TWENTY YEARS AFTER.

"A propos, what are the names of your friends?"

"The Count de la Ferre, formerly styled Athos; Mousnier du Valion, whom we used to call Porthos; the Chevalier d'Herblay—now the Abbé d'Herblay—whom we used to call Aramis."'

The Cardinal smiled.

"Younger sons," he said, "who enlisted in the Musketeers under feigned names in order not to lower their family names. Long rapiers, but light purses, you know."

"If God willing, these rapiers should be devoted to the service of your Eminence," said D'Artagnan, "I shall venture to express a wish—which is, that, in its turn, the purse of your Eminence may become light, and thence heavy—for with these three men, your Eminence may move all Europe, if you like."

"These Genoa," said the Cardinal, laughing, "almost beat the Italians in effrontery."

"At all events," answered D'Artagnan, with a smile similar to the Cardinal's, "they beat them when they draw their swords.

He then withdrew, and as he passed into the court-yard he stopped near a lamp, and divined eagerly into the bag of money.

"Crown pieces only, silver pieces! Inspected it, Ah, Mazarin! thou hast no confidence in me; so much the worse for thee—harm may come of it!"

Meanwhile, the Cardinal was rubbing his hands in great satisfaction.

"A hundred pistoles! a hundred pistoles! for a hundred pistoles I have discovered a secret for which Richelieu would have paid a thousand crowns; without reckoning the value of that diamond—" he cast a complacent look at the ring, which he had kept, instead of restoring it to D'Artagnan—"which is worth, at least, ten thousand francs."

He returned to his room, and, after depositing the ring in a cabinet filled with brilliants of every sort—for the Cardinal was a connoisseur in precious stones—he called to Bernadou to address him, regardless of the noise, or of the firing of guns which continued to resound through Paris, although it was now nearly midnight.

CHAPTER VI.

D'ARTAGNAN IN HIS FORTYTH YEAR.

Years have elapsed, many events have happened, alas! since, in our romance of "The Three Musketeers," we took leave of D'Artagnan, at No. 13, Rue des Fossés-Saint-Antoine. D'Artagnan had not failed in his career, but circumstances had been adverse to him. So long as he was surrounded by his friends, he retained his youth and the poetry of his character. He was one of those fine, ingenuous natures which assimilate themselves easily to the dispositions of others. Athos imparted to him his greatness of soul; Porthos, his enthusiasm; Aramis, his elegance. Had D'Artagnan continued his intemacy with these three men, he would have become a superior character. Athos was the first to leave him, in order that he might retire to a small property which he had inherited near Blois. Porthos,
the second, to marry an attorney's wife; and lastly, Armand, the third, to take orders, and become an abbé. From that day D'Artagnan felt handy and powerless, without courage to pursue a career in which he could only distinguish himself on condition that each of his three companions should endow him with one of the gifts which each had received from Heaven.

Notwithstanding his commission in the Musketeers, D'Artagnan felt completely wanting. For a time the delightful remembrance of Madame Bonacieux left on his character a certain poetic tinge; perishable, and, like all other recollections in this world, these impressions wore, by degrees, off. A garrison life is fatal even to the most aristocratic organizations; and, imperceptibly, D'Artagnan, always in the camp, always on horseback, always in garrison, became (I know not how) in the present age one would expose to a complete trooper. His early refinement of character was not only not lost, but was even greater than ever; but it was now applied to the little, instead of to the great things of life—to the martial condition of the soldier—comprised under the heads of a good lodging, a good table, a good hostess. These important advantages D'Artagnan found, to his own taste, in the Rue Tiquetonne, at the sign of the Lion, where a pretty Flemish woman, named Madeleine, presided.

In the evening, after his conversation with Mazarin, he returned to his lodgings, absorbed in reflection. His mind was full of the fine diamond which he had once called his own, and which he had seen on the minister’s finger that night.

"Should that diamond ever fall into my hands again," such was his reflection, "I should turn it at once into money; I should buy, with the proceeds, certain lands around my father’s château, which is a pretty place—well enough—but with no land to it at all, except a garden about the size of the Cemetery des Innocents; and I should wait, in all my glory, till some rich heiress, attracted by my good looks, chose to marry me. Then I should like to have three sons: I should make the first a nobleman, like Athos; the second, a good soldier, like Porthos; the third, an excellent abbé, like Aramis. Faith! that would be a far better life than I lead now; but Monsieur Mazarin is a mean wretch, who won’t dispossess himself of his diamond in my favor.”

On entering the Rue Tiquetonne he heard a tremendous noise, and found a dense crowd near the house.

"Oh! oh!" said he, "is the hotel on fire?" On approaching the hotel of the Rue, he found, however, that it was in front of the next house, that the mob was collected: The people were shouting, and running about with torches. By the light of one of these torches, D’Artagnan perceived men in uniform.

He asked what was going on.

He was told that twenty citizens headed by one man, had attacked a carriage, which was escorted by a troop of the Cardinal’s bodyguard; but a re-enforcement having come up, the assailants had been put to flight, and the leader had taken refuge in the hotel next to his lodgings; the house was now being searched.

In his youth, D’Artagnan had often headed the bourgeoisie against the military, but he was cured of all those hot-headed propensities; besides he had the Cardinal’s hundred pistoles in his pocket, so he
went into the hotel without saying a word; he found Mauclerc
alarmed for his safety, and anxious to tell him all the events of the
evening, but he cut her short by asking her to put his supper in
his room, and give him with it a bottle of good Burgundy.

He took his key and his candle, and went up stairs to his bed-
room. He had been contented, for the convenience of the house, to
lodge on the fourth story; and truth obliges us even to confess that
his chamber was just above the gutter and below the roof. His first
care on entering was to lock up in an old bureau with a new lock,
his bag of money, and then as soon as supper was ready, he sent
away the waiter who brought it up, and sat down to table.

Not to reflect on what had passed, at one might fancy. No—
D'Artagnan considered that things are never well done when they
are not reserved to their proper time. He was hungry; he snipped,
he went to bed. Neither was he one of those who think that the
silence of the night brings good counsel with it. In the night he
slept, but in the morning, refreshed and calm, he was inspired with
the clearest views of everything. It was long since he had had any
reason for his morning's inspiration, but he had always slept all
night long. At daybreak he awoke, and made a tour round his
room.

"In '45," he said, "just before the death of the late Cardinal, I
received a letter from Athos. Where was I then? Let me see. Oh!
Oh! at the siege of Béarn. I was in the trenches. He told me
—let me think—what was it? That he was living on a small estate
—but where? I was just reading the name of the place when the
wind blew my letter away; I suppose to the Spaniards; there's no use
in thinking any more about Athos. Let me see—" with regard to
Porthos, I received a letter from him, too. He invited me to a hunt-
ing party on his property in the month of September, 1646. Un-
luckily, as I was then in Béarn, on account of my father's death,
the letter followed me there. I had left Béarn when it arrived, and
I never received it until the month of April, 1647; and as the invi-
tation was for September, 1646, I couldn't accept it. Let me look
for this letter; it must be with my title-deeds."

D'Artagnan opened an old casket, which stood in a corner of the
room, and which was full of parchments, referring to an estate, dur-
ing a period of two hundred years lost to his family. He uttered an
exclamation of delight, for the large handwriting of Porthos was
discernible, and beneath some lines traced by his worthy spouse.
D'Artagnan eagerly searched for the date of this letter; it was
dated from the Château du Vallon.

"Devil take the vain fellow," said D'Artagnan. "However, I
must have become an idiot by this time from drinking. Athos
must be absorbed in his devotional exercises."

He cast his eyes again on the letter. There was a postscript:

"I write by the same courier to our worthy friend Aramis in his
content."
“In his convent! what convent? There are about two hundred in Paris, and three thousand in France; and then, perhaps, on entering the convent he has changed his name. Ah! if I were but learned in theology, I should recollect what it was he used to dispute about with the Curate of Montdidier and the Superior of the Jesuits, when we were at Crevecoeur, I should know what doctrine he leans to, and I should glean from that what saint he has adopted as his patron.

“ Well, suppose I go back to the Cardinal and ask him for a passport into all the convents one can find, even into the unnumbered? It would be a curious idea, and maybe I should find my friend under the name of Achilles. But, no! I should lose myself in the Cardinal’s opinion. Great people only thank you for doing for them what’s impossible; what’s possible, they say, they can do themselves, and they are right.”

So he was perfectly ignorant either where to find Aramis any more than Porthos, and the affair was becoming a matter of great perplexity, when he fancied he heard a pane of glass break in his room window. He thought directly of his bag, and rushed from the inner room where he was sleeping. He was not mistaken: as he entered his bedroom, a man was getting in by the window.

“Ah! you scoundrel!” cried D’Artagnan, taking the man for a thief, and seizing his sword.

“Sir,” cried the man, “in the name of Heaven put your sword back into the sheath, and don’t kill me unheard. I’m no thief, but an honest citizen, well off in the world, with a house of my own. My name is—ah! but surely you are Monsieur d’Artagnan?”

“And then—Planchet! cried the lieutenant.

“At your service, sir,” said Planchet, overwhelmed with joy;

“and I’m still capable of serving you.”

“Perhaps so,” replied D’Artagnan. “But why the devil dost thou run about the tops of houses at seven o’clock of the morning in the month of January?”

“Sir,” said Planchet, “you must know; but, perhaps, you ought not to know—”

“Tell us what,” returned D’Artagnan; “but first put a napkin against the window, and draw the curtain.”

“Sir,” said the prudent Planchet, “in particular, are you on good terms with Monsieur de Rochefort?”

“Perfectly; one of my dearest friends.”

“Ah! so much the better!”

“But what has De Rochefort to do with this manner you have of invading my room?”

“Ah, sir! I must tell you that Monsieur de Rochefort is——”

Planchet hesitated.

“Ergal, I know where he is,” said D’Artagnan. “He’s in the Bastille.”

“That is to say, he was there,” replied Planchet. “But in returning hither last night, when fortunately you did not accompany him, as his carriage was crossing the Rue de la Fronsonerie, his guards insulted the people, who began to abuse them. The prisoner thought this a good opportunity for escape; he called out his name, and cried for help. I was there, I heard the name of Rochefort.
I remembered him well. I said in a loud voice that he was a prisoner, a friend of the Duc de Beaufort, who called for help. The people were infuriated; they stopped the horses, and cut the escort to pieces, whilst I opened the doors of the carriage, and Monseigneur de Rochefort jumped out and was lost amongst the crowd. At this moment a patrol passed by. I was obliged to sound a retreat toward the rue Tiquetonne; I was pursued, and took refuge in a house next to this, where I had been concealed till this morning on the top of the house, between two mattresss. I ventured to run along the gutters, and——"

"Well," interrupted D'Artagnan. "I am delighted that De Rochefort is free, but as for thee, if thou shouldst fall into the hands of the king's servants they will hang thee without mercy. Neverthe-
less, I promise thee thou shalt be hidden here, though I risk by concealing thee neither more nor less than my lieutenantcy. If it was found out that I gave a rebel an asylum."

"Ah! sir, you know well I would risk my life for you."

"Thou mayst add that thou hast risked it, Planchet. I have not forgotten all I owe thee. Sit down there, and eat in security. I see thee cast expressive glances at the remains of my supper."

"Yes, sir; for all I've had since yesterday was a slice of bread and butter, with preserve on it. Although I don't despise sweet things in proper time and place, yet I found that supper rather light."

"Poor fellow!" said D'Artagnan. "Well, come; set to."

"Ah, sir! you are going to save my life a second time," cried Planchet.

And he seated himself at the table, and ate as he did in the merry days of the Rue des Fossais, whilst D'Artagnan walked to and fro, and thought how he could make use of Planchet under present circumstances. While he turned this over in his mind, Planchet did his best to make up for lost time at table.

At last he uttered a sigh of satisfaction, and paused, as if he had partially appeased his hunger.

"Co, co," said D'Artagnan, who thought that it was now a convenient time to begin his interrogations, "dost thou know where Athos is?"

"No, sir," replied Planchet.

"The devil then dost not! Dost know where Porthos is?"

"No—not at all,"

"And Aramis?"

"Not in the least."

"The devil! the devil! the devil!"

"But, sir," said Planchet, with a look of surprise, "I know where Bazin is."

"Where is he?"

"At Notre Dame."

"What has he to do at Notre Dame?"

"He is beadle."

"Bazin beadle at Notre Dame! He must know where his master is!"

"Without doubt he must."

D'Artagnan thought for a moment, then took his sword, and put on his cloak ready to go out.
"Sir," said Panchet, in a mournful tone, "do you abandon me thus to my fate? Think, if I am found out here, the people of the house, who have not seen me enter it, must take me for a thief."

"True," said D'Artagnan. "Let's see. Canst thou speak my patois?"

"I can do something better than that, sir; I can speak Flemish."

"Where the devil didst thou learn it?"

"In Artois, where I fought for two years. Listen, sir. Geesten, morgen, muntzuy, oth ben hegevay le weeden the ge soul heets omstand."

"Which means?" "Good-day, sir! I am anxious to know the state of your health."

"He calls that knowing a language; but, never mind, that will do capably."

D'Artagnan opened the door, and called out to a waiter to desire Madeleine to come up-stairs.

When the landlady made her appearance, she expressed much astonishment at seeing Panchet.

"My dear landlady," said D'Artagnan, "I beg to introduce to you your brother, who is arrived from Flanders, and whom I am going to take into my service."

"My brother?"

"Wish your sister good-morning, Master Peter."

"Wilkom, zuster," said Panchet.

"Goedem dag, broeder," replied the astonished landlady.

"This is the case," said D'Artagnan; "this is your brother, Madeleine: you don't know him perhaps, but I know him: he has arrived from Amsterdam. You must dress him up during my absence. When I return, which will be in about an hour, you must offer him to me as a servant, and, upon your recommendation, though he doesn't speak a word of French, I take him into my service. You understand?"

"That is to say, I guess your wishes; and that is all that's necessary," said Madeleine.

"You are a precious creature, my pretty hostess, and I'm obliged to you."

The next moment D'Artagnan was on his way to Notre Dame.

CHAPTER VII.

TOUCHES UPON THE DIFFERENT EFFECTS WHICH HALF A PIESTOLE MAY PRODUCE UPON A BRAKER AND A CHORESTER.

D'Artagnan, as he passed the Pont Neuf, congratulated himself upon having found Panchet again; for at that time an intelligent servant was essential to him: nor was he sorry that through Panchet, and the situation which he held in the Rue des Lombards, a connection with the bourgeoisie might be commenced, at that critical period when that class were preparing to make war with the court party. It was like having a spy in the enemy's camp. In this frame of mind, grateful for the accidental meeting with Panchet, pleased with himself, D'Artagnan reached Notre Dame. He ran up the