Arlaguan bowed.

But the impatient voice of Mazarin summoned Rochefort to the room where the minister awaited him. "Tell Monsieur d'Arлагan to wait outside—I don't require him yet," said the Cardinal.

Rochefort, rendered suspicious and cautious by these words, entered the apartment, where he found Mazarin sitting at the table, dressed in his ordinary garb, and as one of the prelates of the Church, his costume being similar to that of the abbé's in that day, excepting that his scarf and stockings were violet.

As the door was closed, Rochefort cast a glance toward Mazarin, which was answered by one, equally furtive, from the minister.

There was little change in the Cardinal: still dressed with sedulous care, his hair well arranged and well curled, his person perfumed—he looked, owing to his extreme taste in dress, only half his age. But Rochefort, who had passed five years in prison, had become old in the lapse of years; the dark locks of this estimable friend of the defunct Cardinal de Richelieu were now white; the deep bronze of his complexion had been succeeded by a mortal pallor which betokened debility. As he gazed at him, Mazarin shook his head slightly, as much as to say, "This is a man who does not appear to me fit for much."

After a pause, which appeared an age to Rochefort, Mazarin, however, took from a bundle of papers, a letter, and showing it to the count, he said:

"I find here a letter in which you sue for liberty, Monsieur de Rochefort. You are in prison, then?"

Rochefort trembled in every limb at this question. "But I thought," he said, "that your Eminence knew that circumstance better than any one——"

"Yo! Oh yes! There's a mass of prisoners in the Bastille who were sent there in the time of Monsieur de Richelieu—I don't even know their names."

"Yes, but in regard to myself, my lord, it cannot be so, for I was removed from the Châtelet to the Bastille owing to an order from your Eminence."

"You think you were."

"I am certain of it."

"Ah, yes! I think I remember it. Did you not once refuse to undertake a journey to Brussels for the queen?"

"Ah! ah!" exclaimed Rochefort. "There is the true reason! Idiot as I am, though I have been trying to find it out for five years, I never found it out."

"But I do not say that it was the cause of your imprisonment. I merely ask you, did you not refuse to go to Brussels for the queen, whilst you had consented to go there to do some service for the late Cardinal?"

"That is the very reason that I refused to go back to Brussels. I was there at a fearful moment. I was sent there to intercept a correspondence between Chalais and the arch duke, and even then,
when I was discovered, I was nearly torn to pieces. How could I then return to Brussels?"

"Well, then, since the best motives are liable to misconception, the queen saw in your refusal nothing but a refusal—a distinct refusal; she had also much to complain of during the lifetime of the Cardinal—yes—her majesty the queen——"

Rochefort smiled contemptuously.

"Since I was a faithful servant, my lord, to Cardinal Richelieu during his life, it stands to reason that now, after his death, I should serve you well, in defense of the whole world."

"With regard to myself, Monsieur de Rochefort," replied Mazarin, "I am not, like Monsieur de Richelieu, all-powerful. I am but a minister, who wants no servants, being myself nothing but a servant of the queen's. Now, the queen is of a sensitive nature; hearing of your refusal to obey her, she looked upon it as a declaration of war, and as she considers you as a man of superior talent, and therefore dangerous, she desired me to make sure of you—that is the reason of your being shut up in the Bastille—but your release can be managed. You are one of those men who can comprehend certain matters, and having understood them, can act with energy——"

"Such was Cardinal Richelieu's opinion, my lord."

"The Cardinal," interrupted Mazarin, "was a great politician, and there was his vast superiority over me. I am a straightforward, simple man; that's my great disadvantage. I am of a frankness of character quite French."

Rochefort bit his lips in order to force a smile.

"Now to the point. I want friends, I want faithful servants. When I say I want, I mean the queen wants them. I do nothing without her command; pray, understand that—not like Monsieur de Richelieu, who went on just as he pleased—so I shall never be a great man, as he was; but to compensate for that, I shall be a good man, Monsieur de Rochefort, and I hope to prove it to you.

Rochefort knew well the tones of that soft voice, in which there was sometimes a sort of gentle hiss, like the hissing of a viper.

"I am disposed to believe your Eminence," he replied; "but have the kindness not to forget that I have been five years in the Bastille, and that no way of viewing things is so false as through the grating of a prison."

"Ah, Monsieur de Rochefort! have I not told you already that I had nothing to do with that. The queen—cannot you make allowances for the pettiness of a queen and a princess? But that has passed away as suddenly as it came, and is forgotten."

"I can easily suppose, sir, that her majesty has forgotten it amid the feats and the courtesies of the Palace Royal, but I who have passed those years in the Bastille——"

"Ah! mon Dieu! my dear Monsieur de Rochefort! do you absolutely think that the Palace Royal is the abode of gaiety? No. We have had great annoyances there. As for me, I play the game, fair and above board, as I always do. Let us come to some conclusion. Are you one of us, Monsieur de Rochefort?"

"I am very desirous of being so, my lord; but I am totally in the dark about everything. In the Bastille one talks politics only with
solders and jailers, and you have not an idea, my lord, how little
these sort of people really know of the state of affairs. I am of
Monsieur de Bassompierre's party. Is he still one of the seventeen
peers of France?

'He is dead, sir—tis a great loss. His devotion to the queen
was great; and men of loyalty are scarce.'

'I think so, forsooth,' said Rochefort; 'and when you find any
of them, you send them off to the Bastille. However, there are
plenty of them in the world, but you don't look in the right di-
tion for them, my lord.'

'Indeed! explain to me. Ah! my dear Monsieur de Rochefort,
how much you must have learned during your intimacy with the
late Cardinal! Ah! he was a great man.'

'Will your Eminence be angry if I read you a lesson?'

'Never! you know you may say anything to me. I try to be
beloved, and not to be feared.'

'Well, I myself, on the wall of my cell, scratched with a nail a
proverb, which says, "Like master, like servant."'

'Pray, what does that mean?'

'It means that Monsieur de Richelieu was able to find trust-
worthy servants—dozens and dozens of them.'

'Had the point aimed at by every postcard! Richelieu, who
passed his life in warding off blows which were forever aimed
at him?'

'But he did ward them off,' said De Rochefort; 'and the reason
was, that though he had bitter enemies he possessed also true friends.
I have known persons,' he continued—"for he thought he made
myself by the opportunity of speaking at the right moment, who, by
their sagacity and address, have deceived the penetration
of Cardinal Richelieu; who, by their valor, have got the better of
his guards and his spies; persons without money, without support,
without credit, yet who have preserved to the crowned head its
crown, and made the Cardinal ask for pardon."

'Ah! cried Mazarin, with his wonted grace, "could I but find
such men?"

'My lord, there has stood for six years at your very door a man
such as I describe, and during those six years he has been unappre-
ciated and unemployed by you.'

'Who is he?'

'He is Monsieur d'Artagnan, a Gascon, who has done all this,
saved his queen, and made Monsieur de Richelieu confess, that, in
point of talent, address, and political skill, he was but little more
than a tyro.'

'Tell me how it all happened.'

'No, my lord; the secret is not mine; it is a secret which con-
cerns the queen. In what he did, this man had three colleagues,
three brave men, such men as you were wishing for just now.'

'And were these four men attached to each other, true in heart,
really united?'

'As if they had been one man, as if their four hearts had pulsed
in one breast.'

'You pique my curiosity, dear Rochefort; pray tell me the whole
story.'
"That is impossible; but I will tell you a true story, my lord."

"Pray do so—I delight in stories," cried the Cardinal.

"Listen then," returned Rochefort, as he spoke endeavoring to read, in that sable countenance, the Cardinal's motive. "Once upon a time there lived a queen—a powerful monarch—who reigned over one of the greatest kingdoms of the universe; and a minister; and this minister wished to injure the queen, whom once he had loved too well. (Do not try, my lord, you cannot guess who it is; all this happened long before you came into the country where this queen reigned.) There came to the court an ambassador so brave, so magnificent, so elegant, that every woman lost her heart to him; and the queen had even the indiscretion to give him certain ornaments so rare, that they could never be replaced by any like them.

"As these ornaments belonged to the king, the minister persuaded his majesty to insist upon the queen's appearing in them, as part of her jewels, at a ball which was soon to take place. There is no occasion to tell you, my lord, that the minister knew for a fact that those ornaments had been sent after the ambassador, who was far away, beyond seas. This illustrious queen had fallen low as the lead of her subjects—felled from her high estate."

"Indeed!"

"Well, my lord, four men resolved to save her. These four men were not princes, neither were they dukes, neither were they men in power; they were not even rich men. They were four honest soldiers, each with a good heart, a good arm, and a sword at the service of those who wanted it. They set out. The minister knew of their departure, and had planted people on the road to prevent them ever reaching their destination. Three of them were overcome and disabled by numerous assailants, one of them alone arrived at the port, having either killed or wounded those who wished to stop him. He crossed the sea, and brought back the set of ornaments to the great queen, who was able to wear them on her shoulder on the appointed day, and this very nearly ruined the minister. What think you of that trait, my lord?"

"It is splendid," said Mazarin.

"Well, I know too much men."

"And was Monseur d'Artagnan one of those four men?" inquired the Cardinal.

"It was he who conducted the enterprise."

"And who were the others?"

"I leave it to Monseur d'Artagnan to name them, my lord."

"You suspect me, Monseur de Rochefort; I want him, and you, and all to aid me."

"Begin by telling me why, my lord; for after five or six years of imprisonment, it is natural to feel some curiosity as to one's destination."

"You, my dear Monseur de Rochefort, shall have the post of confidence; you shall go to Vincennes, where Monseur de Beaufort is confined; you will guard him well for me."

"My lord," replied Rochefort, "to go out of the Bastile in order to go into Vincennes is only to change one's prison."
TWENTY YEARS AFTER.

"Say at once that you are on the side of Monsieur de Beaufort—
that will be the most suave line of conduct," said Mazarin.

"My lord, I have been so long shut up, that I am only of one
party—I am for fresh air. Employ me in any other way; employ
me even actively—but let it be on the high roads."

"My dear Monsieur de Rochefort," Mazarin replied in a tone of
rallery, "you think yourself still a young man—your spirit is still
juvenile, but your strength fails you. Believe me, you ought now
to take rest. Here!"

"You decide, then, nothing about me, my lord?"

"On the contrary, I have come to a decision about you."

Bernouin came into the room.

("Call an officer of justice," he said; "and stay close to me," he
added, in a low tone."

The officer entered—Mazarin wrote a few words, which he gave
to this man—then he left.

"Adieu, Monsieur de Rochefort," he said.

Rochefort bowed.

"I see, my lord, that I am to be taken back to the Bastille."

"You are sagacious."

"I shall return thither, my lord, but you are wrong not to employ
me."

"Vous le friend of my greatest foe? don't suppose that you
are the only person who can serve me, Monsieur de Rochefort. I
shall find many as able men as you are.""

"I wish you may, my lord," replied De Rochefort.

He was then conducted by the little staircase, instead of passing
through the ante-chamber where D'Artagnan was waiting. In the
court-yard the carriages and the four Musketeers were ready, but he
looked around in vain for his friend.

"Ah!" he muttered to himself. "Things are changed indeed!"
yet he jumped into the carriages with the alacrity of a man of fifty
and twenty.

CHAPTER IV.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA AT THE AGE OF FORTY-SIX.

When left alone with Bernouin, Mazarin was, for some minutes,
lost in thought. He had gained much information, but not enough.

"My lord, have you any command?" asked Bernouin.

"Yes, yes," replied Mazarin. "Light me; I am going to the
queen."

Bernouin took up a candlestick, and led the way.

There was a secret communication between the Cardinal's apart-
ments and those of the queen; and through this corridor * Mazarin
passed whenever he wished to visit Anne of Austria.

In the bedroom in which this passage ended, Bernouin encountered
Madame de Beauvais, like himself intrusted with the secret of these
subterranean love affairs; and Madame de Beauvais made to look to

* This secret passage is still to be seen in the Palais Royal.