

and begun to repair the breach made by his army, had just gone out with ten companies of grenadiers to reconstruct the work.

M. Colbert's messenger had orders to seek M. d'Artagnan wherever he might be, and at whatever hour of the day or night. He made his way, then, to the trenches, followed by his escort, all on horseback.

It was easy to distinguish D'Artagnan in the open plain with his gold-laced hat and his long cane. He was biting his white mustache and brushing off from his tunic, with his left hand, the dust thrown up by the balls that ploughed the soil around him.

They also witnessed, in the midst of the terrible fire, which filled the air with its whizzing and hissing, the officers handling the shovels, the soldiers rolling the wheelbarrows, and the vast piles of fascines, carried thither and heaped up by a score of half a score of men, which covered the front of the trench reopened to the centre by this extraordinary effort of the general to inspire his soldiers.

Within three hours everything was repaired, and D'Artagnan began to speak more gently. He was quite calm when the captain of the pioneers came, hat in hand, to inform him that the trench afforded cover. This man had scarcely finished speaking, when a ball cut off one of his legs and he fell into D'Artagnan's arms. The latter encouraged the soldier, took him up in his arms, and carried him into the trench, amid the enthusiastic cheers of the regiments.

From now on it was not ardor that seized the soldiers, it was delirium. Two companies stole away and rushed upon the outposts, which they destroyed in a few seconds.

When their comrades, who could hardly be held in by D'Artagnan, saw them lodged on the bastions, they sprang after them, and there was soon a furious struggle at the counter-scarp, on which the fate of the place depended.

D'Artagnan saw that there was only one way left him to stop his army, and that was to hurl it on the fortress. He directed all his forces on the two breaches which the enemy were repairing. The shock was terrible. Eighteen companies took part in it, and D'Artagnan advanced with the remainder to within half cannon-shot of the place, to support the assault by echelons.

The cries of the Dutch, who were being poniarded by his grenadiers, could be heard distinctly. The struggle grew more