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North Carolina-Alamance County,

In the Superior Cour

## THE THREE GUARDSMEN

BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS

was beforenand with his the audited the curacy instantly. He was doubtless the first lover who had pretended to be a cure for the purpose of setting his mistress married and securing her a position. He has been hanged before this time, I hope."

"These young fellows can none them drink," said Athes, looking him with pity, "and yet this is one the best of them too."

The Return.

ARTAGNAN was astonished by the terrible confidence of A thou and yet many things appeared very obscure to him in this partial revelation, in the first place, it had been made by a man quite drunk to one who was half drunk and yet in spite of the uncertainty which the vapor of three or four both. and yet in spite of the uncertainty which the vapor of three or four bottles of Burgundy carries with it to the brain, D'Artagnan, when a waking on the following morning had every word of Athos' as bresent to his memory as if they fell from his mouth; they had been impressed upon his mid. He found Athos quite himself again—that is to say, the most shrewd and impenetrable of men.

"I was pretty drunk yesterday, D'Artagnan," said he. "I would lay a wager I uttered a thousand absurdities." "No," replied D'Artagnan. "If I recollect what you said it was nothing out of the common way,"

"Indeed, you surprise me. I thought I had related a most lamentable his tory to you?" And he looked at the young man as if he would read to the very depths of his beart.

"Oh," said D'Artagnan, "It would appear that I was more drunk than you, since I remember nothing of the kind." But this did not deceive Athos, and he resumed:

"It certainly never will get drunk."

again, D'Artagnan—it is too bad a habit."

D'Artagnan remained allent.
Then Athos, changing the conversation all at once:

"By the bye, I thank you for the house you have brought me," said he. "I have parted with him."

"How?"

"Why, here is the simple fact: This morning I awoke at 6 o'clock. You were still fast asleep, and I. did not know what to do with myself. I was still stupid from our yesterday's debauch. As I came into the public room I six one of our Englishmen bargain, ing with a dealer for a horse, his own having died yesterday from bleeding. I drew near and found he was hidding 100 pistoles for a fine chestnut sag.

"Ay, and a very fine one! I saw him yesterday—your friends lackey was leading him."
"Do you think he is worth 100 pistoles?
"Yes; will you sell him to me for that sun?
"No: but I will play at dice for him." "No sooner said than done, and I lost

the horse. Ah, ahl but please to observe I wou back the caparison," cried Athos. D'Artagnan looked much discon-

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"What else have you done?"
"After having lost my own home,
nine against ten—see how near—I
formed an ides of staking yours."
"Yes—but you stopped at the ides, I

"No; for I put it in execution that very minute."

"And the consequence?" said D'Artagnan in great anxiety.

"I threw, and I lost."

"What, my horse?"

"Your horse."

"Athos, this is frightful?"

"Stop a minute; you don't know all yet. I should make an excellent gambler if I were not too hot headed; but I became so, just as if I were drinking. Well, I was hot headed then."

"Well, but what else could you play for—you had nothing left?"

"Ohl yes, yes, my friend; there was still that diamond left which sparkles on your finger, and which I observed yesterday."

"This diamond!" said D'Artagnan.

yesterday."
"This diamond?" said D'Artagnan, placing his hand eagerly on his ring.
"And as I am a connolsseur in such things, having had a few of my own once, I estimated it at 1,000 pistoles."
"I hope," said D'Artagnan, half dead with fright, "you made no mention of my diamond?"

This is a droil story," cried D'Arta-gnan, a little consoled and holding his sides with laughter, "You may easily guess that, finding the luck turned. I again staked the dia-mond. I won back your furniture, then your horse, then my furniture, then my horse, and then I lost again. To make short, I regained your furni-ture and then mine. That's where we left off. That was a superb throw, so I left off there."

"the diamond is safe. But what is the use of borse furniture without

Well, the Englishman and his com-penion are still here. I remarked that he regretted the horse furniture very much. You appear to think much of your horse. Is your place, now, I would stake the furniture against the

"But he will not be satisfied with me equipment."
"Stake both. I am not selfish, if you

"You would do so?" said D'Artaguan, undecided, so strongly did the confidence of Athos begin to prevail, unknown to himself.
"In one single throw."
"But having lost the horses, I am particularly anxious to preserve the furniture."
"Stake your diamond, then."
"This No. thank you; that's quite another thing. Never, never!"
"Well," said Athos. "I would propose to you to stake Planchet, but as that has already been done, the Englishman would not, perhaps, be willing. Try, one throw."

"I will try one throw," said D'Artagnan.

Athos went in search of the Englishman, whom he found in the stable examining the furniture with a greedy eye. The opportunity was good. He proposed the conditions—the two furnitures against one horse or 100 pistoles, to choose. The Englishman consented. D'Artagnas threw the dice with a trembling hand and turned up the number three. His paleness terrified Athos, who, however, contented himself with saying:

will have the horses fully equipped,

monsieur."

The Englishman, quite triumphant, did not even give himself the trouble to shake the dice; he threw them on the table without looking at them, so sure was he of victory; D'Artagnan himself had turned on one side to conceal his ill humor.

ceal his ill humor.

"There, there, there!" said Athos, with his quiet tone; "that throw of the dice is extraordinary. I have only witnessed such a one four times in my life. Two aces, gentlemen!"

The Englishman looked, and was seized with astonishment; D'Artagnan looked and was seized with pleasure.

"Then monsieur takes his horse back again," said the Englishman.
"Certainly," said D'Artagnan.

"Certainly," said D'Artagnan, "Then there is no revenge?"
"Our conditions said no revenge, you will please to recollect."
"That is true; the horse shall be restored to your lackey, monsieur."
"A moment!" said Athos; "with your sermission, monsieur. I wish to speak

restored to your lackey, monsieur."

"A moment!" said Athos; "with your permission, monsieur. I wish to speak a word with my friend."

"If you please."

Athos drew D'Artagnan on one side.

"I would take the 100 pistoles. You

know you have staked the furniture against the horse or 100 pistoles, at your choice."

"I will take the horse."

But how shall we get back to Partar"
"Upon our lackeys' horses."
"Your advice, then, is"...
"To take the 100 pistoles, D'Artsgran. With the 100 pistoles we can live
well to the end of the month. We
have undergone a great deal of fatigue,
remember, and a little rest will do us
no harm."
"I gest! Oh, no, Athon. The moment!
I am in Paris I shall prosecute my researches after that unfortunate woman."
("Well. you may be asserted."

of the fragnity of things of the earth.

I have just been duped. Sixty louis for a horse which by the manner in which he goes can do at least five leagues an hour."

D'Artaguan and Athos burst into a loud laugh.

"My dear D'Artagnan," said Aramis, "dou't be too angry with me, I beg of you. Necessity has no law. Besides, I am the person punished, as that ruscally horse dealer has robbed me of 60 pistoles at least. Ah, you fellows are

cally horse dealer has robbed me of 50 pistoles at least. Ah, you fellows are good managers. You ride on your lackeys borses and have your own gallant steeds led along carefully by hand at short stages."

At the same instant a market cart, which had for some minutes appeared upon the Amiens road, pulled up at the inn, and Planchet and Grimand got out of it with the saddles on their heads. The carter was going to Paris and had agreed, on condition of being prevented from feeling thirst upon the road, to convey the lackeys and their burdens thither.

"How is all this?" said Aramis, on seeing them arrive. "Nothing but sad-

"Oh, yes, all alike. I retained my

Join Porthos.

They found him up, less pale than when D'Artagnan left him and seated at a table on which, though he was

alone, was spread enough for four per sons. This dinner consisted of viands "Ah," said he, rising, "you come in

here?" said Athos, at the expiration of

"Eating what?" said D'Artagnan. "Horsefiesh!" said Aramis, with a look of disgust.
Porthos alone made no reply.
"Yes, real horse. Are we not, Porthos, enting a horse—and perhaps his

agreement."
"Then your duchess is still taking
the waters?" asked D'Artagnan of "Yes, still," replied Porthos. "And

"Gave him to him."
"Gave him?" cried D'Artagnan.
"Lord! Yes, gave it to him; you can't call it anything but a gift," said Por-

the musketeers.
As this was the height of D'Artagnan's worldly ambition, apart, be it
fair devotee touched the great ha gnan's worldly ambitton, apart, be it fair devotes touched the great hand on worldly ambitton, apart, be it fair devotes touched the great hand on tween love and avarice.

This was too much for the other wood that fair devotes touched the church in the church before, but the church of love and and deadly was a second of the church of th majesty's fixed intention to open the campaign on the 1st of May, they must immediately get ready all their ap-

"Four times fifteen make sixty—ah! 6,000 livres," said Afhos,
"For my part, I think," said D'Artagaan, "with 1,000 livres each"—
"Stop!" said Porthos. "I have an idea."

a have not the snadow of one, and sakthos coolly. "But as to D'Artagnan, the idea of belonging to us, gentlemen, has driven him out of his senses. A thousand livres! For my part, I declare I want 2,000."

thousand livres! For my part, I de-clare I want 2,000."

"Four times two make eight, then," said Aramis. "It is 8,000 that we want to complete our appointments, of which appointments, it is true, we have already handsome saddles."

"Besides." said Athos, waiting till D'Artagnan, who went to thank M. de Treville, had shut the door, "besides, there is that beautiful ring which beams from the finger of our friend. D'Artagnar is too good a comrade to leave his brothers in embarrassment white he wears the ransom of a king on his finger."

Athos did not leave his champer. He made up his mind not to take a single step to provide for his equipment.

"We have still a fortnight before us," said he to his friends. "Well, if at the end of a fortnight I have found nothing, or, rather, if nothing has come to find me, as I am too good a Catholic to kill myself with a pistol builet, I will seek a good cause of quarrel with four of his eminence's guards or with eight Englishmen. I will fight until one of them has killed me, which, considering the number, cannot fall to happen. It will then be said of me that I died for the king, so that I shall have performed my duty without the expense of equipment."

Porthos continued to walk about with his hands behind him, tossing his head and repeating:

and repeating:

"I shall follow up my idea."

Arimis. anxious and negligently dressed, said nothing.

As Porthos had first found an idea and had thought of it earnestly afterward, he was the first to act. D'Arta-ward, he w gnan perceived him one day walking into the church of St. Leu and follow-ed him instinctively. As D'Artagnan

thos took advantage of this circumstance to ogle the women. Thanks to the care of Mousqueton, the exterior was far from announcing the distress of the interior, and Porthos

was still the handsome Porthos.
D'Artagnan observed, on the beach
nearest to the pillar against which
Porthos leaned, a sort of ripe beauty,
rather yellow and rather dry, but erect
and haughty, under ber black hood.
The eyes of Porthos were furtively
cast upon this indy and then roved
about at large over the nave.
On her side, the lady, who from time
to time blushed, darted with the rapis. was still the handsome Porthos

sty of lightning a giance toward the inconstant Porthos. He, seeing this, began to make signals to a beautiful lady who was near the choir and who not only was a beautiful lady, but, still further no doubt, a great lady, for she had behind her a negro boy, who had brought the cushion on which she kneit, and a female servant.

The lady with the red cushion produced a great effect—for she was very handsome—upon the lady with the black hood, who saw in her a rival really to be dreaded; a great effect upon Porthos, who thought her much more pretty than the lady with the black hood; a great effect upon D'Artagan, who recognized in her the lady of Meung, of Calais and Dover, whom his persecutor, the man with

the lady of the red cushion, continued to watch the proceedings of Porthes, which amused him greatly. He direct-ly guessed that the lady of the black hood was the lawyer's wife mentioned

"Gave him?" cried D'Artagnan.

"Lord! Yes, gave it to him; you can't call it anything but a gift," said Porthos, "for the animal was worth at least 150 louis, and the stingy fellow would only give me 80!"

"Without the saddle?" said Aramis.

"Yes, without the saddle?" said Aramis.

"You will please observe, gentlemen," said Athos, "that Porthos has made the best bargain of any of us."

And then commenced a roar of laughere in which they all joined, to the astonishment of poor Porthos; but when he was informed of the cause of their hilarity, his laughter, according to custom, was more vociferous than anybody's.

On arriving in Paris, D'Artagnan found a letter from M. de Treville, which informed him that, at his request, the king had promised that he should be admitted to the company of the musketeers.

As this was the height of D'Arta-

tented herself with saying to the mus-keteer with concentrated fury:
"Eh, M. Porthos, you don't offer me

Porthos at the sound of that voice started like a man awakened from a sleep of a hundred years.

"Ma-madame," cried he, "is that you? How is your husband, our dear M. Coquenard? Is he still as stingy as ever? Where can my eyes have been not to have even perceived you during the two hours the sermon has lasted?"

"I was within two paces of you, monsieur," replied she, "but you did not perceive me because you had no eyes but for the pretty lady to whom you fust now gave the holy water."

Porthos pretended to be confused.
"Yes." said he; "that is a duchess of my acquaintance with whom I have

"Yes," said he; "that is a duchess of my acquaintance with whom I have great trouble to meet on account of the fealousy of her husband and who sent me word that she should come today."

"M. Porthos," said the procureuse, "will you have the kindness to offer me your arm for five minutes? I have something to say to you."

"Certainly, madame," said Porthos, winking to himself. At that moment D'Artagnan passed in pursuit of milady. He cast a passing glance at Porthos and beheld this triumphant look.
"Ah, M. Porthos," cried she—"sh, M. Porthos, you are a great conqueror, it

"But M. Porthos." marmured the woman, who began to feel that, to judge by the conduct of the great ladies of the time, she was wrong. "It

ladies of the time, she was wrong, "It was my husband that would not hear of lending."

"Mme. Coquenard," said Porthos, "remember the first letter you, wrote me, and which I preserve engraven in

The woman uttered a grean.
"Besides," said she, "the sum you required me to borrow was rather large; you said you wanted 1,000 livres!"

"Fie, madame, fie!" said Porthos, as if disgusted; "let us not talk about mon-ey, if you please; it is humiliating." "Then you no longer love me!" said

dear Porthos."
"Besides, what did I ask of you? A loan, nothing more. After all, I am not took some precautions to conceal himself. Porthos believed he had not been seen. D'Artagnan entered behind him. Porthos went and leaned sgainst the side of a pillar: D'Artagnan, still unperceived, supported himself against the other side of it.

The support of the support of

She was piqued.
"Please to know. M. Porthos, that
my strong box, strong box of a lawyer's wife as it may be, is better filled

tf you are rich, Mme. Coquenard then there is no excuse for your re-fusal. Let us say no more upon the subject, I beg of you. You don't know me—all sympathy is extinct between

"Begone, then, to your beautiful

paign is to open. I shall be fearfully engaged in providing for my equip



ment. Then I am obliged to make journey to my family in the lower part of Brittany to obtain the sum neces-

you saw at the church has estates near to those of my family, we mean to make the journey together. Journeys, you know, appear much shorter when we travel two in company."
"Come to our house tomorrow," said the woman. "You are the son of my

aunt, consequently my cousin; you come from Noyon, in Picardy; you have several lawsuits and no lawyer. Can you collect all that?

tract the survivor takes everythin

contract the survivor takes everything."
"You are a woman of precaution, I
see, my dear Mme. Coquenard," said
Porthos, squeezing the hand of the
procureuse tenderly.
"We are, then, reconciled, dear M.
Porthos?" said she, simpering.
"For life," said Porthos in the same
manner.

D'Artagnan and the Englishman. ARTAGNAN followed milady without being perceived by her. He saw her get into her carriage and heard her order the conchman to drive to St. Germain. It was useless to endeavor to keep pace on foot with a carriage drawn by two powerful horses. D'Artagnan re-turned to the Rue Ferou. In the Rue de Seine he met with Planchet and ordered him to go and saddle two horses in M. de Treville's stables, one for himself (D'Artagnan) and one for Planchet. M. de Treville on all common occasions had allowed him the liberty to do so.

"Madame, you are deceived; she is simply a duchess."

"Ah, you are quite the pet of the ladies, M. Porthos! How quickly men forget!".

"Still less quickly than the women, in my opinion," replied Porthos; "as a proof, madame, I may say I was your victim; when wounded, dying, I was abandoned by the surgeons; i, the off-spring of a noble family, who placed reliance upon your friendship, I was near dying of my wounds at first and of hunger afterward, in a beggarly inn at Chantilly, without your ever deigning once to reply to the burning letters I addressed to van."

At St. Germidin he rode up a very quiet street, looking to the right and the left to see if he could catch any vestige of his heautiful English woman, when from the terrace in front of a pretty house which had no window toward the street he saw a face peep out with which he thought he was acqualited.

tressing D'Artagnan, "don't you re-member that face which is gaping about yonder? It is poor Lubin, the lackey of the Count de Wardes, he

Planchet dismounted and went Planchet dismounted and went straight up to Lubin, who did not at all remember him, and the two lackeys began to chat with the best under-standing possible, while D'Artagnan turned the two horses-into a lane and went round the house, coming back to watch the conference from behind a helice of any trees.

a hedge of nut trees. Soon he heard the noise of a carriage and speedily saw that of milady stop opposite to him. She put her charm-ing fair head out of the window and gave her orders to her female attendant. The latter, a pretty girl of about twenty years of age, made her way to ward the terrace upon which D'Arta gnan had perceived Lubin.

his eyes and saw her go toward the terrace. But it happened that some one in the house called Lubin, so that Planchet remained alone, looking in all directions for his master.

D'Artagnan followed the girl with

all directions for his master.

The maid approached Planchet, whom she took for Lubin, and holding out a little billet to him—

"For your master," said she, "It is of consequence—take it quickly,"

Thereupon she ran toward the carriage, which had turned round toward the way it came improd upon the the way it came, jumped upon the step, and the carriage drove off. Planchet took the billet to D'Arta-gnan. He opened the letter and read these words:

A person who takes more interest in you than she is willing to confess wishes to know on what day it will suit you to walk in the forest. Tomorrow, at the Hotel of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, a lackey in black and red will wait for

pears that miliady and I are anxious about the health of the same person. Well, Planchet, how is the good M. de Wardes; he is not dead, then?"
"Oh, no, monsieur, he is as well as a man can be with four sword wounds in his body."
"Now, Planchet, jump upon you horse and let us overtake the carriage.

They soon effected this. At the end of five minutes they perceived the carriage drawn up by the roadside. A cavaller, richly dressed, was close to the coach door.

The conversation between milady and the cavaller was so animated that D'Artagnan stopped on the other side of the carriage without any one but the pretty maid being aware of his

The conversation took place in Eng-lish, a language which D'Artagnan could not understand, but by the accent the young man plainly saw that the beautiful Englishwoman was in a great rage. The cavaller broke into a loud laugh, which appeared to exas-

perate milady still more.

D'Artagnan thought this was the moment to interfere.

"Madame," said be, "will you permit sent to me to offer you my services?"

At the first word milady turned round, looking at the young man with astonishment, and when he had fin-"Monsieur," said she in very good Orders may be left at this office.

ence place myself under your protec tion if the person with whom I quar rel were not my brother.' gnan. "You must be aware was ignorant of that, madame!"

himself about?" cried the cavaller.
"Stupid fellow yourself!" said D'Ar-The carriage went on. The cavaller made a movement as if to follow, but D'Artagnan, whose anger, already excited, was much increased by recog-nizing in him the Englishman of Amiens who had won his horse and was very near winning his diamond of Athos, caught at his bridle and

stopped him, "Well, monsieur," said he, "we will see if you can handle a sword as skillfully as you can a dice box."

"That will do. I will be there." "Apropos you have probably one or two friends?"

"Behind the Luxembourg at 6

with me."
"Three! That's fortunate. That falls out oddly. Three is just my "Now, then, who are you?" asked the Englishman.
"I am M. d'Artagnan, a Gascon gentleman serving in the guards in the

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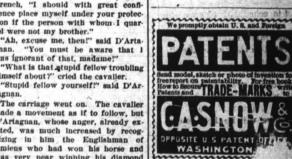
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