"No," replied the latter.
"Look at the arm,"
The sergeant put the lantern near the panel.
"They are those of Monseur le Conducqueur," he said.
"Hush; he is enjoying a ride with Madame de Guemenee."
The sergeant began to laugh.
"Open the gate," he cried. "I know who it is!" Then, putting
his face to the lowered blinds, he said:
"I wish you joy, my lord!"
"Impudent fellow!" cried D'Artagnan, "you will get me turned
off!"

The gate groaned on its hinges, and D'Artagnan, seeing the way
clear, wheeled his horse, who started at a canter, and five
minutes later they had rejoined the Cardinal.
"Musqueton!" exclaimed D'Artagnan, "draw up the blinds of
his majesty's carriage."
"It is he!" cried Porthos.
"As a condottiere!" exclaimed Mazarin.
"And with the Condottiere's carriage!" said the queen.
"Corpo di Dio! Monseur D'Artagnan!" said Mazarin, "you are
worth your weight in gold."

CHAPTER LI.

HOW D'ARTAGNAN AND PORTHOS EARNED BY THE SALE OF STRAW,
THE ONE TWO HUNDRED AND NINETEEN, AND THE OTHER TWO
HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN LOUIS D'OR.

Mazarin was desirous of sending out instantly for St. Germain;
bUt the queen declared that she should wait for the people whom
she had appointed to meet her. However, she offered the Cardinal
Laporte's place, which he accepted, and went from one carriage to
the other.

It was not without foundation that a report of the king's inten-
ting to leave Paris by night had been circulated. Ten or twelve
persons had been in the secret since six o'clock, and how great so-
ever their prudence might be, they could not issue the necessary
orders for the departure without the thing transpiring a little.
Besides, each individual had some one or two others interested in him;
and, as there could be no doubt but that the queen was leaving
Paris full of terrible projects of vengeance, every one had warned
parents and friends of what was going to happen; so that the news
of the approaching exit ran like a train of lighted gunpowder
through the streets.

The first carriage which arrived after that of the queen was that
of the Prince de Condé, who with the princess, and dowerage prin-
cess, was in it; both these ladies had been awakened in the middle
of the night, and did not know what it was all about. The second
contained the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, the tall young Made-
moiselle, and the Abbé de la Rivière; and the third, the Duke of
Longueville, and the Prince de Conti, brother and brother-in-law of
Condé. They all alighted, and hastened to pay their respects to the
TWENTY YEARS AFTER.

king and queen in their coach. The queen fixed her eyes upon the carriage they had left, and seeing that it was empty, she said:

"But where is Madame de Longueville?"

"Ah, yes, where is my sister?" asked the prince.

"Madame de Longueville is ill," said the duke, "and she desired me to excuse her to your Majesty."

Anne gave a quick glance to Mazarin, who replied by an almost imperceptible shake of his head.

"What do you say of this?" asked the queen.

"I say that she is an hostage for the Parisians," answered the Cardinal.

"Why is she not come?" asked the prince in a low voice, addressing his brother.

"Silence," whispered the duke, "she has her reasons."

"She will ruin us!" returned the prince.

"She will save us," said Condé.

Carriages now arrived in crowds; those of the Maréchal de Villeroi, Guisant, Villequier, and Comminges came into the line. The two Musketeers arrived in their turn, holding the horses of D'Artagnan and Porthos in their hands. These two instantly mounted; the coachman of the latter replacing D'Artagnan on the coach-box of the royal coach. Musqueton took the place of the coachman, and drove standing—for reasons known to himself—like the Phaeton of antiquity.

The queen, though occupied by a thousand details, tried to catch the Gascon's eye; but he, with his wonted prudence, had mingled with the crowd.

"Let us be the avant-garde," said he to Porthos, "and find out good quarters at St. Germain; nobody will think of us, and, for my part, I'm much fatigued."

"As for me," replied Porthos, "I'm falling asleep, considering that we have not had any fighting; truly the Parisians are idiots."

"Or, rather, we are very clever," said D'Artagnan.

"Perhaps."

"And your wrist—how is it?"

"Better—but do you think that we've got them this time?"

"Got what?"

"You, your promotion—and I, my title?"

"I'faith yes—I should expect so—besides, if they forget, I shall take the liberty of reminding them."

"The queen's voice! She is speaking," said Porthos; "I think she wants to ride on horseback."

"Oh, she would like it—she would, but——"

"But what?"

"The Cardinal won't allow it. Gentlemen," he said, addressing the two Musketeers, "accompany the royal carriage; we are going on to seek for lodgings."

And the royal carriage drove on, followed by the other coaches and about fifty horsemen.

They reached Saint Germain without any accident; on descending the footstep, the queen found the prince awaiting her, bareheaded, to offer her his hand.

"What an alarm for the Parisians!" said the queen.
"It is war," were the emphatic words of the prince.

"Well, then, let it be war! Have we not on our side the con-
queror of Rocroy, of Nordlingen, of Leiss?"

The prince bowed low.

It was then nine o'clock in the morning. The queen walked first
on the château; every one followed her. About two hundred per-
sons had accompanied her in her flight.

"Gentlemen," said the queen, laughing, "pray take up your
loups in the château; it is large, and there will be no want of room
for you all; but, as we never thought of coming here, I am informed
that there are, in all, only three beds here, one for the king, one for
us—"

"And one for the Cardinal," muttered the prince.

"Am I—am I then to sleep on the floor?" asked Gasto
l'Orléans, with a forced smile.

"No, my prince," replied Mazarin, "for the third bed is intended
for your highness.

"But your Eminence?" replied the prince.

"I," answered Mazarin—"I shall not sleep at all—I shall have
work to do."

Gaston desired that he should be shown into the room where he
was to sleep, without in the least concerning himself as to where his
wife and daughter were to repose.

"Well, for my part, I shall go to bed," said D'Artagnan; "come,
Porthos."

Porthos followed the lieutenant with that profound confidence
which he had in the wisdom of his friend. They walked from one
end of the château to the other, Porthos looking with wondering
eyes at D'Artagnan, who was counting on his fingers.

"Four hundred, at a pistole each, four hundred pistoles."

"Yes," interposed Porthos, "four hundred pistoles; but who is
to make four hundred pistoles?"

"A pistole is not enough," said D'Artagnan, "'tis worth a
louis."

"What is worth a louis?"

"Four hundred, at a louis each, make four hundred louis."

"Four hundred!" exclaimed Porthos.

"Listen!" cried D'Artagnan.

But, as there were all descriptions of people about, who were in a
daze of wondertment at the arrival of the court which they were
watching, he whispered in his friend's ear,

"I understand," answered Porthos, "I understand you perfect-
ly, on my honor: two hundred louis, each of us, would be making
a pretty thing of it; but what will people say?"

"Let them say what they will; besides, how will they know it's
us?"

"But who will distribute these things?" asked Porthos.

"I, and Musqueton there."

"But he wears my livery; my livery will be known," replied
Porthos.

"He can turn his coat inside out."

"You are always in the right, my dear friend," cried Porthos;
"but where the devil do you discover all the notions you put into practice?"

D'Artagnan smiled. The two friends turned down the first street they came to. Porthos knocked at the door of a house to the right, whilst D'Artagnan knocked at the door of a house to the left.

"Some straw," they said.

"Sir, we don't keep any," was the reply of the people who opened the doors. "but ask, please, at the hay-dealer's."

"Where is the hay-dealer's?"

"At the last large door in the street."

"Are there any other people in Saint Germain who sell straw?"

"Yes: there's the landlord of the Lamb, and Gros-Louis the farmer; they live in the Rue des Ursulines."

"Very well."

D'Artagnan went instantly to the hay-dealer, and bargained with him for a hundred and fifty trusses of straw, which he had, at the rate of three pistoles each. He went afterward to the innkeeper, and bought from him two hundred trusses at the same price. Finally, Farmer Louis sold them eighty trusses, making, in all, four hundred and thirty.

There was no more to be had in Saint Germain. This foraging did not occupy more than half an hour. Musqueton, duly instructed, was set at the head of this sudden and new business. He was cautioned not to let a bit of straw out of his hands under a louis the truss, and they intrusted to him straw to the amount of four hundred and thirty louis. D'Artagnan, taking with him three trusses of straw, returned to the château, where everybody, freezing with cold, and falling asleep, envied the king, the queen, and the Duke of Orleans, on their camp-hoods. The lieutenant's entrance produced a burst of laughter in the great drawing room; but he did not appear to notice that he was the object of general attention, but began to arrange, with so much cleverness, nicety, and gaiety, his straw bed, that the mounds of all these poor sleepy creatures, who could not go to sleep, began to water.

"Straw!" they all cried out, "straw! where is any to be found?"

"I can show you," answered the Gascon.

And he conducted them to Musqueton, who distributed lavishly the trusses at a guinea a-piece. It was thought rather dear, but people wanted to go to sleep, and who would not give even two or three louis for some hours of sound sleep?

Musqueton, who knew nothing of what was going on in the château, wondered that the idea had not occurred to him sooner. D'Artagnan put the gold in his hat, and, in going back to the château, settled the reckoning with Porthos: each of them had cleared two hundred and fifteen louis.

Porthos, however, found that he had no straw left for himself. He returned to Musqueton, but the steward had sold the last whip. He then repaired to D'Artagnan, who, thanks to his four trusses of straw, was in the act of making up and of tasting, by anticipation, the luxury of a bed so soft, so well stuffed at the head, so well covered at the foot, that it would have excited the envy of the king himself, if his Majesty had not been fast asleep in his own. D'Artagnan could, on no account, consent to pull his bed to pieces again.
for Porthos, but for a consideration of four houres, that the latter paid
him for it, he consented that Porthos should share his couch with
him. He laid his sword at the head, his pistols by his side, sti
tressed his clock over his feet, placed his felt hat on the top of his
cloak, and extended himself luxuriously on the straw, which rustled
under him. He was already enjoying the sweet dream engendered
by the possession of two hundred and nineteen louis, made in a quar-
ter of an hour, when a voice was heard at the door of the hall,
which made him stir.

"Monsieur d'Artagnan!" it cried.

"Here!" cried Porthos, "here!"

Porthos foresaw that if D'Artagnan was called away he should
remain sole possessor of the bed. An officer approached.

"I am come to fetch you, Monsieur d'Artagnan."

"From whom?"

"His Eminence sent me."

"Tell my lord that I'm going to sleep, and I advise him, as a
friend, to do the same."

"His Eminence is not gone to bed, and will not go to bed, and
wants you instantly."

"The devil take Mazarin, who does not know when to sleep at the
proper time. What does he want with me? Is it to make me a cap-
tain? In that case I forgive him."

And the Musketeer rose, grumbling, took his sword, hat, pistols,
and cloak, and followed the officer, whilst Porthos, alone, and sole
possessor of the bed, endeavored to follow the good example of fall-
ing asleep, which his predecessor had set him.

"Monsieur d'Artagnan," said the Cardinal, on perceiving him,

"I have not forgotten with what zeal you have served me. I am
goin to prove to you that I have not."

"Good," thought the Gascon, "this begins well."

"Monsieur d'Artagnan," he resumed, "do you wish to become
a captain?"

"Yes, my lord."

"And your friend still wishes to be made a baron?"

"At this very moment, my lord, he's dreaming that he is one."

"Then," said Mazarin, taking from his portfolio the letter which
he had already shown D'Artagnan, "take this dispatch, and carry
it to England."

D'Artagnan looked at the envelope; there was no address on it.

"Am I not to know to whom to present it?"

"You will know when you reach London; at London you may
tear off the outer envelope."

"And what are my instructions?"

"To obey, in every particular, him to whom this letter is
addressed. You must set out for Boulorge. At the Royal
Arms of England you will find a young gentleman named
Mordant."

"Yes, my lord; and what am I to do with this young gentle-
man?"

"To follow wherever he leads you."

D'Artagnan looked at the Cardinal with a stupefied air.

"There are your instructions," said Mazarin, "go!"
"'Tis very dear living in England, my lord, especially as envoy extraordinary.

"Zounds!" replied Mazarin, "the people there are very sedate and their habits, since the revolution, simple; but no matter.

He opened a drawer, and took out a purse.

"What do you say to a thousand crowns?"

D'Artagnan pointed out his lower lip in a most extraordinary manner.

"I reply, my lord, 'tis but little, as certainly I shall not go alone."

"I suppose not, Monsieur du Vallon, that worthy gentleman, for, with the exception of yourself, Monsieur d'Aubignan, there's not a man in France that I esteem and love so much as him—"

"Then, my lord," replied D'Artagnan, pointing to the purse which Mazarin still held, "if you love and esteem him so much, you—understand me?"

"Be it so! on his account I will add two hundred crowns."

"Sounded!" muttered D'Artagnan—"but on our return," he said aloud, "may we, that is my friend and I, depend on having, as his barony, and my promotion?"

"On the honor of Mazarin."

"I should like another sort of oath better," said D'Artagnan to himself—then aloud, "May I not offer my duty to her Majesty the queen?"

"Her Majesty is asleep, and you must set off directly," replied Mazarin, "go pray, sir—"

"One word more, my lord; if there's any fighting where I'm going, credit I to fight."

"You are to obey the commands of the personage to whom I have addressed the enclosed letter."

"'Tis well," said D'Artagnan, holding out his hand to receive the money, "I offer my best respects and services to you, my lord."

D'Artagnan then returning to the officer, said:

"Sir, have the kindness also to awaken Monsieur du Vallon, and to say 'tis by his Eminence's order, and that I shall wait for him at the stables."

The officer went off with an eagerness that showed the Gascon that he had some personal interest in the matter.

Porthos was among most modestly, when some one touched him on the shoulder.

"I come from the Cardinal," said the officer.

"Helzof!" said Porthos, opening his large eyes; "what do you say?"

"I say that his Eminence has ordered you to go to England, and that Monsieur d'Aubignan is waiting for you in the stables."

Porthos sighed heavily—not, took his hat, his pistols, and his
cluck, and departed, casting a look of regret on the bed where he had hoped to sleep so well.

Narrowly had he turned his back than the officer laid himself down in it, and he had not crossed the threshold of the door, before his successor, in his turn, snored immediately. It was very natural he being the only man in the whole assemblage of people, except the king, the queen, and the Duke of Orleans, who slept gratis.

CHAPTER LII.
IN WHICH WE HEAR TIDINGS OF ARAMIS.

D’ARTAGNAN went straight to the stables; day had just dawned. He found his horse and that of Porthos fastened to the manger, but to an empty manger. He took pity on these poor animals, and went to a corner of the stable, where he saw a little straw, but in going so he struck his foot against a round body, which uttered a cry, and arose on its knees, rubbing its eyes. It was Musqueton, who, having no straw to lie upon himself, had helped himself to that of the horses.

"Musqueton," cried D’Artagnan, "let us be off! Let us set off."

Musqueton, recognizing the voice of his master’s friend, got up suddenly, and in doing so let fall some louis which he had appropriated to himself illegally during the night.

"Ho! ho!" exclaimed D’Artagnan, picking up a louis and displaying it; "here’s a louis that smells of straw a little."

Musqueton blushed so confusedly that the Gascon began to laugh at him, and said:

"Porthos would be angry, my dear Monsieur Musqueton, but I pardon you—only let us remember that this gold must serve us as a joke—so be gay—come along."

Musqueton instantly assumed a most jovial countenance, saddled the horses quickly, and mounted his own without making faces over it.

Whilst this went on, Porthos arrived with a very cross look on his face, and was astonished to find the lieutenant ready, and Musqueton almost merry.

"Ah, that’s it," he cried, "you have your promotion, and I my barren."

"We are going to fetch our brevets," said D’Artagnan, "and when we come back, Master Mazarin will sign them."

"And where are we going?" asked Porthos.

"To Paris first—I have affairs to settle."

And they both set out for Paris.

On arriving at its gates they were astounded to see the threatening aspect of the capital. Around a broken-down carriage the people were uttering imprecations, whilst the persons who had attempted to escape were made prisoners—that is to say, an old man and two women. On the other hand, when the two friends wanted to enter, they showed them every kind of civility, thinking them deserters from the royal party, and wishing to bind them to their own.