



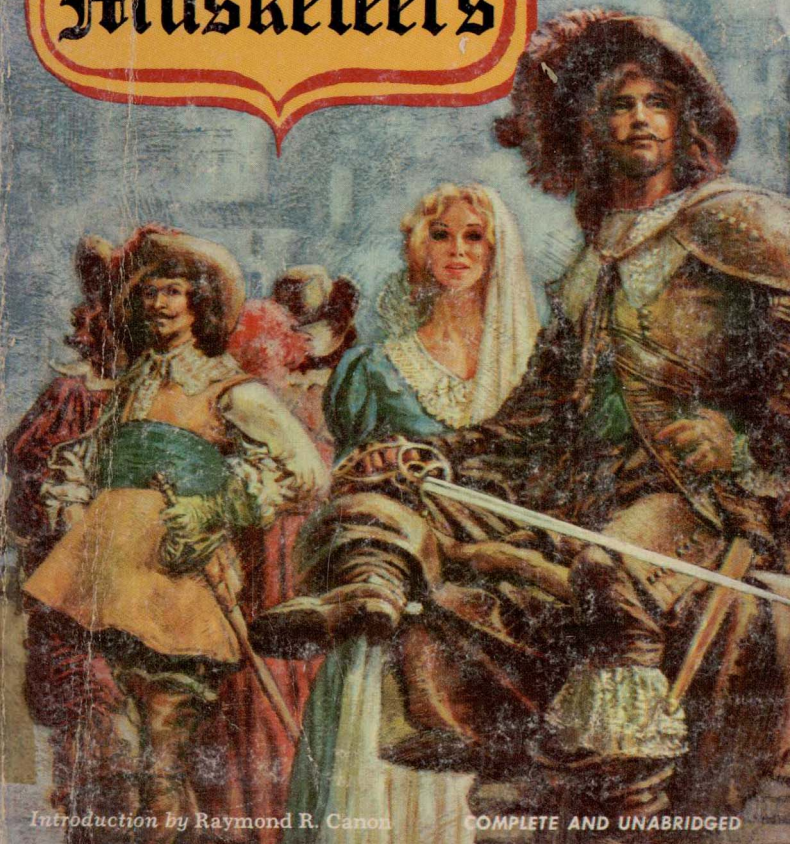
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CLASSICS SERIES CL127



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

The Three Musketeers



Introduction by Raymond R. Canon

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

The Three Musketeers



ALEXANDRE DUMAS



AIRMONT

AIRMONT PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.
22 EAST 60TH STREET • NEW YORK 10022

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THE SPECIAL CONTENTS OF THIS EDITION

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PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY IN THE DOMINION OF CANADA
BY THE RYERSON PRESS, TORONTO

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE COLONIAL PRESS, INC., CLINTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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The Three Musketeers



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

Introduction

The story is told of two English boys walking along the Seine River in Paris and browsing about at one of the small book stalls for which the city is famous. "Look!" said one to the other, after having examined one of the books. "Here's a French translation of *The Three Musketeers*."

This story, although undoubtedly apocryphal, illustrates extremely well how famous the works of certain French writers have become to English readers. And these writers, with Dumas and Verne in the fore, have gained a similar fame in many other countries, if the number of translations are to be believed. It is not surprising to learn that Dumas is a product of nineteenth-century France, for it is in this century that France produced far more than her share of writers whose fame has become worldwide. Nor has time diminished this popularity.

It was into the tumultuous world of Napoleon that Alexandre Dumas was born—on July 24, 1802. His father, who had been born in Haiti, and was part Negro, was a general under Bonaparte, and had fallen into disgrace in Egypt. He returned home—a broken man—and died in 1806 at the age of 34. His young wife was left with the task of trying to bring up the family. Her efforts to obtain a pension were unsuccessful, but later she was able to open a small tobacco shop and made a meager living from it. She had hoped that Alexandre would enter the priesthood, but after he ran away from home to avoid entering a seminary, nothing came of this plan. Instead, he entered a lawyer's office as a copy clerk, and it was while he was employed here that he came face to face with the realization that what he wanted to do most of all was to write. He considered himself too ignorant and naïve

to achieve anything of importance, and to correct this deficiency, he mapped out a definite plan of study. It was, however, a performance of *Hamlet* that gave him his first real lift. He sat spell-bound through the whole play, ordered a copy of it immediately afterwards, and in three days had learned the entire role of Hamlet by heart. He went on to read the works of contemporary French dramatists, and then sat down to write his first play with the help of de Leuven, a close friend. The play, together with two others which followed shortly afterward, were taken to Paris by the friend, but nothing came of them.

Like de Maupassant, Dumas went to Paris and obtained menial work while his mind was filled with great things he was going to put on paper. He also resembled Maupassant in that he had a great eye for the ladies. It is not surprising that he found a mistress in short order. The woman in question lived on the same floor as he and claimed to be separated from her husband. She was, in fact, quite single. It was from this liaison that a child was born. Dumas recognized the child to the point of giving him his own name. In later years, he, too, gained considerable fame as a writer.

Dumas did not spend all his time dreaming about writing. He realized the need for continued reading of established literature, and steeped himself in the works of Scott, Byron, and Cooper. Finally, at the age of twenty-three, he was able to witness his first production—"La Chasse et l'Amour"—which had a moderate success.

An interesting facet of this play is the fact that it was written in collaboration with two other authors, a practice which was to become a trademark of Dumas, and which led some critics to question the veracity of certain of his works. This practice of collaboration seems to have been more prevalent in France than in other countries. In the case of Erckmann-Chatrian, for example, the identity of the two writers is known, while those works of Dumas which are products of this method are often signed simply by his name. As a result, it is sometimes difficult, if not impossible, to know what is Dumas and what is not.

It was not until 1829 that Dumas had his first real dramatic success in the form of "*Henri III et sa Cour*" which was played at the Comédie Française. The play was later banned temporarily by Charles X, but its importance rests more in the fact that Dumas turns completely away from the classical tradition of the drama and heralds the definite arrival of the Romantic movement which was to find its zenith in Hugo's "*Hernani*," produced the following year.

The next few years saw Dumas traveling, writing and rewriting plays, changing mistresses, fighting duels—a very romantic existence for a romantic writer. He gradually branched out into other types of literature and had the satisfaction of seeing much of it accepted and published. He came into contact with numer-

ous other literary figures of the age, exchanged ideas with them, and, of course, couldn't resist writing in collaboration with some of them. But by this time, Dumas was established and he could write pretty much as he pleased.

It was in the year 1844 that all Paris found itself avidly reading the adventures of "Les Trois Mousquetaires" as fast as they appeared, and the fame of Dumas soared to astronomical heights. The sources of these adventures are varied, the basic work being the memoirs of M. d'Artagnan, which were published in The Hague in 1700. Dumas was helped in his work by his aide, Maquet. While the latter provided the rough drafts and ideas, it was Dumas who organized them and gave them their color. Without him, the stories were nothing; with him, they were everything.

It is a rare occasion, indeed, that the literary works of an author have caused such a sensation as did Dumas' version of the adventures of d'Artagnan and his three trusty henchmen. I am hard put to find an equal in our day, unless it be the exploits of James Bond. But for lightning to strike twice in the same place is unthinkable. Yet it did, and the second bolt hit with a force equal to the first—in the form of "Le Comte de Monte Cristo." In this work, Dumas was not limited by any historical figures and his imagination took over completely. Dantes held sway over the public as much as d'Artagnan had done, and one can imagine how much of Dantes was Dumas living vicariously.

Why were these two novels so popular? Reasons are not hard to find. There is nothing in the history of French literature that could compare with them, and so Dumas had the field to himself. Both novels were, in addition, that type which seems to appeal to the man in the street as well as to the scholar. Finally, the people of Paris were bored, and were ripe for any novelty that would relieve this boredom. So they took Dumas to their hearts, and, in their eagerness to read, ignored the obvious defects of the stories.

Dumas would have been a busy man with only the novels to turn out, but at the same time as the heroics of d'Artagnan were the talk of Paris, he was carrying out other ventures. To accomplish this, Dumas resorted to the old method of hiring authors to grind out story after story, to which he applied the finishing touches and signed his name to it. It was inevitable that some purist would decide to attack him publicly, and so it was precisely at this time that a vicious charge was made on Dumas by a certain Jacquot, who accused him of running a "literary workshop." Nothing came of this attack, so Jacquot followed it with a further one the following year, by publishing a pamphlet entitled "Fabrique de Romans, Maison Alexandre Dumas et Cie." The second accusation of Jacquot was more vitriolic than the first, was widely read, and evoked an immediate response on the part of Dumas. He took Jacquot to court and had the satisfac-

tion of seeing him sentenced to fifteen days in jail. However, the damage had been done, for Dumas bore the reputation for the rest of his days.

If this affair disturbed Dumas, he did not show it in his writing. The volume of work which he turned out was as enormous as ever, and much of it was produced by the same methods as before. But he never again achieved the success of his two novels. On the contrary, he saw the fame and fortune which he had gained slowly dissipate itself until anything he touched was crowned with instant failure. He died in 1870 at his son's home in Dieppe—a total wreck.

But if the fortunes of Dumas declined, it is safe to say that the fortunes of d'Artagnan and Dantes never suffered the same fate, for their appeal to readers today is still great. How many admirers of d'Artagnan have not imagined themselves to be followed by three such worthy men as Athos, Aramis, and Porthos, or rescuing a damsel in distress such as Mme. Bonacieux, or even thwarting the evil designs of a Milady Winter. Small wonder that people of all ages and nationalities have chosen to overlook the sordid details of Dumas' life and to re-live vicariously, as Dumas himself certainly did, the exploits of his swashbuckling heroes.

RAYMOND R. CANON

Chapter 1 *THE THREE PRESENTS OF M. D'ARTAGNAN THE ELDER*

On the first Monday of the month of April, 1625, the bourg, of Meung, in which the author of the "Romance of the Rose" was born, appeared to be in as perfect a state of revolution as if the Huguenots had just made a second Rochelle of it. Many citizens, seeing the women flying toward the High Street, leaving their children crying at the open doors, hastened to don the cuirass, and, supporting their somewhat uncertain courage with a musket or a partizan, directed their steps toward the hostelry of the Franc-Meunier, before which was gathered, increasing every minute, a compact group, vociferous and full of curiosity.

In those times panics were common, and few days passed without some city or other enregistering in its archives an event of this kind. There were nobles who made war against each other; there was the king, who made war against the cardinal; there was Spain, which made war against the king. Then, in addition to these, concealed or public, secret or patent wars, there were, moreover, robbers, mendicants, Huguenots, wolves, and scoundrels who made war upon everybody. The citizens always took up arms readily against thieves, wolves or scoundrels—often against other nobles or Huguenots—sometimes against the king—but never against the cardinal or Spain. It resulted, then, from this habit, that on the said first Monday of the month of April, 1625, the citizens, on hearing the clamor, and seeing neither the red and yellow standard, nor the livery of the Duke de Richelieu, rushed toward the hostel of the Franc-Meunier.

When arrived there, the cause of this hubbub was apparent to all.

A young man—we can sketch his portrait at a dash—imagine to yourself a Don Quixote of eighteen; a Don Quixote without his corselet, without his coat of mail, without his cuistres; a Don Quixote clothed in a woolen doublet, the blue color of which had faded into a nameless shade between lees of wine and a heavenly azure; face long and brown; high cheek-bones, a sign of astucity; the maxillary muscles enormously developed, an infallible sign by which a Gascon may always be detected, even without his barret-cap—and our young man wore a barret-cap, set off with

a sort of feather; the eye open and intelligent; the nose hooked, but finely chiseled. Too big for a youth, too small for a grown man, an experienced eye might have taken him for a farmer's son upon a journey, had it not been for the long sword, which, dangling from a leathern baldrick, hit against the calves of its owner as he walked, and against the rough side of his steed when he was on horseback.

For our young man had a steed, which was the observed of all observers. It was a Béarn pony, from twelve to fourteen years old, yellow in his hide, without a hair in his tail, but not without wind-galls on his legs, which, though going with his head lower than his knees, rendering a martingale quite unnecessary, contrived, nevertheless, to perform his eight leagues a day. Unfortunately, the qualities of this horse were so well concealed under his strange-colored hide and his unaccountable gait, that at a time when everybody was a connoisseur in horseflesh, the appearance of the said pony at Meung, which place he had entered about a quarter of an hour before, by the gate of Beaugency, produced an unfavorable feeling, which extended to his master.

And this feeling had been the more painfully perceived by young D'Artagnan—for so was the Don Quixote of this second Rosinante named—from his not being able to conceal from himself the ridiculous appearance that such a steed gave him, good horseman as he was. He had sighed deeply, therefore, when accepting the gift of the pony from M. d'Artagnan the elder. He was not ignorant that such a beast was worth at least twenty livres; and the words which accompanied the present were above all price.

"My son," said the old Gascon gentleman, in that pure Béarn *patois* of which Henry IV could never get rid—"my son, this horse was born in the house of your father, about thirteen years ago, and has remained in it ever since, which ought to make you love it. Never sell it—allow it to die tranquilly and honorably of old age; and if you make a campaign with it, take as much care of it as you would of an old servant. At court, provided you have the honor to go there," continued M. d'Artagnan the elder, "an honor to which, remember, your ancient nobility gives you right, sustain worthily your name of *gentleman*, which has been worthily borne by your ancestors during five hundred years, both for your sake and that of those that belong to you. By these I mean your relations and friends. Endure nothing from any one but M. le Cardinal and the king. It is by his courage, please to observe, by his courage alone, that a gentleman can make his way nowadays. Whoever trembles for a second perhaps allows the bait to escape, which, during that exact second, fortune held out to him. You are young; you ought to be brave for two reasons—the first is that you are a Gascon, and the second is that you are my son. Never fear quarrels, but seek

hazardous adventures. I have taught you how to handle a sword; you have thews of iron, a wrist of steel: fight on all occasions; fight the more for duels being forbidden, since, consequently there is twice as much courage in fighting. I have nothing to give you, my son, but fifteen crowns, my horse, and the counsels you have just heard. Your mother will add to them a recipe for a certain balsam, which she had from a Bohemian, and which has the miraculous virtue of curing all wounds that do not reach the heart. Take advantage of all, and live happily and long. I have but one word to add, and that is to propose an example to you—not mine, for I myself have never appeared at court, and have only taken part in religious wars as a volunteer; I speak of M. de Tréville, who was formerly my neighbor, and who had the honor to be as a child the play-fellow of our king, Louis XIII., whom God preserve! Sometimes their play degenerated into battles, and in these battles the king was not always the stronger. The blows which he received from him gave him a great esteem and friendship for M. de Tréville. Afterward, M. de Tréville fought with others; in his first journey to Paris, five times; from the death of the late king to the majority of the young one, without reckoning wars and sieges, seven times; and from that majority up to the present day, a hundred times perhaps! So that in spite of edicts, ordinances, and decrees, there he is captain of the musketeers—that is to say, leader of a legion of Caesars, whom the king holds in great esteem, and whom the cardinal dreads—he who dreads nothing, as it is said. Still further, M. de Tréville gains ten thousand crowns a year; he is, therefore, a great noble. He began as you begin; go to him with this letter, and make him your model, in order that you may do as he has done.”

Upon which M. d'Artagnan the elder girded his own sword round his son, kissed him tenderly on both cheeks, and gave him his benediction.

On leaving the paternal chamber, the young man found his mother, who was waiting for him with the famous recipe, of which the counsels we have just repeated would necessitate the so frequent employment. The adieux were on this side longer and more tender than they had been on the other; not that M. d'Artagnan did not love his son, who was his only offspring, but M. d'Artagnan was a man, and he would have considered it unworthy of a man to give way to his feelings; whereas Madame d'Artagnan was a woman, and, still more, a mother. She wept abundantly, and, let us speak it to the praise of M. d'Artagnan the younger, notwithstanding the efforts he made to be as firm as a future musketeer ought to be, nature prevailed, and he shed many tears, of which he succeeded with great difficulty in concealing the half.

The same day the young man set forward on his journey, furnished with the three paternal presents, which consisted, as

we have said, of fifteen crowns, the horse, and the letter for M. de Tréville, the counsels being thrown into the bargain.

With such a *vade mecum* D'Artagnan was, morally and physically, an exact copy of the hero of Cervantes, to whom we so happily compared him, when our duty of an historian placed us under the necessity of sketching his portrait. Don Quixote took windmills for giants, and sheep for armies; D'Artagnan took every smile for an insult, and every look as a provocation: whence it resulted that from Tarbes to Meung his fist was constantly doubled, or his hand on the hilt of his sword; and yet the fist did not descend upon any jaw, nor did the sword issue from its scabbard. It was not that the sight of the wretched pony did not excite numerous smiles on the countenances of passers-by; but as against the side of this pony rattled a sword of respectable length, and as over this sword gleamed an eye rather ferocious than haughty, these said passers-by repressed their hilarity, or, if hilarity prevailed over prudence, they endeavored to laugh only on one side, like the masks of the ancients. D'Artagnan, then, remained majestic and intact in his susceptibility till he came to this unlucky city of Meung.

But there, as he was alighting from his horse at the gate of the Franc-Meunier, without any one, host, waiter, or hostler, coming to hold his stirrup or take his horse, D'Artagnan spied, through an open window on the ground floor, a gentleman well made and of good carriage, although of rather a stern countenance, talking with two persons who appeared to listen to him with respect. D'Artagnan fancied quite naturally, according to his custom, that he must be the object of their conversation and listened. This time D'Artagnan was only in part mistaken: he himself was not in question, but his horse was. The gentleman appeared to be enumerating all his qualities to his auditors, and, as I have said, the auditors seeming to have great deference for the narrator, they every moment burst into fits of laughter. Now, as a half smile was sufficient to awaken the irascibility of the young man, the effect produced upon him by this vociferous mirth may be easily imagined.

Nevertheless, D'Artagnan was desirous of examining the appearance of this impertinent personage who was laughing at him. He fixed his haughty eye upon the stranger, and perceived a man of from forty to forty-five years of age, with black and piercing eyes, a pale complexion, a strongly-marked nose, and a black and well-shaped mustache. He was dressed in a doublet and hose of a violet color, with aiguillettes of the same without any other ornaments than the customary slashes through which the skirt appeared. This doublet and hose, though new, looked creased like traveling clothes for a long time packed up in a portmanteau. D'Artagnan made all these remarks with the rapidity of a most minute observer, and, doubtless, from an

instinctive feeling that this unknown was destined to have a great influence over his future life.

Now, as at the moment in which D'Artagnan fixed his eyes upon the gentleman in the violet doubtlet, the gentleman made one of his most knowing and profound remarks respecting the Béarnese pony, his two auditors laughed even louder than before, and he himself, though contrary to his custom, allowed a pale smile (if I may be allowed to use such an expression) to stray over his countenance. This time, there could be no doubt, D'Artagnan was really insulted. Full, then, of this conviction, he pulled his cap down over his eyes, and, endeavoring to copy some of the court airs he had picked up in Gascony among young traveling nobles, he advanced, with one hand on the hilt of his sword and the other leaning on his hip. Unfortunately, as he advanced, his anger increased at every step, and, instead of the proper and lofty speech he had prepared, as a prelude to his challenge, he found nothing at the tip of his tongue but a gross personality, which he accompanied with a furious gesture.

"I say, sir, you, sir, who are hiding yourself behind that shutter!—yes, you, sir, tell me what you are laughing at, and we will laugh together."

The gentleman withdrew his eyes slowly from the nag to his master, as if he required some time to ascertain whether it could be to him that such strange reproaches were addressed; then, when he could not possibly entertain any doubt of the matter, his eyebrows slightly bent, and, with an accent of irony and insolence impossible to be described, replied to D'Artagnan:

"I was not speaking to you, sir!"

"But I am speaking to you!" replied the young man, additionally exasperated with this mixture of insolence and good manners, of politeness and scorn.

The unknown looked at him again with a slight smile, and retiring from the window, came out of the hostelry with a slow step, and placed himself before the horse within two paces of D'Artagnan. His quiet manner and the ironical expression of his countenance redoubled the mirth of the persons with whom he had been talking, and who still remained at the window.

D'Artagnan, seeing him approach, drew his sword a foot out of the scabbard.

"This horse is decidedly, or rather has been in his youth, a *bouton d'or*" (buttercup), resumed the unknown, continuing the remarks he had begun, and addressing himself to his auditors at the window, without paying the least attention to the exasperation of D'Artagnan, who, however, placed himself between him and them. "It is a color very well known in botany, but till the present time very rare among horses."

"There are people who laugh at a horse that would not dare to laugh at the master of it," cried the young emulator of the furious Tréville.

"I do not often laugh, sir," replied the unknown, "as you may perceive by the air of my countenance; but, nevertheless, I retain the privilege of laughing when I please."

"And I," cried D'Artagnan, "will allow no man to laugh when it displeases me!"

"Indeed, sir," continued the unknown, more calm than ever. "Well! that is perfectly right!" and, turning on his heel, was about to re-enter the hostelry by the front gate, under which D'Artagnan, on arriving, had observed a saddled horse.

But D'Artagnan was not of a character to allow a man to escape him thus, who had had the insolence to laugh at him. He drew his sword entirely from the scabbard, and followed him, crying:

"Turn, turn, Master Joker, lest I strike you behind!"

"Strike me!" said the other, turning sharply round and surveying the young man with as much astonishment as contempt. "Why, my good fellow, you must be mad!" Then, in a suppressed tone, as if speaking to himself: "This is annoying," continued he. "What a God-send this would be for his majesty, who is seeking everywhere for brave fellows to recruit his musketeers!"

He had scarcely finished, when D'Artagnan made such a furious lunge at him that if he had not sprung nimbly backward, he would have jested for the last time. The unknown then, perceiving that the matter was beyond a joke, drew his sword, saluted his adversary, and placed himself on his guard. But at the same moment his two auditors, accompanied by the host, fell upon D'Artagnan with sticks, shovels, and tongs. This caused so rapid and complete a diversion to the attack, that D'Artagnan's adversary, while the latter turned round to face this shower of blows, sheathed his sword with the same precision, and from an actor, which he had nearly been, became a spectator of the fight, a part in which he acquitted himself with his usual impassability, muttering, nevertheless:

"A plague upon these Gascons! Put him on his orange horse again, and let him begone!"

"Not before I have killed you, poltroon!" cried D'Artagnan, making the best face possible, and never giving back one step before his three assailants, who continued to shower their blows upon him.

"Another Gasconade!" murmured the gentleman. "By my honor, these Gascons are incorrigible! Keep up the dance, then, since he will have it so. When he is tired, he will, perhaps, tell us that he has enough of it."

But the unknown was not acquainted with the headstrong personage he had to do with; D'Artagnan was not the man ever to cry for quarter. The fight was, therefore, prolonged for some seconds; but at length D'Artagnan's sword was struck from his hand by the blow of a stick, and broken in two pieces. Another

blow full upon his forehead, at the same moment, brought him to the ground, covered with blood and almost fainting.

It was at this period that people came flocking to the scene of action from all parts. The host, fearful of consequences, with the help of his servants, carried the wounded man into the kitchen, where some trifling attention was bestowed upon him.

As to the gentleman, he resumed his place at the window, and surveyed the crowd with a certain air of impatience, evidently annoyed by their remaining undispersed.

"Well, how is it with this madman?" exclaimed he, turning round as the opening door announced the entrance of the host, who came to inquire if he was unhurt.

"Your excellency is safe and sound?" asked the host.

"Oh, yes! perfectly safe and sound, my good host, and wish to know what is become of our young man."

"He is better," said the host; "he fainted quite away."

"Indeed!" said the gentleman.

"But before he fainted, he collected all his strength to challenge you, and to defy you while challenging you."

"Why, this fellow must be the devil in person!" cried the unknown.

"Oh, no, your excellency!" replied the host, with a grin of contempt; "he is not the devil, for during his fainting we rummaged his valise, and found nothing but a clean shirt and twelve crowns, which, however, did not prevent his saying, as he was fainting, that if such a thing had happened in Paris you should have instantly repented of it, while here you would only have cause to repent of it at a later period."

"Then," said the unknown coldly, "he must be some prince in disguise."

"I have told you this, good sir," resumed the host, "in order that you may be on your guard."

"Did he name no one in his passion?"

"Yes! he struck his pocket and said: 'We shall see what M. de Tréville will think of this insult offered to his *protégé*.'"

"M. de Tréville?" said the unknown, becoming attentive: "he put his hand upon his pocket while pronouncing the name of M. de Tréville? Now, my dear host! while your young man was insensible, you did not fail, I am quite sure, to ascertain what that pocket contained. What was there in it?"

"A letter addressed to M. de Tréville, captain of the musketeers."

"Indeed!"

"Exactly as I have the honor to tell your excellency."

The host, who was not endowed with great perspicacity, did not observe the expression which his words had given to the physiognomy of the unknown. The latter rose from the front of the window, upon the sill of which he had leaned with his

elbow, and knitted his brows like a man suddenly rendered uneasy.

"The devil!" murmured he, between his teeth. "Can Tréville have set this Gascon upon me? He is very young, but a sword-thrust is a sword-thrust, whatever be the age of him who gives it, and a youth is less to be suspected than an older man; a weak obstacle is sometimes sufficient to overthrow a great design."

And the unknown fell into a reverie which lasted some minutes.

"Host," said he, "could you not contrive to get rid of this frantic boy for me? In conscience, I cannot kill him; and yet," added he, with a coldly menacing expression, "and yet he annoys me. Where is he?"

"In my wife's chamber, where they are dressing his hurts, on the first floor."

"His things and his bag are with him? Has he taken off his doublet?"

"On the contrary, everything is in the kitchen. But if he annoys you, this young crazy fool——"

"To be sure he does. He causes a disturbance in your hostelry. Go make out my bill, and call my servant."

"What, sir! do you mean to leave us already?"

"You know I was going, as I ordered you to get my horse saddled. Has not my desire been complied with?"

"Yes, sir; and as your excellency may have observed, your horse is in the great gateway, ready saddled for your departure."

"That is well; do as I have directed you, then."

"What the devil!" said the host to himself, "can he be afraid of this boy?" He bowed humbly, and retired.

"Milady* must see nothing of this fellow," continued the stranger. "She will soon pass—she is already late. I had better get on horseback, and go and meet her. I should like, however, to know what this letter addressed to Tréville contains!"

And the unknown, muttering to himself, directed his steps toward the kitchen.

In the meantime, the host, who entertained no doubt that it was the presence of the young man that drove the unknown from his hostelry, reascended to his wife's chamber, and found D'Artagnan just recovering his senses. Giving him to understand that the police would deal with him pretty severely for having sought a quarrel with a great lord, for, in the opinion of the host, the unknown could be nothing less than a great lord, he insisted that, notwithstanding his weakness, he should get up and depart as quickly as possible. D'Artagnan, half stupe-

* We are well aware that this term "milady" is only properly used when followed by a family name. But we find it thus in the manuscript, and we do not choose to take upon ourselves to alter it.