

# SWING THAT SWORD!

A Random Look At The Historical Novel

By WILBORNE HARRELL

Give to my hand a flashing sword,  
In glory let me join the fight;  
In honor wield it like a lord,  
But bear it ever in the right.

When Alexandre Dumas wrote The Three Musketeers and created D'Artagnan, he gave to the world a symbol of romance that has lived through page after page of fiction and many miles of movie film. Given the breath of life by the early portrayals of Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., and later by Errol Flynn and others, the fictional character of Dumas' and his inevitable swordplay has outlived its creator in both popularity and fame. Which, the old saying to the contrary, proves that the sword can be mightier than the pen.

Alexandre Dumas was a brilliant writer and the most prolific producer of colorful historical novels the world has ever known. He wrote over 1200 volumes of fiction, of which the best known single volume is probably The Three Musketeers and its inimitable swordsman, D'Artagnan.

The plumed hat, the flowing cape, the high boots, and the sword—ah, don't forget the sword—are familiar to the readers of romantic novels. It is the flashing blade, more than anything else, that blazed the way for the historical novel into public acclaim. But for the sword, swash-buckling fiction would have died a quick death. And where would the movies be if we deprived them of that indispensable prop, the sword?

Grasp a sword by its hilt and we have a weapon—a conqueror of empires, a carver of destinies. Hold it by its blade and we have a cross—a defender of the faithful, protector of the weak. The sword is simultaneously aggressive and defensive; belligerent and peaceful. The attributes of the sword are the natural ingredients of the popular historical novel, and ready grist for the historical literary mill. Other weapons, the knife, the lance, the gun, the bow, closely parallel the sword and are essential to some forms of historical literature. But the sword is still supreme—king.

A singing, flashing blade exudes an aura of romance that no gun may equal. The sword is subtle, suave—the gun a crafty blunderer. The gun is loudmouthed, blatant—the sword is quiet, insistent. Both are deadly—but the gun is treacherous, striking like a snake from ambush. The sword, by its very nature, must allow its opponent to come within striking distance before going into action.

D'Artagnan is the prototype of the modern school of the historical novel and the embodiment of all the elements that the average reader expects to find when he opens the pages of a costume romance. Reading historical novels is the adult equivalent of playing soldier or pirate. It affords a vicarious outlet for that juvenile urge for dramatizing our heroes none of us outgrow. An adult collects rapiers and swords and crosses them on his wall—when his fingers fairly itch

to take them down and play with them; to be a boy again wielding a wooden sword. But he is ashamed to give way to this boyish but perfectly natural impulse.

So—the logical gateways to adventure closed to us—we do the next best thing: we read about adventure and romance in the pages of historical novels.

A large percentage of historical novels published today fall into the "modern" era and fit the D'Artagnan pattern. Very few new books reach farther back into history than Elizabethan England—those lusty and adventurous days when new horizons hove into view and far lands remained to be explored.

But there are fertile fields for the writer and many excellent books to be enjoyed by the reader that reach back beyond Elizabethan England. And in my opinion have as strong an interest, and as strong a hold on the intellect, for those days are more mysterious—we know less about them. And through all these periods of history we find the sword, a shining bodkin on a thread of romance, weaving and shuttling back and forth. The heavy, two-handed sword of the Middle Ages and the Crusades (Scott's Ivanhoe); the short sword of ancient Rome (Davis' (Continued on Page Eleven)

**CHRISTIAN CHURCH SERVICES**  
Services at the First Christian Church have been announced as follows by the pastor, the Rev. E. G. Alexander:  
Bible School, Sunday morning at 10 o'clock; morning service at 11 o'clock; young people's meeting at 6:30 P. M.; evening service at 7:30 o'clock. Wednesday Evening Bible Class meets at 7:30 o'clock. Everyone is welcome to all services.

*No New Designs  
Time for Repairs!*



For a like-new appearance let us give your shoes a complete rebuilding job—For foot health and comfort ask for "STEERHEAD" genuine leather soles.

**W. M. RHOADES  
SHOE REPAIR SHOP**  
EDENTON, N. C.  
429 S. Broad St. Phone 378

## Gibson's Diamond Eight



\$2.10  
pt.  
\$3.40  
4/5 qt.

Gibson's Diamond 8 Blended Whiskey, 86 proof, 65% Grain Neutral Spirits.

# NOTICE! TO CHOWAN COUNTY TAXPAYERS

By order of the Chowan County Commissioners, I will on Monday, May 7, 1951, advertise property for sale for 1950 delinquent taxes, the sale to be held on Monday, June 4, 1951.

**PAY YOUR TAXES NOW AND SAVE THIS EXTRA  
EXPENSE AND EMBARRASSMENT**

**J. A. BUNCH**  
Sheriff of Chowan County

# Belk-Tyler's

EDENTON

WISHES TO REMIND YOU

To Remember  
Sunday May The Thirteenth

This is one of the most important Calendar dates in the year. Mother's Day and Belk-Tyler's collection of gifts for her are more important than ever in that it is more outstanding than ever before. Remember, too, Belk-Tyler will gladly box and wrap all Mother's Day gifts for you attractively without additional charge.



Lovely Gift Nylons.....\$1.00 to \$1.45

Summer Gift Bags.....\$1.00 to \$4.98

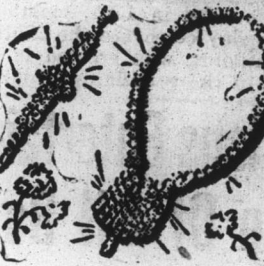
Fine Gift Gloves.....98c to \$1.98

Smart Gift Jewelry.....55c to \$1.98

Gift Linens.....\$1.00 to \$8.95

Cannon Sheets.....\$2.79 to \$4.29

BELK-TYLER WILL WRAP ALL GIFTS  
WITHOUT ANY EXTRA CHARGE



Gift Handkerchiefs.....29c to \$1.48

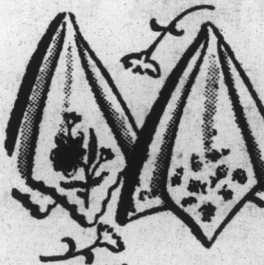
Lovely Gift Scarfs.....\$1.00 to \$1.98

Chenille Bed Spreads.....\$4.98 to \$7.95

Old Spice Cosmetics.....65c to \$1.50

Dorothy Perkins Cosmetics...50c to \$3.00

Gift Blouses.....\$1.98 to \$5.95



BELK-TYLER'S OFFERS THOUSANDS  
OF GIFTS FOR MOM!

Seamproof Slips.....\$2.98 to \$5.95

Gift Panties.....49c to \$1.19

Smart Gift Gowns.....\$1.98 to \$5.95

Lovely Pajamas.....\$1.98 to \$5.95

Smart Gift Robes.....\$3.98 to \$12.50

Duncan Crystal Wear.....98c to \$1.98

Imperial Milk Glasses.....98c to \$3.98

Lovely Pictures.....\$1.98 to \$2.98

Havaline Spray China.....Sets \$9.95

Pretty Waste Baskets.....48c to \$1.98

Smart Lamps.....\$1.79 to \$7.95

BELK-TYLER'S AGAIN REMINDS YOU THAT  
SUNDAY WEEK, MAY 13, IS MOTHER'S  
BIG DAY!

**BELK-TYLER'S-EDENTON**

