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THE THREE GUARDSMEN

BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS

action, but at that period people were not so scrupulous.

D'Artagnan's plan was very simple. By Kitty's chamber be would gain that of her mistress. He would take advantage of the first moment of surprise, shume and terror. He might the unfortunate Forthos. He, having the campaign was to open.

"Yes, monsieur," said Mousqueton, but in a very ill humor. Go on!" And he continued his way toward the two friends went to ring at the bell of the unfortunate Forthos. He, having as them crossing the yard, took care, not to answer, and they rang in was to open.

be sure that nobody could effier doe or hear him, and gave a letter to Aramis. The guardaman uttered a cry of joy at the sight of the seat, kissed the superscription with an almost religious respect, and opened the opisite, which contained what follows:

My Priend—It is the will of sate that we should be still for some fines. My Priend—It is the will of sate that are not lost bayond return. Firecas assigned, but the delightful days of youth are not lost bayond return. Firecas assigned, but the delightful days of youth are not lost bayond return. Firecas assigned, but the delightful days of youth are not lost bayond returns. Firecas assigned, but him of me, who tained it is your dear black eyes!

Added for, rather, au revoir!

The messenger then drew from smid his rags 150 Spanish double pistoles, which he laid down on the table; then he opened the door, bowed, and went out before the young man, supessed by his letter, had ventured to addresse a word to him.

Aramis then reperused the letter and nevertived there was a postectific.

"Lies of the fall in the shape of imprecations and represents upon the imprecations and represents the submed a submediation of a woman Porthos It all upon a best of a woman Porthos It all upon the submediation of a woman Porthos It all upon the submediation of a woman Porthos of a woman

"Milady will tell you."

"Ah, you do not love me," cried Ritty, "and I am very wretched."

In spite of the caresses with which D'Artagnan endeavored to console her Kitty wept for some time before she could be persuaded to give her mistress the note, but she yielded at last.

CHAPTER XXVII.

In Which the Equipment of Aramis and Porthos is Treated Of.

N'entering his rooms the same day Aramis found a man of short stature and intelligent eyes, but covered with rags.

"I wish to speak with M Aramis, is that your name, monsient?"

"Yes; you have brought me something?"

"Yes, if you can show me a certain embroidered handkerchie?"

"Yes, if you can show me a certain embroidered handkerchie?"

"Yes, if you can show me a certain embroidered handkerchie?"

"Yes, if you can show me a certain embroidered handkerchie?"

"Yes, if you can show me a certain embroidered handkerchie?"

"Yes, if you can show me a certain embroidered handkerchie?"

"Here it is," said Aramis.

"That is right," replied the mendicant. "Dismiss your lackey."

Basin being sone, the mendicant cast a rapid glance around him in order to be sure that nobody could either see or hear him, and gave a letter to Aramis.

The guardaman uttered a cry of joy at the sight of the seal, kinsed the superscription with an almost relations respect, and opened the epistle, which contained what follows:

"All that which a man wounded in his best. One of our clients is a horse-

"And how will you do that?" asked the musketeer.
"Listen to me. This evening M. Goquenard is going to the house of M. le Duc de Chaulnes, who has sent for him. It is upon a consultation, which will last three hours at least. 'Come, we shall be alone and can make up our accounts."

"Ah now that is speaking to the purpose, my dear!"

Daily (mall) in Soc; it mo. 750; 0 mo. 8 mo. 750; 0 mo. 8 mo

scarcely pushed me in, when her mis-tress' little bell rang.

"A few minutes before the appoint-ed hour milady had the lights in her chamber dimmed and dismissed Kitty to hers, with an injunction to intro-duce the count the moment he arrived.

"I was at the door of milady's claim-ber before Kitty had closed it.

"What is that noise? said milady.

"It is I. De Wardes,' replied I in a suppressed voice.

suppressed voice.

"'Well, why does he not come in a said milady.

"Shaking off poor Kitty with as much kindness as I could, I made my way into milady's chamber. And here, dear Athos, I must confess that I ficiently.

scarcely knew which predominated, love or jealousy. Her love for De Wardes seems boundless."

"Call it not love, D'Artagnan," said milady in a quick tone, but so piercing that D'Artagnan heard her in the antechamber.

He was introduced.

"I am at home to nobody," said mi-milady in glance.

"At parting she forced this ring upon my finger with a request that I would return her a token of responding affection today, and people don't give such jewels as this away lightly. My heart smote me, and I wished to refuse it. She, however, would not hear of that, but replied, 'No, no; keep that ring for my sake. You will render me likewise a greater service than you are aware of by doing so,' and her voice "At parting she forced this ring upon my finger with a request that I would return her a token of responding affection today, and people don't give such jewels as this away lightly. My heart smote me, and I wished to refuse it. She, bowever, would not hear of that, but replied, 'No, no: keep that ring for my sake. You will render me likewise a greater service than you are aware of by doing so,' and her voice was agitated as she snoke. What the was agrated as she spoke. What the latter part of her speech meant I don't know, but she is full of mysteries. The ring is, as you see, a magnificent sapphire, surrounded by brilliants. She added:

added:

"'Poor dear angel, whom the monster of a Gascon was so near killing.
Do you suffer much from your
wounds?

"'Yes, a great deal,' said I.

"Be satisfied,' murmured she. ?

will avenge you and cruelly.'

"'Whew!' thought I to myself, 'the
time for confidence has not yet come!'
At our parting another interview was
agreed upon for next week."

agreed upon for next week."

"Your milady is doubtless an infamous creature. But, since you mentioned it, my aftention has been engressed by your ring," said Athos. "It reminds me of a family jewel. I did not think two sapphires of such a fine water existed. And she gave you that

water existed. And she gave you that ring, do you say?"

"Yes, my beautiful Englishwoman, or, rather, Frenchwoman, for I am sure she was bern in France, took it from her own finger and forced it on to mine." "Pray," said Athos after a minute,

"Fray," said Athos after a minute, "either take off that ring or turn the collet inside. It recalls such recollections that I cannot keep my head cool enough to converse with you. But stop, let me look at that ring again. The one I mentioned to you had one of its faces scratched."

D'Artagnan took off the ring, giving it again to Athos.

it again to Athos,
Athos started. "Look," said be, "is
it not strange?" and he pointed out to
D'Artagnan the scratch he had remem-

"But from whom did this ring come "But from whom did this ring come to you, Athos?"

"From my mother, who inherited it from her mother."

"And you—sold it?" asked D'Artagnan hesitatingly,

"No," replied Athos, with a singular smile, "I gave it away in a love affair, as it has been given to you."

as it has been given to you."
D'Artagnan took back the ring, but
put it into his pocket and not on to

his finger.

"D'Artagnan." said Athos, taking his hand, "you know I love you. If I had a son I could not love him better. Take my advice, renounce this woman."

"You are right," said D'Artagnan. "I

have done with her, she terrifies me.

Athos bowed to D'Artagnan, like
man who wishes to be left alone with

his thoughts.
On reaching home D'Artaguan found
Kitty waiting for him. She was sent
by her mistress to the false De Wardes.
Her mistress was mad with love; she ed to know when her lover w washed to know when her lover would meet her again. The counsels of his friend, joined to the cries of his own heart, made him determine, now his pride was saved and his vengeance sat-isfied, not to see milady again. As a reply he wrote the following letter: Do not desend upon me madame for

pride was saved and his vengeance attesfied, not to see milady again. As a reply he wrote the following letter:
Do not depend upon me, madame, for the next meeting. Since my convalescence I have so many affairs of this kind on my hands that I am forced to regulate them a little. When your turn comes I shall have the honor to inform you of it. I kiss your hands.

DE WARDES.

Not a word about the ring. D'Artagnan gave 'e- open letter to Eity, who at first was unable to comprehend it, but who became almost wild with joy on reading it a second time. She ran back to the Place Royale.

Milady opened the letter with eagerness, but at the first words ahe read she became livid. She crushed the paper, and Kitty, fearing she was going to faint, hastened toward ber and was beginning to open her dress, but milady started up, pushing her away. "What do you want with me?" sid she, "and why do you place your hand an me?"

It hought you were going to faint, milady," answered the terrified girl.

"I faint: 1! I! Do you take me for a weak, silly woman, then? When I am insulted I do not faint: I sverge myself!"

And she made a sign for Kitty to

myself!"
And she made a sign for Kitty to

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Dream of Vengence.

HAT evening milady gave orders that when M. D'Artaguan came as usual, he should be immediately admitted. But he did not come.

The next day Kitty went to see the young man again, and related to him all that had passed on the preceding evening. D'Artaguan smiled; this jealous anger of milady was his revenge.

contrary, as and as possessor.

This letter was in miliady's handwriting, only this time it was addressed to M. d'Arragnan, and not to M. de Wardes.

He opened it and rgad as follows:
Dear M. d'Artagnan—It is wrong thus to neglect your friends, particularly at the moment you are about to leave them for so long a time. My brother-in-law and myself expected you yesterday and the day before, but in vain. 'Will it be the same this evening.' Your very grateful LADY, CLARIK.

"Will you go?" asked Kitty. "Will you go?" asked Kitty.

D'Artagnan promised Kitty to remain insensible to the seductions of milady and desired her to tell her mistress that he could not be more grateful for her kindnesses than he was, and that he would be obedient to her orders; but he did not dare to write for fear of not being able, to such experienced eyes as those of milady, to disguise his writing sufficiently.

never did a more distressed counte-nance give the lie to a more amiable smile. She asked D'Artagnan if he had a mistress.

"Alse!" sold D'Artegnen with the

"Can you be cruel enough to put such a question to me—to me, who from the moment I saw you have only hreathed and sighed by you and for you!"
Milady smiled with a strange smile.
"You know, the more hearts are worth the capture, the more difficult they are to be won."
"Oh, difficulties do not affright me," said D'Artagnan. "I shrink before nothing but, impossibilities."

note is changed. Can she be going to fall in love with me, by chance, this fair inconstant, and be disposed to



"You, madame!" said D'Artagnan, affecting surprise. "Is that possible, good and beautiful as you are?"
"An enemy who has insulted me so cruelly that between him and me it is war to the death. May I reckon on

war to the death. May I recked on you as an auxiliary?"

"You may, madame," said he with emphasis. "My arm and my life are yours, as my love is."

"Then," said milady, "since you are as generous as you are loving

stopped.

"Do not overwhelm me with happiness!" cried D'Artagnan, throwing himself on his knees and covering with kisses the hands she did not attempt the statement of the stat

you, double fool, living sword blade?

"Pall voluntarily into my arms," said
D'Artagnan, likewise to himself, "after having abused me with such effrontery, hypocritical, dangerous woman, and afterward I will laugh at you
with him whom you wish me to kill."

"I am ready," said he aloud.

"You have understood me, then, dear
M. d'Artagnan," said milday, "and you
would employ on-my account your arm,
which has already acquired so much
remown?"

which has already acquired so much cenown?"
"Instantity!"
"But on my part," said milady, "how should I repay such a service? I know what lovers are; they are men who do nothing for nothing."
"You know the only reply that I desire," said D'Artagnan, "the only one worthy of you and of me!"
"Interested man!" cried she, amiling." I am at your orders," said D'Artagnan.

statue.

Milady seized the desired mon "His name is"—said she in her turn.
"De Wardes. I know it," cried D'Artagnan.
"And how do you know it?" asked

self to be carried away and that he had committed an error.
"I know it because yesterday M. de Wardes, in a salou where I was, show-ed a ring which he sald he had of

"Miserable scoundrel!" cried milady.
"Well?" continued she.
"I will avenge you of this 'miserable scoundrel," replied D'Artagnan,
"Thanks, my brave friend!" cried milady, "and when shall I be avenged?"

please. You will be avenged or I shall be dead!"

be dead!"

Milady was about to cry out, "Immediately!" but she reflected that such precipitation would not be very gracious toward D'Artagnan.

"No," said she. "You will avenge me, but you will not be dead. He is a contemptible fellow. But silence! I hear my brother; it will be useless for him

to find you here."
She rang the bell and Kitty appeared.
"Go out this way," said she, opening a small private door, "and come back at 11 o'clock. We will then terminate

The poor girl was near fainting at

The poor girl was near fainting at hearing these words.
Milady held out her hand to D'Artagnan, which he kissed tenderly.
"But," said he, as he retired as quickly as possible from the reproaches of Kitty, "but I must not play the fool—this is certainly a very bad woman. I must be upon my guard."

He walked six or seven times around the Place Royale, turning at every ten steps to look at the light in milady's spartment, which was to be seen through the blinds; it was evident that this time the young woman was not in this time the young woman was not in such haste to retire to her apartment as she had been the first. At length the light disappeared.

With this light was extinguished the brain on fire he re-entered the house and flew toward Kitty's chamber. The poor girl, pale as death and trembling in all her limbs, wished to delay her lover, but milady, with her ear on the watch, had heard the noise

D'Artagnan had made and, opening the As the door closed after them, Kitty rushed toward it. Jealousy, fury, of-fended pride, all the passions in short, that dispute the heart of an outraged woman in love, urged her to make a revelation; but she reflected that she would be totally lost if she confessed having assisted in such a machination, and, above all, that D'Artagnan would also be lost to her forever. This last ought of love counseled her to make

this last sacrifice.

D'Artagnan, on his part, had gained the summit of all his wishes. It was no longer a rival that was beloved, it was he himself that was apparently beloved. A secret voice whispered to him, at the bottom of his heart, that he was but an instrument of venhe was but an instrument of ven-geance; that he was only caressed till he had given d. th: but pride, but self love, but madness silenced this voice and stiffed its murmurs. But milady, who had not the sam motives for forgetfulness that D'Ar-tagian had, was, the first to return to realify, and asked the young man if

reality, and asked the young man if ranged in his mind.

D'Artagnan drew bis seat nearer to milady's.

"Well, now, let us see what you would do to prove this lore of which you speak. I have an enemy," said she.

"You, madame!" said D'Artagnan, whose ideas had taken quite another course, forgot himself like a fool, and answered gallantly you speak. I have an enemy," said she that was not the time to think about duels and sword thrusts. He fancied himself very cunning when advising milady to renounce, by par-doning De Wardes, the furious pro-jects she had formed,

"Are you afraid, dear D'Artagnan?"
"You cannot think me so, dear love!" seplied D'Artagnan, "but now, suj pose this poor Count de Wardes should be less guilty than you imagine him to be?"

"At all events," said milady serious "He shall die, then, since you con-

demn him!"

When the faint light of dawn peeped when the thinks milady warned b'Artagnan that it was time to depart, not forgetting to remind him of his promise to avenge her on Count de Wardes. "You would not, then, prefer a

"You would not, then, prefer a means," resumed D'Artagnan, "which would equally avenge you, while rendering the combat useless?"

Milady looked at her lover in silence. The pale light of the first rays of day gave to her clear eyes a strangely frightful expression.

"Really," said she, "I believe you now begin to hesitate."

"You gave De Wardes a meeting on Thursday last in this very room, did you not?"

you not?"
"Who—1? No, certainly not!" said
milady, in a tone of voice so firm and with a countenance so unchanged that if D'Artagnan had not been in such perfect possession of the fact he would have doubted."

have doubted."
"Do not say that which is not true,
my angel," said D'Artagnan, smiling.

and grasped her dress, out the transcambric could not stand against two such strong wills—it was torn from her fair round shoulders, and, to his horror and astenishment, D'Artagaan recognized upon one of them, indelibly branded, the mark which is impressed by the impressed by t

cutioner.

"Great benven:" cried D'Artagnan.
icosing his hold and remaining mute,
motionless and frozen.
But milady felt hervelf denounced by

her secret, her terrible secret—the se-cret she concealed even from her mild with such care, the secret of which all the world excepting he was ignorant. "Ah, wretch," she cried. "thou hast basely betrayed me, and, still more, thou hast my secret! Thou shalt die!" And she flew to a little iniaid casket which stood upon the tolet, opened it with a feverich and trembling hand, drew from it a small poniard with a golden haft and a sharp, thin blade, and then threy be reself with a bound

upon D'Arrignan.
Although the young man was, as we know, brave, he drew back to the other side of the room as he would have done from a serpent which wa

crawling towar! him, and his sword coming in contact with his nervous hand, he drew it almost unconsciously from the scabburd. She then endeavored to seize the word with her hands. But D'Arta-man kept it free from her grasp and continued to present the point, some-limes at her eyes, sometimes at her prenst, while he aimed at making his retreat_by the door which led to Kit-

Milady during this time continued to

Milady during this time continued to strike at him with her dagger with horrible fury, screaming in a superhuman manner.

"Very well, pretty lady, very well," said he, "but if you don't calm yourself I will uark you with a second fleur-de-lis upon one of those pretty cheeks."

"Scoundre!! Infamous scoundre!!" howled miled!"

howled milady.

But D'Artagnan with one spring few from the chamber of milady into that of the maid, and quick as lightning he slammed to the door and placed all his weight against it, while kitty holted it.

Kitty bolted it.
"Quick, Kitty! Quick!" said D'Ar tagnan in a low voice as soon as the bolts were fast. "Let me get out of the house, for if we leave her time to turn around she will have me killed



It was time. Milady had already rung her bell and aroused the whole mansion. The porter was drawing the

the gate!" The young man sprang out while impotent gesture. At the moment she lost sight of him milady sank back fainting into her chamber

CHAPTER XXIX.

w, Without Incommoding Himsel Athos Found His Equipment. Athes Found His Equipment.

'ARTAGNAN was so completely bewildered that, without taking any heed of what would become of Kitty, he ran at full speed across half Paris and did not stop till he came to Athos' door. He crossed the court, ran up the two flights to Athos: apartments and knocked at the door enough to break it down.

Athos met his comrade. "Are you wounded, my friend? How pale yourse!" he cried.

"Athos," said D'Artagnan, "prepare yourself to hear an incredible, an un with a figur-de-lis upon her shoulder!"
"Ah!" cried the musketeer as if he had received a ball in his heart. "Are you sure," said D'Artagnan, "are you sure that the other is dead-she of whom you told me one day at

Amiens?"
Athos uttered a groan and let his head sink into his hands.
"This one is a woman of from twenty-six to twenty-eight years of age." blue and clear eyes of a strange brilliancy, with black eyelids and eye-

[TO RE CONTINUED.]

The next day Kitty went to see the young man again, and related to him all that had passed on the preceding evening. D'Artagnan smiled; this jealous anger of milady was his revenge.

That evening milady was still more impatient than on the preceding one. She renewed the order relative to the Gascop; but, as before, she expected him in vain.

The next morning, when Kitty presented herself at D'Artagnan's residence with a letter, she was no longer forous and slert, as she had been on the folded her in his arms. She made no effort to remove her lips from him it was then broad daylight. In his eigerness t detain her, D'Artagnan and the north side of it."

"I am at your orders," said D'Artagnan, smiling.

"Quite certain?" said milady, with a last doubt.

"Only name to me the base man that has brought tears into your beautiful eyes?"

"How is that? You told me yourself that that ring?"—
"How is that? You told me yourself that that ring?"—
"How is that? You told me yourself that that ring?"—
"How is that? You told me yourself that that ring?"—
"That ring I have! The Count de Wardes of last Thursday and the D'Artagnan of today are the same person!"
The aext morning, when Kitty presented herself at D'Artagnan's residence with a letter, she was no longer forous and slert, as she had been on the folded her in his arms. She made no effort to remove her lips from him.

It was then broad daylight. In his lisses, only she did not respond to mers visited it was a terribly bare lit-

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