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# 三个火枪手

THE THREE  
MUSKETEERS  
ALEXANDRE DUMAS

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## 三个火枪手

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大仲马(1802—1870), 19 世纪法国浪漫主义创作流派的著名作家。他的祖父是法国的一位侯爵, 祖母是黑人, 父亲是拿破仑手下的一位将军。由于父母早丧, 家道中落, 没读几年书, 他就只身赴巴黎, 谋求生活, 做过见习生、抄写员等工作。

1823 年, 大仲马开始文学生涯, 先后写了一些诗歌、小说和剧本, 但是这些作品都没有受到注意。大仲马对自己的写作很有信心, 他毫不气馁, 继续创作。1829 年他的历史剧《亨利三世和他的宫廷》在法兰西喜剧院首次上演, 对法国浪漫主义戏剧的发展起了一定作用, 获得观众的热烈欢迎, 终于使他名声大震。

大仲马一生创作颇丰, 仅小说就写了 250 余部, 尤其是历史小说数量惊人。最著名的是达达尼昂三部曲《三个火枪手》、《二十年以后》、《波治伦子爵》和《基督山伯爵》。他以个人的雄伟气魄和豪爽性情支配作品中的人物活动, 塑造的都是些行为勇敢、态度粗犷的人物。同时, 故事情节曲折紧凑, 足以吸引读者。但是他的作品, 尤其是后期作品从没有获得无可争议的文学价值。这与他名利双收后生活奢侈豪华, 债台高筑, 经常被迫以极高的速度写作不无关系。

1624年,红衣主教黎塞留当上了法王路易十三的首相。路易十三、王后和首相三分国权,各有间隙。

故事开始于1625年,结束于1628年。小说的主人公达达尼昂是个没落贵族家庭出身的青年。这种家庭出身的子弟唯一的出路是做火枪手,参加国王的卫队。达达尼昂就是抱着这个目的,来到巴黎的。到巴黎后,他先后结识了三个火枪手:阿多斯、波尔多斯和阿拉米斯,四人结为知己。

达达尼昂等曾经打败红衣主教的部下,国王暗加褒奖,但红衣主教却怀恨在心。英国白金汉公爵对于王后旧情未断,王后赠以钻石作纪念。主教想趁机陷害王后便向国王进谗言,要王后在舞会上佩戴钻石。舞会期近,王后惶急无计。王后的女侍波那雪夫人设法向达达尼昂和他的伙伴们求助,达达尼昂深爱波那雪夫人,便不辞危险,和三个火枪手渡多佛尔海峡赴英国,索回王后的钻石,带给王后,解救了她的危机,王后非常感激。

米列蒂是红衣主教的亲信,英国温特爵士的弟妇。她美艳动人,毒若蛇蝎,达达尼昂为她的美貌所迷,爱上了她。无意中达达尼昂发现她犯过大罪的刑迹,使她怀恨在心,几次要暗害达达尼昂未遂。

那时英法两军正有战争,英国的主将是白金汉公爵,法军的统帅是红衣主教。主教令米列蒂赴英刺杀公爵,米列蒂假借他人之手杀死了公爵,杀死波那雪夫人。达达尼昂同三个火枪手及其他被米列蒂坑骗过的人们苦苦追寻她,终于将她正法。

红衣主教得知达达尼昂是杀害米列蒂的主角,派人去捉他。达达尼昂来向主教坦白自首,主教见他义勇双全,对他非但不加罪,还提升他为火枪营副统领。三个火枪手也都有了美满的归宿。

## THE WORLD'S CLASSICS

### THE THREE MUSKETEERS

ALEXANDRE DUMAS was born at Villers-Cotterêts in 1802, the son of an innkeeper's daughter and of one of Napoleon's most remarkable generals. He moved to Paris in 1823 to make his fortune in the theatre. At 28 he was one of the leading literary figures of his day, a star of the Romantic Revolution, and known for his many mistresses and taste for high living. He threw himself recklessly into the July Revolution of 1830 which he regarded as a great adventure. Quickly wearying of politics, he returned to the theatre and by the early 1840s was producing vast historical novels at a stupendous rate and in prodigious quantities for the cheap newspapers which paid enormous sums of money to authors who could please the public. His complete works were eventually to fill over 300 volumes and his yarns made him the best known Frenchman of his age. He earned several fortunes which he gave away, or spent on women and travel, or wasted on grandiose follies like the 'Château de Monte Cristo' which he built to symbolize his success. In 1848 he stood unsuccessfully in the elections for the new Assembly. By 1850 his creditors began to catch up with him and, partly to escape them and partly to find new material for his novels, plays, and travel books, he lived abroad for long periods, travelling through Russia where his fame had preceded him, and Italy where he ran guns in support of Garibaldi's libertarian cause. Without guile and without enemies, he was a man of endless fascination who lived long enough to see his talent desert him. He died of a stroke at Puys, near Dieppe, in 1870.

DAVID COWARD is Senior Lecturer in French at the University of Leeds and the author of studies of Marivaux, Marguerite Duras, and Marcel Pagnol. For the World's Classics he has edited Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo* and translated Dumas fils's *Lady of the Camellias* and a selection of Maupassant's short stories. An award-winning film-maker, he also reviews regularly for the *Times Literary Supplement*.

THE WORLD'S CLASSICS



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

*The Three Musketeers*



*Edited with an Introduction by*

DAVID COWARD

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## INTRODUCTION

ALEXANDRE DUMAS was born at Villers-Cotterêts, fifty miles north-east of Paris, in 1802. His mother was an innkeeper's daughter. His father was the son of a dissolute French Marquis and a former slave. Alexandre Davy de la Pailleterie (1762-1806) had risen through the ranks by his own efforts and was a general at 31. But his plain speaking was not to the taste of Napoleon who effectively ended his military career. He died destitute, leaving his widow to raise his two surviving children as best she could.

From his mulatto father, Alexandre Dumas inherited healthy appetites, an iron constitution, and the swarthy skin and tight curls which were later to prove a boon to caricaturists. His schooling was deficient but he enjoyed his childhood immensely (there was no part of his life that he did not enjoy). He began earning his living as an office-boy in 1817. Six years later, he moved to Paris to pursue his literary ambitions, supporting himself as a lowly clerk in the service of the Duke d'Orléans. He filled his leisure hours with writing and love-affairs. From his liaison with a seamstress, Catherine Labay, resulted a son, the future author of *La Dame aux Camélias*. His first performed play, which he wrote with two friends, went unnoticed when it was staged in 1825 and only four copies were sold of a volume of stories which appeared in 1826. He turned his hand to poetry, comedy, and tragedy with little success and though a five-act verse tragedy, *Christine*, was accepted by the Comédie-Française, it was not performed until 1830. By then, however, Dumas was famous.

Through Charles Nodier, whom he had met by accident, he was introduced to Lamartine, Hugo, Vigny, and Musset, the rising stars of the new generation of 'Romantic' writers who, under the banner of 'freedom in art', inaugurated a new age of imaginative literature. Classical reason and measure were discarded in favour of sensation,

emotion, and the cult of nature, youth, and death. The new hero was not sober and dignified but an exalted, morbid soul given to grandly Byronic gestures. In 1829, backed by the new iconoclasts, Dumas staged a historical drama, *Henry III and his Court*, which was not only a personal triumph but struck a spectacular blow for the cause. Instead of the flat verse and arid passion of classical theatre, Dumas gave audiences fiery prose, action, and conflict. His melodramatic manner was ideally suited to the extravagant mood of his times and he was catapulted into the leading ranks of the Romantic Movement. When, in July 1830, literary revolt turned into political revolution, he threw himself dashing into the fray. Single-handedly he captured two tons of gunpowder from a bemused garrison at Soissons and persuaded La Fayette that he was the man to organize the new National Guard in the Vendée where, however, he made little headway against staunch royalist opposition. Quickly tiring of his new role, he returned to Paris and literature.

Over the next two years, he staged seven plays which glorified passion in melodramatic situations, and mixed the sublime and the grotesque in the new approved manner. Success brought money which he squandered on women and travel or simply gave away, a habit which he never lost. In the summer of 1832, suspected of harbouring republican sympathies, he left Paris and visited Switzerland which he made the subject of the first of his many travelogues. By now, he was avidly reading the historical memoirs for which his history-conscious age, stimulated by the novels of Walter Scott, showed an insatiable appetite. He continued to write plays on both historical and contemporary subjects—*Kean* (1836) was a notable success—but he was turning increasingly to fiction. Perhaps he realized that his talents had been misdirected, for his epic plays now often read as though they ought to have been written as novels. But he was also impressed by the growing popularity of the serialized novel (the *roman feuilleton*) which had begun in 1836 with the appearance of the first cheap newspapers. Proprietors found that running popular serials was good for circulation and by the early 1840s the practice



was generalized. Eugène Sue, the first great master of the genre, set new standards of cliff-hanging suspense. 'The sick postponed death until the *Mysteries of Paris* had reached its end', remarked Gautier enviously. For *The Wandering Jew* (1844-5), which pushed up the circulation of *Le Constitutionnel* from 4,000 to 24,000 overnight, Sue was paid 100,000 francs at a time when manual workers received 3 francs a day and clerks between 1,000 and 2,000 a year.

By this time, Dumas, without abandoning the stage, had committed himself to the *roman feuilleton* which fitted him like a glove. The genre called for suspense, violence and high passion, black-hearted villains and doughty heroes. Novels with a historical background were as popular as those set in contemporary society, for themes and values were stereotyped. The hero, exuding effortless aristocratic superiority and sometimes nursing a murky past, went about righting wrongs in a fantasy world which caricatured the middle classes and portrayed the 'people' as exotic and dangerous. The situations reflected in a cruder form the Romantics' love of hyperbole and macabre thrills: the rise and fall of the wicked, the return and vengeance of a man wronged, the ravages of passion, imprisonment and escape, distant worship and love that overcomes all obstacles, the whole spiced with Gothic thrills and a *frisson* of sadism. Yet what Sainte-Beuve dismissed as 'industrial literature' had an energy and an imaginative power which more gifted 'literary' authors such as Zola and Thackeray greatly admired.

*The Three Musketeers*, serialized in *Le Siècle* between 14 March 1843 and 14 July 1844, was an immediate success. But even before the final episode appeared, Dumas, who regularly overcommitted himself, had begun another vast epic of adventure and revenge, *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844-5), and soon he was not only France's best-selling author but the most famous living Frenchman. He capitalized on the popularity of his Musketeers with a sequel, *Twenty Years After* (1845), and followed it with an unstoppable stream of high-impact yarns. His energy and powers of concentration were astonishing. He was unusually sociable, travelled widely, and was capable of

writing under pressure for fourteen hours at a stretch. He had always been susceptible to pretty actresses and when his five-year marriage to Ida Ferrier ended in 1844 he embarked on a new series of often stormy affairs which lasted until shortly before his death.

He earned and spent vast sums of money for which he had little regard, though he loved what money could buy. He lavished a fortune on a house at Marly-le-Roi which he called the 'Château de Monte Cristo', and another on starting up the 'Théâtre historique' which opened in December 1847. He was disarmingly likeable, had few enemies, and was the most generous of men. The Revolution of 1848 tempted him to stand as a reformist parliamentary candidate, though his politics were a curious mix of sympathy for the poor, a snobbish regard for lords and princes, and a meritocratic respect for self-made men of talent like himself. In spite of his forceful way with hecklers, he was not elected and in December voted for Louis-Napoleon's Second Republic.

By the early 1850s his extravagance and over-ambitious schemes had drained his finances. To meet his debts, he started newspapers of his own for which he provided most of the copy himself, supplied others with hugely popular *feuilletons* (including *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne* (1848-50), the final instalment of the Musketeer saga), and staged plays at the 'Théâtre historique' of which he eventually lost control. In 1850 the 'Château de Monte Cristo' was sold off to an American dentist and finally, in December 1851, using Louis-Napoleon's *coup d'état* as a pretext, Dumas fled to Brussels, beyond the reach of his creditors. After returning to France in 1853, he embarked on a new series of travels which took him to Russia, where his fame had preceded him, and in 1860 to Italy where he bought guns for Garibaldi and backed the struggle for Italian unification. At 60, he was portly, as vain as ever (wherever he went he collected honours and medals, some of which he bought himself), unflaggingly creative, and unendingly vulnerable to a pretty face. He lived just long enough to see his powers fail and died of a stroke at his son's house near Dieppe on 5 December 1870.

'Prolific' is an adjective too insipid to apply to Dumas, for not even he could keep track of everything he wrote. Over a period of fifty years he published a dozen travel books and founded as many newspapers. His journalism and general works fill perhaps twenty large tomes, and there are a score of multi-volume histories, biographies, and memoirs. He was the author of over fifty plays and about ninety novels, many of them very long indeed: the three instalments of the Musketeer saga alone run to about a million and a quarter words. During his lifetime, his authorship of the books he signed was questioned and sometimes contested, most notoriously by a journalist named Jacquot who in 1845 accused him of running a 'fiction factory' staffed by paid drudges. Dumas took Jacquot to court and refuted the charges of shameless plagiarism and 'literary mercantilism', though he cheerfully admitted to using the services of 'collaborators' whose contribution, however, he always acknowledged. Some were no more than secretaries who recopied his rapidly written pages, adding punctuation and correcting minor inconsistencies. Yet from the outset, Dumas had been in the habit of working with other writers, discussing plots and character and sometimes rewriting plays by other hands rejected by theatre managements. During the 1830s he acquired a reputation not only as a playwright but also, in Nerval's words, 'as a surgeon skilled in straightening the limbs of plays born crooked'. But he was always more than a fixer, for his reworkings were highly imaginative and unfailingly marked by the Dumas touch: simple but strong characters, melodramatic situations, and highly charged dialogue.

Dumas's association with Auguste Maquet (1813-88), whom he met in 1838, was the most productive of his collaborations. A history teacher with literary ambitions, Maquet worked closely with Dumas in ways which are still not entirely clear. At the start, Dumas simply rewrote Maquet. Thus, immediately after their first meeting, he revised a Maquet play which was performed in 1839 as *Bathilde* under Maquet's name. But he totally transformed a short novel which Maquet had set in the early eighteenth

century, and turned it into the four-volume *Chevalier d'Harmental* (1843) which he acknowledged as his own. Subsequently, Maquet's role was to write first drafts, faithfully following detailed plans and firm directives supplied by Dumas who, however, occasionally adopted suggestions from his collaborator. These drafts were changed beyond recognition as Dumas's imagination worked on them. The ninety-nine surviving pages of Maquet's manuscript outline for *The Three Musketeers* reveal that he not only supplied specific historical detail but also furnished a substantial but agreed 'treatment' which Dumas followed in parts but radically altered in others. The earlier sections of the outline have disappeared, but Maquet's version of major episodes—the conversation heard through the stove-pipe between Richelieu and Milady, the breakfast on the Bastion de Saint-Gervais, the seduction of Felton, the murder of Buckingham, and the execution of Milady—are pale reflections of what was to come. Dumas expanded Maquet's material into hundreds of pages, changing the order of events, inventing new twists, and injecting excitement, humour, and high drama into his collaborator's basic template. In 1857 Maquet successfully sued Dumas not for literary theft, which he did not claim, but for non-payment of agreed royalties. Even so, the judgment has been used to castigate Dumas for professional malpractice, a charge which is contradicted by his open acknowledgement of the help he received. Of course, Dumas was a shameless literary plunderer, for he had the same nonchalant attitude to literary property as he did to money. He borrowed and stole whatever he needed to start his imaginative juices flowing, but what he took he made his own. There is no doubt that Dumas stood in Maquet's debt, but no more so than Racine was indebted to the authors of antiquity. His unerring instinct for action and excitement, his ability to create forceful characters, and the sustained exuberance of his imagination were quite unborrowable: from these alone comes the lasting glamour of the Musketeers.

But neither man invented d'Artagnan and the Musketeers. In 1841, during a visit to Marseilles, Dumas

chanced upon the first volume of *The Memoirs of M. d'Artagnan* (1700) by Courtilz de Sandras (1644-1712), an army captain who supplemented his pay by writing romances, the best of which read like a mixture of historical chronicle and bad Defoe. Dumas was immediately struck by Courtilz's racy manner and engaging hero. He was also taken with the names of Athos, Porthos, and Aramis (though they appear only briefly in the pseudo-*Memoirs*). He never read beyond the first volume but promptly borrowed d'Artagnan's leave-taking, his yellow horse and the quarrel it provokes on his way to Paris, his appointment with Tréville, the first encounter with Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, and the rivalry between the King's Musketeers and the Cardinal's Guards. The first half-dozen or so chapters of *The Three Musketeers* are a virtuoso improvisation on the beginning of Courtilz's pseudo-*Memoirs*. Thereafter, having got into his stride, he abandoned Courtilz, though not before converting the pseudo-d'Artagnan's predatory landlady into the sweet Constance and filching the name 'Milédi' and the brief episode in which she attempts to seduce de Wardes.

Thereafter, doubtless with promptings from Maquet, Dumas continued with his technique of amplifying anecdotes and incidents which he purloined from a variety of historical sources. He described his approach in the preface to *The Countess of Salisbury* (1838), his first serialized novel, in which he claimed modestly to 'interpret' history in such a way that historical figures would always appear in their true likenesses and not be upstaged by minor characters of his own invention. But in practice, he bent history to fit his imagination and those who made it into roles dictated by the requirements of his fiction. Richelieu, who in reality worked tirelessly for the creation of the modern French state, is merely ruthless, sinister, and wily. Buckingham, who was arrogant and much loathed, becomes a romantic figure prepared to start a European war for the sake of a smile from the Queen of France. Dumas's habit of seeing historical issues in terms of personalities was not good history, of course, but it made history accessible and exciting. Furthermore, his overriding interest in his own

creations led to severe upstaging: the heroes of *The Three Musketeers* are not the King and Queen of France or Buckingham and Richelieu but the four comrades who engage in a battle to the death with the predatory Milady de Winter. In 1854, in his *Memoirs* (v. 328-9), he explained his practice more realistically: 'I begin by making up a story. I try to make it romantic, tender and dramatic, and, when sentiment and imagination are duly provided, I hunt through history for a framework in which to set them.' He did not undertake careful research but trusted to his nose for drama, though the ample explanatory notes at the end of this volume show how seriously he strove to document his story. With *The Three Musketeers*, he seems to have started with a clear idea of d'Artagnan and Courtitz's oddly named Musketeers, together with a promising framework of historical events—the intrigues of Louis XIII's court and the siege of La Rochelle which provided a natural, thrilling climax. Thereafter, he simply trusted to his imagination. There was altogether more flair than method in his proceedings. A hint here, a suggestion there were enough to set his imagination on fire. Milady is a case in point.

All of Dumas's fiction is based on the principle of conflict, and from the outset his dramatic sense led him to seed *The Three Musketeers* with evil as a counterweight to d'Artagnan's nobility of heart. At first, he seems to have cast Rochefort as his villain. But Rochefort remains a shadowy figure who is never given much scope to live up to his reputation as Richelieu's *âme damnée*. Instead, instinct led Dumas to an even more damnable agent of the Cardinal: Lady de Winter. Dumas's long tale seems to sprawl. It is in fact structured quite simply, for it is dominated by d'Artagnan's battle to the death with Milady which acquires an epic dimension because it is also an allegorical battle between Good and Evil. Dumas had no difficulty in building a hero and finding stirring deeds for him to carry out: duels and derring-do were his stock in trade as a novelist. But to show fathomless wickedness in a woman, he needed prompting. Of course, literature and history are full of examples of baleful females, from

Astarte and Delilah to Lady Macbeth and the nest of Borgias, and Dumas draws them to our attention. Moreover, as an assiduous womanizer, he had personal experience of viperish mistresses. But rather as Frankenstein's monster grew out of bits of dead bodies, Milady acquired brilliant focus as a composite demon created out of quite specific parts. Of course, Dumas always used whatever material he had to hand and the origins of Milady are complex. But his use of three quite unrelated anecdotes reveals not only how she acquired such clarity in his imagination but also how crucial she is to the whole structure of the plot.

First he wrote her into history by attributing to her the minor episode of the diamond studs which enabled him to turn Buckingham's love for Anne of Austria into a drama. One version of the anecdote, where the Duchess of Carlisle wields a pair of spiteful scissors, occupies half a page of La Rochefoucauld's *Mémoires* (see note to p. 137). In Dumas's hands, it expands to fill Chapters 10-23 where Richelieu's attempt to embarrass the Queen is foiled by d'Artagnan. The second structural borrowing was of a short episode of Courtitz's pseudo-*Memoirs* where d'Artagnan gets the better of the francophobic 'Milédi'. From this stems Milady's infatuation with de Wardes, a motive for her undying hatred for d'Artagnan, and revelations about her murky past which furnish Lord de Winter with good reason for imprisoning her in his castle near Portsmouth—and Dumas with another fifteen or so chapters. Finally, from another of Courtitz's apocryphal chronicles, the *Memoirs of M. Le Comte de Rochefort* (see note to p. 278), he took the idea of branding her, a deliciously melodramatic touch, adding a *frisson* of horror which darkens the whole mood of the story from Chapter 27 until the final crashing climax. Thus from these three separate sources Dumas derived the increasingly Gothic atmosphere and most of the narrative impetus: d'Artagnan is usually more occupied with countering Milady's moves than with initiating actions of his own. But just as important is his use of them to shape a subtle portrait of Milady as an intelligent, courageous, but utterly unscrupulous woman, sexually aggressive, and

closed to the requirements of decency, humanity, and morality.

*The Three Musketeers* is, of course, an unashamedly masculine book, full of comradeship and swordplay, a celebration of a man's world. But it is also pointedly anti-feminist. Women are helpless, emotional, and tender, the object and reward of male quests. Constance may be more enterprising than d'Artagnan would like, but even she fits the 'angelic' stereotype. On the other hand, Milady, a version of the *femme fatale*, bears out Aramis's strict Pauline view, which d'Artagnan shares, of woman the destroyer of man. She does not deceive and betray for money, for she is rich. And if she serves Richelieu, it is not because he has a hold over her but because she chooses evil out of 'a limitless and intense love of it'. Dumas calls her a genius, but though he gives her some admirable lines ('I unwell? . . . When I am insulted, I do not feel unwell, I avenge myself!'), he does not admire her as Laclos admires the equally ruthless Madame de Merteuil whose infamy is at least relieved by her wit and style. Milady's worst crimes are not her attempts to sow discord between nations but her callous abuse of trust and honour and her unforgivable murder of Constance: she simply spits on human decency. Her execution is not only a punishment for her appalling wickedness: it is the chastisement of the 'brawling woman' against whom the Book of Proverbs (25: 24) warns men.

But it is also a rejection of evil and an assertion that right will prevail as long as good men and true are eternally vigilant and prepared to stand, alone if need be, against impossible odds. Dumas's never-say-die moral stance reflects the optimism of his times. If Milady believes in nothing but herself, she is less an echo of the virile self-assertion of Corneille's theatre than of the fascination which Dumas's own age felt for the exceptional heroism or pure villainy of extraordinary beings. Dumas attempts half-heartedly to pass off his tale as the authentic seventeenth-century memoirs of the Comte de La Fère. In reality, *The Three Musketeers* is an unabashed festival of Romantic values. It reflects a stereotyped view of women—helpless child or angel or demon—and it judges men by



simple standards. As a result the reader always knows which side to cheer. Dumas's Richelieu becomes 'our eternal enemy', though it is hard to see why. He is unattractively wily of course, but his actions are invariably designed to further French interests. He counters Spanish influence, takes on the English, and defeats the political threat of Protestantism. But his personal sins outweigh his public virtues, for he is quite simply a spoilsport. He is not only the political adversary of the dashing Buckingham who is ready to turn the world upside down for Anne of Austria, and the enemy of d'Artagnan who can set the world to rights with the point of his sword: he is the opponent of love, youth, and adventure. He is middle-aged, cunning, and miserly and belongs with Constance's sour husband and Coquenard, the tight-fisted lawyer, dreary relics to a man, symbols of the dead hand of the bourgeois establishment which had tamed the Revolution of 1830. The Richelieu of Vigny's *Cinq-Mars* (1826) is a study of the solitude of the man of destiny. Dumas's Richelieu symbolizes all the tediousness of the reign of Louis-Philippe. Where the Cardinal manipulates politics and money in pursuit of power, the Musketeers use it wildly to make life exciting. They embody all the careless dash and flair of Dumas's generation who wanted everything and could not bear to wait.

*The Three Musketeers* combines all the Romantic ideals with the strengths and weaknesses of the new *roman feuilleton*. As history, for all Dumas's careful documentation, it grossly oversimplifies complex issues and Dumas several times loses control of his chronology as he struggles to fit his yarn into the fabric of events. His descriptions of places and people, unpopular with impatient readers, are perfunctory but highly visual, and he relies upon sheer pace and unflagging inventiveness to create breathless suspense and variations of mood. High adventure is relieved by bouts of comedy—from d'Artagnan's discomfiture at Meung to the more conventionally satirical portraits of the lawyer Coquenard or Aramis's clerics—and, as the tension rises, heightened still further by a transfusion from the Gothic *roman noir*. The cheerful bravado of the breakfast at