

A Diplomatic Adventure

Merton merely smiled, and the blue eyes narrowed a little as the countess said:

"And so you are D'Artagnan. How delightful! The man of three duels. And pray, who was my husband?"

"That high-minded gentleman, Athos," said Merton, lifting his glass and bowing to the count.

"Gracious!" cried the countess. "What delightfully ingenious people! I shall always call him Athos."

"It was well, colonel," said the count, "that no one suspected you. The absence of secrecy in the duel put the police at fault. Had you been supposed to be carrying those papers, you would never have reached the field."

"Perhaps. One never can tell," said D'Artagnan, simply.

"Ah, well," said our host, rising, "I have long since forgiven you, Madame Merton,