Groslov. He was accompanied by another man who carried in his hand something long and flexible, rolled up, resembling a washing line.

"Have you the wick?" asked the one who carried the lantern.

"Here it is," answered the other.

At the voice of this last speaker, Grimaud started, and felt a shudder creeping through his very bones. He rose gently, so that his head was just above the round of the barrel; and, under the large hat, he recognized the pale face of Mordaunt.

"How long will this match burn?" asked this person.

"Nearly five minutes," replied the captain.

"Then tell the men to be in readiness—don't tell them why now; when the clock strikes a quarter after midnight collect your men. Get down into the long boat."

"This is when I have lighted the match?"

"I shall undertake that. I wish to be sure of my revenge—are the oars in the boat?"

"Everything is ready."

"Is well."

Mordaunt knelt down and fastened one end of the train to the spigot, in order that he might have nothing to do but to set it on fire at the opposite end with the match.

He then arose.

"You hear me—at a quarter past midnight—in fact, in twenty minutes."

"I understand it all perfectly, sir," replied Groslov; "but allow me to say, there is great danger in what you undertake—would it not be better to instruct one of the men to set fire to the train?"

"My dear Groslov," answered Mordaunt, "you know the French proverb, 'Nothing that one does not do one's self is ever well done.' I shall abide by that rule."

Grimaud had heard all this—had seen the two mortal enemies of the Musketeers—had seen Mordaunt lay the train; then he felt, and felt again, the contents of the tankard that he held in his hand; and, instead of the liquid expected by Biais and Musqueton, he found beneath his fingers the grains of some coarse powder.

Mordaunt went away with the captain. At the door he stopped to listen.

"Do you hear how they sleep?" he said.

In fact, Porthos could be heard snoring through the partitions.

"The God who gives them into our hands," answered Groslov.

"This time the devil himself shall not save them," rejoined Mordaunt.

And they went out together.

CHAPTER LXX.

END OF THE PORT-WINE MYSTERY.

D'Artagnan, as one may suppose, listened to all these details with a growing interest. He awoke Aramis, Athos, and Porthos; and then, stretching out his arms, and closing them again, the Gascon collected in one small circle the three heads of his friends, so near as almost to touch each other.
TWENTY YEARS AFTER.

He then told them under whose command the vessel was in which they were sailing that night; that they had faredlow for their cap-
tain, and Mordaunt acting under him as his lieutenant. Something
more destitute than a shudder, at this moment, shook the brave
Musketeers. The name of Mordaunt seemed to exercise over them
a mysterious and fatal influence—to bring terror even at the very
sound.

"What is to be done?" asked Athos.

"You have some plan?"

D'Artagnan replied by going toward a very small, low window,
just large enough to let a man through. He turned it gently on its
hinges.

"There," he said, "is our road."

"The dense—its very cold, my dear friend," said Aramis.

"Stay here, if you like, but I warn you, 'twill be rather too warm
presently."

"But we cannot swim to the shore."

"The long boat is yonder lashed to the felucca, we can take
possession of it, and cut the cable. Come, my friends."

A moment's delay," said Athos; "our servants?"

"Here we are," they cried.

Meanwhile the three friends were standing motionless before the
awful sight which D'Artagnan, in raising the shutters, had disclosed
to them through the narrow opening of the window.

Those who have once beheld such a spectacle know that there is
nothing more solemn, more striking than the raging sea, rolling,
with its deafening roar, its dark billows beneath the pale light of a
wintry moon.

"Gracious heavens! we are hesitating," cried D'Artagnan; "if we
hesitate what will the servants do?"

"I do not hesitate you know," said Grimaud.

"Sir," interposed Blaisois, "I warn you that I cannot swim
except in rivers."

"And I not at all," said Musqueton.

But D'Artagnan had now slipped through the window.

"You have then decided, my friends," said Athos.

"Yes," the Gascon answered; "Athos! you, who are a perfect
being, bid the spirit to triumph over the body."

"Do you, Aramis, order the servants—Porthos, kill every one
who stands in your way."

And, after pressing the hand of Athos, D'Artagnan chose a mo-
ment when the ship rolled backward, so that he had only to plunge
into the water up to his waist.

Athos followed him before the felucca rose again on the waves;
the cable which tied the boat to the vessel was then seen plainly ris-
ing out of the sea.

D'Artagnan swam to it, and held it, suspending himself by this
rope, his head above out of the water.

In one second Athos joined him.

Then they saw, as the felucca turned, two other heads peeping—
those of Aramis and Grimaud.

"I am uneasy about Blaisois," said Athos; "he can, he says,
only swim in rivers."
"When people can swim at all they can swim everywhere. To the bank! to the bank!"

"But Porthos, I do not see him."

"Porthos is coming—he swims like Leviathan."

Porthos, in fact, did not appear. Musqueta was hidden by the sight of the black gulf below them, and had
shrank back.

"Come along! I shall strangle you both if you don't get out," said Porthos, at last seizing Musqueton by the
throat.

"Forward! Balsac."

A groan, stifled by the grasp of Porthos, was all the reply of poor Balsac, for the giant, taking him neck and
heels, plunged him into the water head foremost, pushing him out by the window as if he had been a plank.

"Now, Musqueton," he said, "I hope you don't mean to desert your master?"

"Ah, sir," replied Musqueton, his eyes filling with tears, "why did you re-enter the army? We were so happy in the
Château de Pierrefonds!"

And, without any complaint, passive and obedient, either from true devotion to his master, or from the example set by
Balsac, Musqueton went into the sea head foremost. A sublime
action, at all events, for Musqueton looked upon himself as dead.
But Porthos was not a man to abandon an old servant, and when
Musqueton rose above the water blinded, he found that he was
supported by the large hand of Porthos, and that he could, without
having occasion even to move, advance toward the cable with the
dignity of a sea-god.

In a few minutes, Porthos had rejoined his companions, who were
already in the boat; but when, after they had all got in, it came to
his turn, there was great danger that in putting his huge leg over the
edge of the boat he would have upset the little vessel. Athos was
the last to enter.

"Are you all here?" he asked.

"Ah! have you your sword, Athos?" cried D'Artagnan.

"Yes."

"Cut the cable, then."

Athos drew a sharp point from his belt, and cut the cord. The
fouessa went on; the boat continued stationary, only moved by the
waves.

"Come, Athos!" said D'Artagnan, giving his hand to the count;
"you are going to see something curious," added the Gascon.

CHAPTER LXXI.

FATALITY.

Seconds had D'Artagnan uttered these words than a ringing
and sudden noise was heard reverberating through the Fouessa, which
now became dim in the obscurity of the night.

"That, you may be sure," said the Gascon, "means something."

They then, at the same instant, perceived a large lantern carried
on a pole appear on the deck, defining the forms of shadows behind
it.