ing for an instant at his noble and honest countenance, took the pen.

"It is sufficient, count," he said, and he signed the treaty.

"And now, Monsieur D'Artagnan," he said, "prepare to set off
for Saint Germain, and to take a letter from me to the queen."

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

SHOWS HOW WITH A TURBAN AND A PEN MORE IS EFFECTED THAN
BY THIS SWORD.

D'Artagnan knew his part well; he was aware that opportunity
has a forelock only for him who will take it, and he was not a man
to let it go by him without seizing it. He soon arranged a prompt
and certain manner of traveling, by sending relays of horses to
Chantilly, so that he could be in Paris in five or six hours.

Nothing was known at St. Germain about Mazarin's disappear-
ance, except by the queen, who concealed to her friends even her
uneasiness. She had heard all about the two soldiers who were
found bound and gagged. Bermonde, who knew more about the
affair than anybody, had, in fact, gone to acquaint the queen of the
circumstances which had occurred. Anne had enforced the utmost
secrecy, and had disclosed the event to no one except the Prince de
Conde, who had sent five or six horsemen into the environs of St.
Germain with orders to bring any suspicious person who was going
away from there, in whatsoever direction it might be.

On entering the court of the palace, D'Artagnan encountered
Bermonde, to whose instrumentality he owed a prompt introduction
to the queen's presence. He approached the sovereign with every
mark of profound respect, and, having fallen on his knees, presented
to her the Cardinal's letter.

It was, however, merely a letter of introduction. The queen read
it, recognized the writing, and, since there were no details in it of
what had occurred, asked for particulars. D'Artagnan related
everything with that simple and ingenuous air which he knew how
to assume on some occasions. The queen, as she went on, looked at
him with increasing astonishment. She could not comprehend how
a man could conceive such an enterprise, and still less how he could
have the audacity to disclose it to her whose interest, and almost
duty, it was to punish him.

"How, sir!" she cried, as D'Artagnan finished, "you dare to tell
me the details of your crime—to give me an account of your treason!"

"Your Majesty, on your side," said D'Artagnan, "is as much
mistaken as to our intentions as the Cardinal Mazarin has always
been."

"You are in error, sir," answered the queen. "I am so little
mistaken that in ten minutes you shall be arrested, and in an hour
I shall set off to relieve my minister."

"I am sure your Majesty will not commit such an act of impru-
dence, first, because it would be useless, and would produce the most
serious results. Before he could be set free, the Cardinal would be
dead; and, indeed, so convinced is he of this, that he entreated me,
should I find your Majesty disposed to act in this way, to do all I could, to induce you to change your intentions."
"Well, then! I shall be content with only arresting you!"
"Madame, the possibility of my arrest has been foreseen, and should I not have returned to-morrow, at a certain hour the next day, the Cardinal will be brought to Paris, and delivered up to the Parliament."
"I think," returned Anne of Austria, fixing upon him a glance, which, in any woman's face, would have expressed disdain, but in a queen's, spread terror to those she looked upon. "I perceive that you dare to threaten the mother of your sovereign."
"Madame," replied D'Artagnan, "I threaten only because I am forced to do so. Believe me, madame, as true a thing as it is that a heart beats in this bosom—a heart devoted to you—believe that you have been the idol of our lives; that we have—as you well know—good Heaven!—risked our lives twenty times for your Majesty. Have you then, madame, no compassion on your people, who love you, and yet who suffer—who love you, and who are yet famished—who have no other wish than to bless you, and who, nevertheless—us! I am wrong; your subjects, madame, will never cease you! Say one word to them! and all will be ended; peace succeed to war, joy to tears, happiness to misery!"
Anne of Austria looked with wonderment on the warlike countenance of D'Artagnan, which betrayed a singular expression of deep feeling.
"Why did you not say all this before you acted?" she said.
"Because, madame, it was necessary to prove to your Majesty one thing of which you doubted—that is, that we still possess amongst us some valor, and are worthy of some consideration at your hands."
"Then, in case of my refusal, this valor, should a struggle occur, will go even to the length of carrying me off! In the midst of my court, to deliver me into the hands of the Fronde, as you have done my minister?"
"We have not thought about it, madame," answered D'Artagnan, with that Gascon croustery which had in him the appearance of natiété; "but if we four had settled it, we should certainly have done so."
"I ought," muttered Anne to herself, "by this time to remember that these are men of iron mold."
"Ah! madame!" exclaimed D'Artagnan, "this proves to me that it is only since yesterday that your Majesty has indulged a true opinion of us. Your Majesty will do us justice. In doing us justice, you will no longer treat us as men of ordinary stamp. You will see in me an ambassador worthy of the high interests which he is authorized to discuss with his sovereign."
"Where is the treaty?"
"Here it is."
Anne of Austria cast her eyes upon the treaty that D'Artagnan presented to her.
"I do not see here," she said, "anything but general conditions; the interests of the Prince de Conti, or of the Due de Béarn, de
Boillon, and d'Elhene, and of the Coadjutor, are herein consulted; but with regard to yours?"

"We do ourselves justice, madame, even in assuming the high position that we have. We do not think ourselves worthy to stand near such great names."

"But you, I presume, have decided to assert your pretensions, "vive vous!""

"I believe you, madame, to be a great and powerful queen, and that it will be unworthy of your power and greatness if you do not recompense the arm which will bring back his Eminence to St. Germain."

"It is my intention so to do; come—let us hear—speak."

"He who has accredited these matters (forgive me if I begin by speaking of myself, but I must take that importance to myself which has been given to me, not assumed by me), he, who has arranged matters for the return of the Cardinal, ought, it appears to me, in order that his reward may not be unworthy of your Majesty, to be made commandant of the Guard—an appointment something like that of captain of the Musketeers."

"The appointment that Monsieur de Treville had, that you ask of me."

"The place, madame, is vacant; and although 'tis a year since Monsieur de Treville has left it, it is not yet filled up."

"But it is one of the principal military appointments in the king's household."

"Monsieur de Treville was merely a younger son of a Gascon family, like me, madame; he occupied that post for twenty years."

"You have an answer ready for everything," replied the queen, and she took a document, which she filled up and signed, from her bureau.

"Undoubtedly, madame," said D'Artagnan, taking the document and bowing, "this is a noble reward; but everything in the world is unstable; and any man who happened to fall into disgrace with your Majesty would lose everything."

"What then do you want?" asked the queen, coloring, as she found that she had to deal with a mind as subtle as her own.

"A hundred thousand francs for this poor captain of Musketeers, to be paid whenever his services should no longer be acceptable to your Majesty."

Anne hesitated.

"To think of the Parisians," resumed D'Artagnan, "offering the other day, by an edict of the Parliament, six hundred thousand francs to any man soeuer who would deliver up the Cardinal to them, dead, or alive—if alive, in order to hang him; if dead, to deny him the rights of Christian burial!—"

"How? said Anne, "it's reasonable—since you only ask from a queen the sixth of what the Parliament has proposed—and she signed an order for a hundred thousand francs."

"Now, then," she said, "what next?"

"Madame, my friend Du Vallon is rich; and has therefore nothing in the way of fortune to desire: but I think I remember that there was a dispute between him and Monsieur Mazarin, as to making his estate a barony or not. "Twas even a promise."
"A country clown," said Anne of Austria; "people will laugh."
"Let them?" answered D'Artagnan. "But I am sure of one thing—that those who laugh at him in his presence will never laugh a second time."
"Here goes the barony," said the queen, and she signed a patent.
"Now there remains the chevalier, or the Abbé D'Herbelay, as your Majesty please."
"Does he wish to be a bishop?"
"No, madame, something easier to grant."
"What?"
"It is that the king should deign to stand godfather to the son of Madame de Longueville."
The queen smiled.
"Nothing more?" she asked.
"No, madame, for I presume that the king, standing godfather to him, could do no less than present him with five hundred thou-
sand francs, giving his father, also, the government of Normandy."
"As to the government of Normandy," replied the queen, "I think I can promise; but, with regard to the present, the Cardinal is always telling me there is no more money in the royal coffers."
"We shall search for some, madame, and I think we can find some, and if your Majesty permits, we will seek for some together."
"What next?"
"Madame, the Count de la Fere."
"What does he ask?"
"Nothing!"
"There is in the world, then, one man who, having the power to ask—asks for nothing."
"The Count de la Fere, madame, is more than a man; he in a demi-god."
"Are you satisfied, sir?"
"There is one thing which the queen has not signed—her consent to the treaty."
"Of what use to-day? I will sign it to-morrow."
"I can assure her Majesty that if she does not sign to-day, she will not have time to sign to-morrow. Consent, then, I beg you, madame, to write at the bottom of this schedule, which has been drawn up by Mazarin, as you see."
"I consent to ratify the treaty proposed by the Parlements."
Anne was insensible; she could not draw back—she signed; but scarcely had she done so, when pride burst forth in her like a tem-
pest, and she began to weep.
D'Artagnan started on seeing these tears: since that time queens have shed tears, like other women.
The Gascon shook his head; these tears from royalty melted his heart.
"Madame," he said, kneeling, "look upon the unhappy man at
your feet. Behold, madame! here are the august signatures of
your Majesty's hand; if you think you are right in giving them to
me, you shall do so—but, from this very moment, you are free
from any obligation to keep them."
And D'Artagnan, full of honest pride and of manly intrepidity,
placed in Anne's hands, in a bundle, the papers that he had, one by one, won from her with so much difficulty.

There are moments—for if everything is not good, everything in this world is not bad—in which the most rigid and the coldest hearts are softened by the tears of strong emotions—of a generous sentiment: one of these moments impelled to actuate Anne.

D'Artagnan, when he gave way to his own feelings—which were in accordance with those of the queen—had accomplished all that the most skilful diplomacy could have done. He was, therefore, in steady recompensed, either for his address, or for his sensibility, whichever it might be termed.

"You were right, sir," said Anne, "I misunderstood you. There are the acts signed; I deliver them to you without compulsion: go and bring me back the Cardinal as soon as possible."

"Madame," faltered D'Artagnan, "it is twenty years ago—I have a good memory—since I had the honor, behind a piece of tapestry in the Hôtel de Ville, to kiss one of these beautiful hands."

"There is the other," replied the queen; "and that the left hand should not be less liberal than the right," she drew from her finger a diamond nearly similar to the one formerly given to him—"take and keep this ring in remembrance of me."

"Madame," said D'Artagnan, rising, "I have only one thing more to wish, which is, that the next thing you ask from me, should be my life."

And with this way of concluding—a way peculiar to himself—he arose and left the room.

"I have never rightly understood these men," said the queen, as she watched him retiring from her presence; "and it is now too late—for in a year the king will be of age."

Twenty-four hours D'Artagnan and Porthos conducted Mazarin to the queen; and the one received his commission, the other his patent of nobility.

On the same day the Treaty of Paris was signed, and it was everywhere announced that the Cardinal had asked himself up for three days, in order to draw it up with the greatest care.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN THAT IT IS SOMETIMES MORE DIFFICULT FOR KINGS TO RETURN TO THE CAPITOLS OF THEIR KINGDOMS, THAN TO GO OUT OF THEM.

While D'Artagnan and Porthos were engaged in conducting the Cardinal to St. Germain, Athos and Aramis returned to Paris.

Each had his own particular visit to make.

Aramis rushed to the Hôtel de Ville, where Madame de Longueville was sojourning. The duchess had promptly announced the announcement of peace. War had made her a queen; peace brought her abdication. She declared that she had never expected the treaty, and that she wished for eternal war.

But Aramis consoled her, and pointed out the solid advantages that were the result of peace—the precarious tenure of all she had prized during the war.