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 emotion—of a generous sentiment: one of these momentary impulses actuated 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 sturdy recompense, 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 slept himself up for three days, in order to draw it up with the greatest care.

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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 roved to the Hôtel de Ville, where Madame de Longueville was sojourning. The duchess had loudly lauded 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.
"Now," said Aramis to her, "detach your brother the Prince of Conde, from the queen, whom he does not like—from Mazarin, whom he despises. The Fronde is a comedy, of which the first act only is played. Let us wait for a denouement—for the day, when the prince, thanks to you, shall have turned against the court."

Madame de Longueville was persuaded of the influence of her fine eyes, and was appeased.

Athos, on quitting Aramis, went to Madame de Chevreuse. Here was another frouzine to persuade; but she was even less open to conviction than her young rival. At the first announcement of peace Madame de Chevreuse frowned, and, in spite of all the logic of Athos to show her that a prolonged war would have been impracticable, contended in favor of hostilities.

"My fair friend," said Athos, "allow me to tell you that everybody is tired of war. You will get yourself exiled, as you did in the time of Louis XIII. Believe me, we have passed the time of success in intrigue, and your beautiful eyes are not destined to be blinded by regaining Paris, where there will always be two queens, as long as you are there."

"Oh," cried the duchess, "I cannot make war alone, but I can avenge myself on that ungrateful queen and ambitious favorite—on the honor of a duchess, I will avenge myself."

"Madame," replied Athos, "do not injure the Vicomte de Bragelonne—do not ruin his prospects. Alas! excuse my weakness! There are moments when a man grows young again in his children."

The duchess smiled; half tenderly, half ironically.

"Count," she said, "you are, I fear, gained over to the court. I suppose you have a blue ribbon in your pocket?"

"Yes, madame; I love that of the Carter, which King Charles I. gave me some days before he died."

"Come! one must grow into an old woman!" said the duchess, pensively. Athos took her hand, and kissed it. She sighed, as she looked at him.

"Count," she said, "Bragelonne must be a charming place. You are a man of taste. You have water—woods—borders—there!"

She sighed again, and leaned her charming head, gracefully reclined, on her hand—still beautiful in form and color.

"Madame!" exclaimed Athos, "what were you saying just now about growing old? Never have I seen you look so young—never more beautiful!"

The duchess shook her head.

"Does Monsieur de Bragelonne remain in Paris?" she inquired.

"What think you of it?" answered Athos.

"Leave it to me," replied the duchess, "really, sir, you are delightful, and I should like to spend a month at Bragelonne."

"Are you not afraid of making people envious, duceheart?" replied Athos.

"No, I shall go incognito, count, under the name of Marie Michos. But do not keep liaison with you."

"Why not?"

"Because he is in love."
"He—he is quite a child!"

"And it is a child whom he loves."

Athos became thoughtful.

"You are right, duchess. This singular passion for a child of seven years old may some day make him very unhappy. There is
to be war in Flanders. He shall go thither."

"And at his return you will send him to me. I will arm him
against love."

"Ah, madame!" exclaimed Athos. "To-day love is like war,
and the breastplate is becoming useless."

Rand entered at this moment; he came to announce that the sol-
cenn entrance of the king, the queen, and her ministers was to take
place on the ensuing day.

On the next day, in fact, at daybreak, the court made prepara-
tions to quit Saint Germain.

Meanwhile the queen every hour had been sending for D'Artag-
nan.

"I hear," she said, "that Paris is not quiet. I am afraid for the
king's safety; place yourself close to the coach door on the right."

"Be assured, madame, I will answer for the king's safety."

As he left the queen's presence, Bernouin summoned him to the
Cardinal.

"Sir," said Mazarin to him, "an 'cemente' is spoken of in Paris.
I shall be on the king's left, and as I am the chief person threat-
ened, remain at the coach-door to the left."

"Your Eminence may be perfectly easy," replied D'Artagnan;
"they will not touch a hair of your head."

"Peace take it!" he thought to himself, "how can I take care of
both? Ah! plague on't, I shall guard the king, and Porthos the
Cardinal."

This arrangement pleased every one. The queen had confidence in
the courage of D'Artagnan, and the Cardinal in the strength of
Porthos.

The royal procession set out for Paris: Guitard and Comminges
at the head of the Guards, marched first; then came the royal car-
rriage, with D'Artagnan on one side, Porthos on the other; then the
Ministers, for twenty-two years the old friends of D'Artagnan.
During twenty he had been their lieutenant, their captain since the
night before.

The cortège proceeded to Notre Dame, where a Te Deum was
chanted. All the people of Paris were in the streets. The Swiss
were drawn up along the road, but as the road was long, they were
placed at six or eight feet distant from each other, and one man
deep only. This force was, therefore, wholly insufficient, and from
time to time the line was broken through by the people, and was
formed again with difficulty. Whenever this occurred, although it
proceeded only from good-will and a desire to see the king and
queen, Anne looked at D'Artagnan anxiously.

Mazarin, who had dispensed a thousand lods to make the people
cry "Long live Mazarin!" and who had, therefore, no confidence in
acclamations bought at twenty pistoles each, looked also at Por-
thos; but the gigantic body-guard replied to that look with his fine
bass voice, "Be tranquil, my lord," and Mazarin became more and more composed.

At the Palais Royal the crowd, which had flowed in from the adjacent street, was still greater: like a large impetuous crowd, a wave of human beings came to meet the carriage, and rolled tumultuously into the Rue St. Honoré.

When the procession reached the palace, loud cries of "Long live their Majesties!" resounded. Mazarin leaned out of the window. One or two shouts of "Long live the Cardinal!" soluted his shadow; but instantly hisses and yells stifled them remorselessly. Mazarin turned pale, and sank back in his coach.

"Low-born fools!" ejaculated Porthos.

D'Artagnan said nothing, but twirled his mustache with a peculiar gesture which showed that his fine Gascon humor was kindled.

Anne of Austria bent down and whispered in the young king's ear:

"Say something gracious to Monsieur d'Artagnan, my lord."

The young king leaned toward the door.

"I have not said good-morning to you, Monsieur d'Artagnan," he said; "nevertheless, I have remarked you. It was you who were behind my bed-curtains that night when the Parisians wished to see me sleep."

"And if the king permits me," returned the Gascon, "I shall be near him whenever there is danger to be encountered."

"Sir," said Mazarin to Porthos, "what would you do if the crowd fell upon us?"

"Kill as many as I could, my lord."

"Hem! brave as you are, and strong as you are, you could not kill all."

"It's true," answered Porthos, rising on his saddle, in order that he might see the immense crowd—"there are many of them."

"I think I should like the other man better than this one," said Mazarin to himself, and he threw himself back in his carriage.

The queen and her minister, more especially the latter, had reason to feel anxious. The crowd, while preserving an appearance of respect, and even of affection for the king and queen-regent, began to be tumultuous. Reports were whispered about like certain sounds which announce, as they are echoed from wave to wave, the coming storm—and when they pass through a multitude, pressage an encore.

D'Artagnan turned toward the Musketeers, and made a sign imperceptible to the crowd, but very easily understood by that chosen regiment, the flower of the army.

The gates were closed, and a kind of shoulder ran from man to man.

At the Barrière des Sergents the procession was obliged to stop. Comminges left the head of the escort, and went to the queen's carriage. Anne questioned D'Artagnan by a look. He answered in the same language.

"Proceed," she said.

Comminges returned to his post. An effort was made, and the living barrier was violently broken through.
Some complaints arose from the crowd, and were addressed with
time to the king as well as the minister.
"Onward!" cried D'Artagnan, with a loud voice.
"Onward!" cried Porthos.

But, as if the multitude had waited only for this demonstration to
burst out, all the sentiments of hostility that possessed it broke out
at once. Cries of "Down with Mazarin!" "Death to the Cardi-
nal!" resounded on all sides.

At the same time through the streets of Grenelle, Saint Honore,
and Du Coq, a double stream of people broke the feeble hedge of
Swiss Guards, and came like a whirlwind even to the very legs of
Porthos's horse and of that of D'Artagnan.

This new commotion was more dangerous than the others, being
composed of armed men. It was plain that it was not the chance
combination of those who had collected a number of the malcontents
at the same spot, but the concerted attack organized by a hostile
spirit.

Each of these two mobs was led on by a chief, one of whom ap-
ppeared to belong, not to the people, but to the honorable corpora-
tion of mendicants, and the other, who, notwithstanding his affected
imagination of the people, might easily be discovered to be a gentle-
man, both were evidently stimulated by the same impulse.

There was a shock which was perceived even in the royal car-
rriage. The millions of cries, forming one vast uproar, were heard
 mingled with guns firing.

"The Musketeers, here!" cried D'Artagnan.

The escort divided into two files. One of them passed round to
the right of the carriage; the other to the left. One went to sup-
sort D'Artagnan, the other Porthos. Then came a skirmish, the
more terrible, because it had no definite object; the more melan-
choly, because those engaged in it knew not for whom they were
fighting. Like all popular movements, the shock given by the rush
of this mob was formidable. The Musketeers, few in number, not
being able, in the midst of this crowd, to make their horses wheel
round began to give way. D'Artagnan offered to lower the blinds of
the royal carriage, but the young king stretched out his arm, saying:

"If your Majesty wishes to look out—well, then, look!" replied
D'Artagnan. And turning with that fury which made him so
formidable, he rushed toward the chief of the insurgents, a man
who, with a large sword in his hand, tried to clear out a passage to
the coach door by a combat with two Musketeers.

"Make room!" cried D'Artagnan. "Zounds! give way!"

At these words, the man with a pistol and sword raised his head;
but it was too late. The blow was spent by D'Artagnan; the rapier
had pierced his bosom.

"Ah! confound it!" cried the Gascon, trying in vain, too late, to
retract the thrust. "What the devil are you doing here, count?"

"Accomplishing my destiny," replied Rochefort, falling on one
knee. "I have already got up again after three stabs from you;
but I shall not rise after a fourth."

"Count!" said D'Artagnan, with some degree of emotion; "I
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struck without knowing that it was you. I am sorry, if you die, that you should die with sentiments of hatred toward me.”

Rochefort extended his hand to D'Artagnan, who took it. The count wished to speak, but a gush of blood stilled him. He suffered in the last convulsions of death, and expired.

"Boek people!" cried D'Artagnan; "your leader is dead, and you have no longer anything to do here."

Indeed, as if De Rochefort had been the very soul of the attack, all the crowd who had followed and obeyed him took flight on seeing him fall. D'Artagnan charged with a party of Musketeers in the Rue du Coq, and that portion of the mob whom he assailed disappeared like smoke, dispersing near the Place St. Germain l'Auxerrois, and taking the direction of the quays.

D'Artagnan returned to help Porthos, if Porthos needed it: but Porthos, on his side, had done his work as conscientiously as D'Artagnan. The left of the carriage was as well cleared as the right; and they drew up the blind of the window which Mazurin, less heroic than the king, had taken the precaution to lower.

Porthos looked very melancholy.

"What a devil of a face you have, Porthos! and what a strange air for a ferocious man!"

"But you," answered Porthos, "seem to me agitated."

"There's a reason! Zounds! I have just killed an old friend."

"Indeed!" replied Porthos; "who?"

"That poor Count de Rochefort."

"Well! exactly like me! I have just killed a man whose face is not unknown to me. Unluckily, I hit him on the head, and immediately his face was covered with blood."

"And he said nothing as he died?"

"Yes; he said, 'Oh!'"

"I suppose," answered D'Artagnan, laughing, "if he only said that, it did not enlighten you much."

"Well, sir!" cried the queen.

"Madame, the passage is quite clear, and your Majesty can continue your road."

In fact, the procession arrived in safety at Notre Dame, at the front gate of which all the clergy, with the Coarctator at their head, awaited the king, the queen, and the minister, for whose happy return they chanted a Te Deum.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII

CONCLUSION.

On going home, the two friends found a letter from Athos, who desired them to meet him at the Grand Charlemagne on the following day.

Both of the friends went to bed early, but neither of them slept. When we arrive at the summit of one's wishes, success has usually the power of driving away sleep on the first night after the fulfillment of long-cherished hopes.