

MISSION FOR THE QUEEN

The weak French King Louis XIII mistrusted his Queen because of her friendship with the English ambassador, the Duke of Buckingham. In order to discredit the Queen even more, Cardinal Richelieu, the most powerful man in France, asked the King to arrange a ball in Paris, at which her Majesty would wear the diamond studs which she had received from the King on her birthday. Richelieu, through his spies, was well aware that the Queen had already given the diamond studs to Buckingham as a keepsake.

In this extract from "The Three Musketeers" by Alexandre Dumas, the gallant D'Artagnan, with the three musketeers Athos, Porthos and Aramis, sets out for London to bring back the diamond studs in time for the ball.

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At two o'clock in the morning our four adventurers, followed by their lackeys, left Paris by the gate St. Denis.

All went well as far as Chantilly, where they stopped for breakfast at an inn recommended by a sign showing St. Martin giving half his cloak to a poor man.

A gentleman also sat having breakfast at the same table. When the comrades rose to depart, the stranger proposed to Porthos to drink the Cardinal's health. Porthos replied that he desired nothing better, if the stranger in his turn would drink the King's health. The stranger

cried that he acknowledged no other king but his Eminence. Porthos told him he was drunk and the stranger drew his sword.

"You have committed a piece of folly," said Athos, "but it can't be helped. Kill your man and rejoin us as soon as you can." All three mounted their horses and departed at full speed whilst Porthos promised his adversary to perforate him in all the fashions known to the fencing school.

At Beauvais they stopped, as much to breathe their horses as to wait for Porthos. At the end of two hours, as Porthos did not come, they resumed their journey.

About a league from Beauvais, where the road was confined between two high banks, they fell in with eight or ten men, who appeared to be employed digging holes. The labourers drew back to the ditch, from which each took a concealed musket. The result was that our seven travellers were outnumbered in weapons. Aramis received a ball which passed through his shoulder and Mousqueton, Porthos' lackey, was hit by a ball which knocked him from his horse.

"It is an ambuscade!" shouted D'Artagnan; "don't waste a shot! Forward!"



Aramis, wounded as he was, seized the mane of his horse which carried him off with the others.

At Crevecoeur, Aramis declared that he could not go on. He grew paler every minute and they were obliged to support him on his horse. They lifted him off at the door of an inn, left his servant Bazin with him and set forward again in the hope of reaching Amiens and passing the night there. They arrived at midnight and alighted at the inn of the Golden Lily.

The host had the appearance of as honest a man as any on earth. He received the travellers with his candlestick in one hand and his cotton nightcap in the other.

"Grimaud can take care of the horses," said Planchet. "I will sleep across your doorway and you will be certain that nobody can come to you."

At four o'clock in the morning, a terrible noise was heard in the stables. Grimaud had tried to waken the stable-boys, and the stable-boys were beating him. When the window was opened, the poor lad was lying senseless from a blow with a fork-handle, and the horses were completely foundered.

This began to be annoying. All these successive accidents were perhaps the result of chance, but they might, quite as probably be the fruits of a plot. Planchet was sent to inquire if there were three horses for sale in the neighbourhood. At the door stood two horses, fresh, strong and fully equipped. This was just the thing. He asked where their owners were, and was informed that they had passed the night in the inn, and were then settling with the master.

When Athos went down to pay the reckoning, four men, armed to the teeth, entered by side-doors and rushed upon him. "I am taken!" shouted Athos, with all the power of his lungs. "Go on, D'Artagnan! Spur! Spur!" And he fired two pistols.



D'Artagnan and Planchet, who were standing at the street door, did not wait to be twice warned. They unfastened the two horses, leaped upon them and set off at full gallop for St. Omer and from thence to Calais.

At a hundred paces from the gates of Calais. D'Artagnan's horse sank under him while Planchet's mount stopped short and could by no means be got up again. They left their horses upon the highway and ran towards the port. Planchet called his master's attention to a gentleman in front who had just arrived with his lackey.

They hastily drew near this gentleman, who appeared to be in a great hurry. His boots were covered with dust and he was asking whether he could not instantly cross over to England.

"Nothing would be more easy," said the captain of a vessel ready to sail, "but this morning an order arrived that no one should be allowed to cross without express permission from the Cardinal."

"I have that permission," said the gentleman, drawing a paper from his pocket. "Here it is."

"Have it signed by the governor of the port," said the captain "and give me the preference."

"Very well," said the gentleman and with his lackey, he started for the governor's house.

D'Artagnan and Planchet followed the gentleman at a distance of five hundred yards. Once outside the city however, D'Artagnan quickly overtook the gentleman as he was entering a little wood.

"Planchet," called out D'Artagnan, "take care of the lackey. I will manage the master."

Planchet, being strong and vigorous, soon had his opponent on his back and he placed his knee on his chest.

"Go on with your affair, sir," cried Planchet, "I have finished mine," And he bound and gagged his unfortunate victim.

Meanwhile the gentleman had drawn his sword and had sprung upon D'Artagnan. In three seconds D'Artagnan had wounded him three times, exclaiming at each thrust, "One for Athos! One for Porthos! And one for Aramis!"

With the fourth thrust, the gentleman closed his eyes and fainted. D'Artagnan searched his pockets and soon found the order for the passage. It was in the name of the Comte de Wardes.

"And now," said D'Artagnan, "to the governor's house."

The governor signed the passport and delivered it to D'Artagnan, who lost no time in useless compliments, but thanked the governor, bowed and departed.

Once out, he and Planchet set off as fast as they could and re-entered the city by another gate. The vessel was quite ready to sail, and the captain waiting on the wharf.

"Here is my pass signed," said D'Artagnan.

"And that other gentleman?" asked the captain.

"He will not go today," said D'Artagnan.

"In that case we will be gone," said the captain . . .

D'Artagnan did not know London; he did not know one word of English, but he wrote the name of Buckingham on a piece of paper, and everyone to whom he showed it pointed out to him the way to the Duke's palace.

On seeing D'Artagnan, Buckingham cried, "Has any misfortune happened to the Queen?"

"I believe not," said D'Artagnan. "Nevertheless she seems in some great peril from which your Grace alone can rescue her. Here is a letter from her Majesty."

Buckingham broke open the seal and avidly read the contents of the letter.

"Come sir, come!" he said sternly and D'Artagnan followed him through several apartments to a bedchamber, which was at once a miracle of taste and of splendour. From beneath a life-size portrait of the Queen of France Buckingham lifted a casket, and he drew from it a large bow of blue ribbon all sparkling with diamonds.



"Here," he said, "are the precious studs. Take them to the Queen." Suddenly he uttered a terrible cry. "All is lost! Two of the studs are missing—there are but ten of them left!"

"Can you have lost them, milord, or have they been stolen?"

"They have been stolen," replied the Duke, "and it is the Cardinal who has dealt me this blow. See, the ribbons which held them have been cut with scissors."

"Let me reflect," continued the Duke. "The only time I wore these studs was at a ball given by the King a week ago at Windsor. The Comtesse de Winter, with whom I had had a quarrel, became reconciled to me, at that ball. The woman is an agent of the Cardinal's."

To D'Artagnan he added, "The ball does not take place till next Monday. Five days yet. That's more time than we need."

The Duke summoned his secretary and his jeweller. To the former he gave a written order for the Lord Chancellor, and to the latter he gave a commission for two diamond studs to be made exactly like the ones on the blue ribbon.

An hour later the ordinance was published in London that no vessel bound for France should leave the ports—not even the packet-boat with letters.

On the day after the next, the two diamond studs were finished. They were such exact imitations that Buckingham could not tell the new ones from the old ones. He immediately called D'Artagnan.

"Here," he said, "are the diamond studs that you came to fetch. Leave the casket with me. You will say that I preserve it."

"I will perform your commission word for word, milord."

"Now, go to the port, ask for the brig 'Sund', and give this letter to the captain. He will convey you to a little

port where certainly no one is on the watch for you.”

D'Artagnan bowed to the Duke and quickly made his way to the port opposite the Tower of London. He found the vessel that had been named to him, delivered his letter to the captain, who, after having it signed by the warden of the port, set sail at once. The next day he landed at St. Valery. Four hours later he was at Neufchatel. At Pontoise he changed his horse for the last time and he galloped the rest of the journey to Paris.

The next day nothing was talked of in Paris but the ball which the provosts of the city were to give to the King and Queen.

At midnight great cries and loud acclamations were heard. It was the King passing through the streets which led from the Louvre to the City Hall and which were all illuminated with coloured lanterns.

The King was the first to arrive. He was attired in a most elegant hunting costume; when he was thus clothed, he really appeared the first gentleman of his kingdom.

The Cardinal drew near to the King and placed a casket in his hand. The King opened it, and found in it two diamond studs.



“What does this mean?” demanded he of the Cardinal.

“Nothing,” replied the latter; “only, if the Queen has the studs—but I very much doubt if she has—count them, sire. If you find only ten, ask her Majesty who can have stolen from her the studs that are here.”

The King looked at the Cardinal but had no time to put any question to him. A cry of admiration burst from every mouth. If the King appeared to be the first gentleman of his kingdom, the Queen was assuredly the most beautiful woman in France.

Her huntress habit was admirably becoming. She wore a beaver hat with blue feathers, a *surtout* of pearl-grey velvet fastened with diamond clasps, and a petticoat of blue satin embroidered in silver. On her left shoulder sparkled the diamond studs on a bow of the same colour as the plumes and the petticoat.

The King trembled with joy and the Cardinal with vexation. The Queen had the studs; the only question was, had she ten or twelve? The King left his company and hastened to the Queen.

“I thank you, madame,” said he, “for the deference you have shown to my wishes; but I think two of your studs are missing, and I bring them back to you.”

At these words he held out to the Queen the two studs the Cardinal had given him.



"How sire?" cried the Queen, affecting surprise; "you are giving me, then, two more. So now I shall have fourteen."

In fact the King counted them and the twelve studs were all on her Majesty's shoulder.

The King called the Cardinal to him.

"What does this mean, Cardinal?" asked the King in a severe tone.

"This means, sire," replied the Cardinal, "that I was desirous of presenting her Majesty with these two studs, and that, not venturing to offer them myself, I adopted this means of inducing her to accept them."

"And I am the more grateful to your Eminence," replied the Queen, with a smile that proved she was not the dupe of this false piece of gallantry, "since I am certain these two studs have cost you as dearly as all the others cost his Majesty."

Then, after bowing to the King and the Cardinal, the Queen returned to her ladies.

[Adapted.]



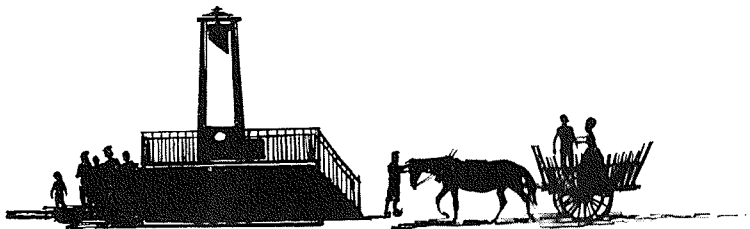
INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT FRANCE AND THE FRENCH PEOPLE

1. In Roman times, France was called *Gaul*. The country was later invaded by barbarians called "Franks", meaning "fierce men", who gave their name to the country. It is now a *republic*, with a president as its head of state, though up until the Revolution of 1789, kings ruled over France. The patron saint is *Saint Denis*; the country's *tricolour* flag has blue, white and red vertical stripes; the *cock* is the national symbol and the floral emblem is the lily or "fleur-de-lis".

2. At one time France was divided up into little kingdoms and the ruler of one of them, *William, Duke of Normandy* became King of England after defeating the English forces at the battle of Hastings in 1066. Many French words began to appear in the English language, especially in connection with war, art and architecture, law and the church. Later, English territory in France, won largely by the Black Prince, was gradually yielded up, due, in great measure, to the efforts of the famous heroine, Joan of Arc, who was burned at the stake as a witch at Rouen.

3. Each year, the 14th of July is remembered as *Independence Day* and the French people celebrate it with fireworks, music and dancing in the streets. The date denotes the beginning of the *French Revolution* and the capture of the *Bastille*, the notorious Paris prison. During the revolution, the king and queen were executed by means

of a grim new machine, which took its name from its inventor, *Dr. Guillotine*. Many of the noble families lost their lives and their possessions during the period known as the Reign of Terror. Under the banner of "*Liberty, Equality and Fraternity*", the people set up the new republic. The famous national march, "*La Marseillaise*" was composed at this time by Rouget de Lisle.



4. From the ashes of the Revolution rose a great leader, *Napoleon Bonaparte*, who was born in the French island of Corsica in the Mediterranean Sea. Napoleon proved to be a great general and conquered almost the whole of Europe. His defeat by *Lord Nelson* at the famous naval battle of *Trafalgar*, prevented him from invading England. He was decisively defeated by the British and Prussian armies at *Waterloo* in Belgium in 1815, after escaping for "a hundred days" from Elba. He was finally sent in exile to the lonely island of *Saint Helena* in the South Atlantic Ocean, where he died six years later. His body was brought home and he was buried with full military honours in *Les Invalides* museum in Paris.

5. The French have for hundreds of years been the leaders of world *fashion*. The French royal court was the centre of elegance and other countries imitated the styles and customs to be seen there. In recent times, French fashion houses have become world-famous and the most

expensive models come from Paris. Buyers from all over the world pay for the privilege of copying these latest styles, and, each year, as fashion changes, fabulous amounts of money are spent in purchasing clothes, ornaments, perfumes and jewellery. Another feature that has brought fame to France is *cooking*. French food and wines are known the world over. From France we get the word "chef" and the menus of the foremost hotels and restaurants in the world are printed in French. Wine is the chief drink, and the products of the French vineyards, champagne, claret and burgundy, are exported to all parts of the world.

6. French weights and measures are based mainly on the *decimal* system. Money is valued in *francs* and *centimes*, with a hundred centimes in each franc. A *metre*, which is the length of a ten millionth part of a line drawn from the Pole to the Equator, is a little more than a yard. A *kilometre*, or a thousand metres, equals about five eighths of a mile. The *gramme* is the unit of weight and, a *kilogramme* or one thousand grammes weighs about two and a quarter pounds. Liquids are measured in *litres* and four and a half litres make almost one gallon.

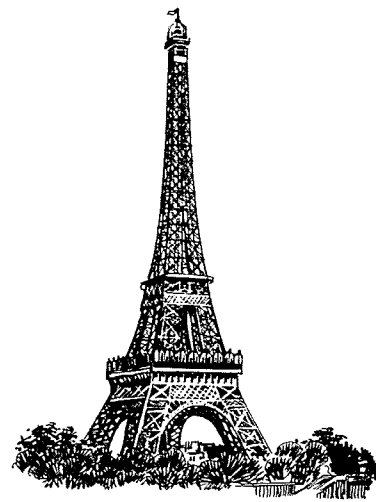
7. Though France has excelled in many sports, such as football, rugby and tennis, the French are especially enthusiastic for racing. In horse-racing, the *Grand Prix* at the famous Longchamps racecourse is only equalled by the English Derby. The *Tour de France* is a twenty-one day cycle race round the country, and sometimes into neighbouring countries, which starts and ends in Paris. In motor-car racing, speedsters regard the event at *Le Mans* as one of the greatest contests of the motor-racing calendar. The *Monte Carlo Rally* for drivers of ordinary private cars is an outstanding international competition. In this rally drivers begin from various starting points, such as Glasgow, Oslo or Lisbon, and by controlled routes, race to Monte Carlo, on the Riviera.

8. In modern times, many clever French people have contributed to our advancement in knowledge. *Daguerre* perfected the first photographs from 1824-1839 and these daguerreotype pictures were the beginnings of a new field of study which has led to motion pictures and television. *Bleriot* flew the first biplane across the Channel in 1909 and became a pioneer of aviation. *Pasteur* was a doctor who discovered germs and their harmful effects. Milk that has been treated and made free from germs is called "pasteurised milk". *Madame Curie*, though Polish by birth, was a doctor who lived and worked in Paris. She and her husband discovered how radium could be used to treat disease. The Curie Institute is one of the world's greatest cancer research centres. *Bertillon* was the founder of the finger-print system of criminal detection. No two finger-prints in the world are alike. By keeping a library of finger-prints, the police can relate crimes to the suspected persons.

9. In the *Landes*, a swampy district of south-western France, men still walk on stilts to counter the difficulties of walking, just as they have done for centuries. In *Brittany*, where the people come from the same stock as Cornish, Welsh, Irish and Scots people, the old Breton costume is worn. The gay national dress is also worn in *Alsace*, while the *Basque* people of the *Pyrenees*—the mountains which mark the southern frontier with Spain—retain their own special language as well. The district of *Provence*, which includes the sunny *Riviera* shores of *Cannes* and *Nice*, attracts thousands of tourists every year.

10. *Paris* is the centre of national life and the title of "gay Paree" is gained from the numbers of artists, writers and composers who live there, enjoying the carefree pleasures of this beautiful city. The most outstanding building in Paris is the *Eiffel Tower*, built for the Paris Exhibition of 1889 by an engineer *Gustave*

Eiffel, who also made the framework for the statue of Liberty in New York harbour and the locks for the Panama Canal. Other noted buildings include the *Notre Dame Cathedral* built on the original island city in the middle of the River Seine. The *Louvre* contains masterpieces of famous artists and was once the palace of the kings of France. Another royal palace, *Versailles*, witnessed the signing of international peace treaties. The *Arc de Triomphe* is the national war memorial; from its top can be seen the twelve straight avenues that lead to it from all parts of the city. Paris is also the terminus for two famous train routes, the *P.L.M.* (Paris-Lyons-Mediterranean) and the *Orient Express* across Europe, via Vienna and Belgrade to Istanbul.



QUESTIONS ON THE STORY

1. Name the three musketeers.
2. Who had prepared the plot to bring the Queen into disfavour?
3. What mission was given to D'Artagnan and the musketeers?
4. Why was speed essential to their mission?
5. What sign was above the inn where they had breakfast?

6. Tell how Porthos was forced into a fight with a stranger.
7. What happened to Aramis near Beauvais?
8. Write down the names of the lackeys and state to whom each was attached.
9. How was Athos captured?
10. From what port did D'Artagnan intend to cross to England?
11. In what way was the crossing to England made more difficult for D'Artagnan?
12. Tell how D'Artagnan found his way to the Duke's palace.
13. Where did Buckingham keep the diamond studs?
14. How did Buckingham know that two of the studs had been stolen?
15. Who was responsible for stealing them?
16. How did Buckingham manage to replace the diamond studs?
17. Detail the route D'Artagnan took back to Paris.
18. What did Cardinal Richelieu ask the King to do when he gave him the two diamond studs?
19. How did Richelieu manage to explain the two extra studs?
20. What was the Queen's reply to show that she had not been deceived by the Cardinal's gift?

QUESTIONS ON THE INTERESTING FACTS

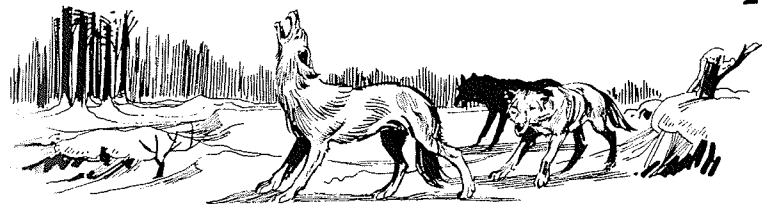
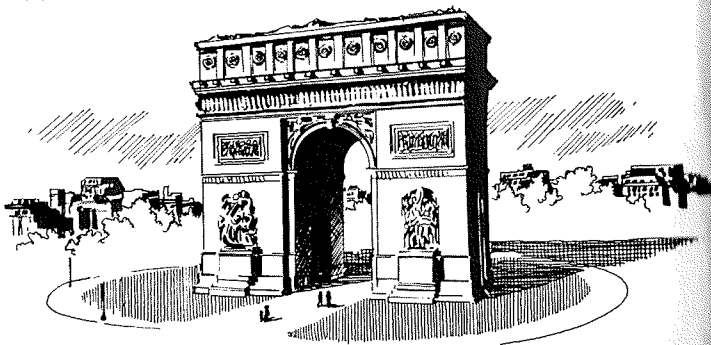
1. (a) What was the old name for France?
(b) How did it get its present name?
2. Name a particular time in history when French words were introduced into the English language.
3. (a) Why is the 14th of July celebrated in France?
(b) Who composed the French national anthem?

4. (a) Where was Napoleon born?
(b) Why did he not invade England?
(c) Where did he die and where is he buried?
5. (a) Name two things for which France is world famous.
(b) Give a reason why restaurants print their menus in French.
6. Give examples of French currency, length, weight and capacity.
7. (a) Name two well-known sports meetings in France.
(b) Name two starting points for the Monte Carlo rally.
8. (a) Who made the first photographs?
(b) Who is regarded as a pioneer of aviation?
(c) For what was Pasteur famous?
(d) Who discovered that radium could be used to cure disease?
(e) Who was the inventor of the finger-print system?
9. (a) Why do the people of Landes walk on stilts?
(b) To what races are the Bretons related?
(c) What range of mountains divides France and Spain?
(d) Name two French towns on the Riviera.
10. (a) Name three famous buildings in Paris.
(b) What routes are followed by P.L.M. and the Orient Express?

DEVELOPMENT EXERCISES

1. (a) Point out on the map the route followed by the musketeers from Paris to London.
(b) Find out the names of at least three present-day Channel crossings.
(c) Show the route you would follow if you were a driver in the Monte Carlo rally.

2. EITHER (a) Give a brief account of how D'Artagnan managed to cross from Calais to England.
- OR (b) If you were in a Paris salon describing a new exclusive model of your own design, tell briefly some of the features you would mention.
3. A musketeer was a soldier who used a musket or gun. Give the meaning of each of the following: (a) engineer, (b) pioneer, (c) privateer, (d) auctioneer, (e) buccaneer.
4. St. Martin was noted for his charity, in giving to the poor. For what particular quality is each of following saints noted (a) St. Francis, (b) St. Bernard (c) St. George, (d) St. Valentine (e) St. Nicholas?
5. Make a list of all the titles of people in the story.
6. The Eiffel Tower is associated with Paris. With what towns are the following associated (a) Kremlin, (b) Leaning Tower, (c) Taj Mahal, (d) Vatican, (e) White House?
7. Write the meaning of each of the following (a) French cakes, (b) French chalk, (c) French leave, (d) French polish, (e) French window.
8. Many French words and phrases have passed into common English usage, what is the meaning of each of the following: (a) aide-de-camp, (b) à la carte, (c) coiffure, (d) nom-de-plume, (e) trousseau?



THE WOLF TEST

In her historical novel of the Bronze Age "Warrior Scarlet", Rosemary Sutcliff tells the story of Drem One-arm, a boy with a crippled arm, who, having failed in his manhood test to kill a wolf unaided, receives another chance to be recognised as a Warrior of his Tribe. In this extract, Drem, who had searched the snow-covered hills for Doli, the shepherd, finds him unconscious at the foot of a flint quarry. He sends his hound, Whitethroat, to the village for help.

FROM somewhere ahead of him in the grey murk, it rose; long-drawn, savage, and unutterably sad, the cry of a wolf on the hunting trail. Another cry echoed it, nearer than the first—and then there was only the wind in the silence. Drem felt as though all the blood in his body had jumped back to his heart, and an icy stillness took him. The ewe stirred behind him, snorting and stamping her foot; he prayed that she might not bleat in terror—not that it would make much difference if she did, for the wolves were down wind of them, and the wind would carry their scent, if indeed the brutes were not running on it already. Something brushed against his knee, and Cu was crouching beside him; he could feel the tremors running through the old dog's body: tremors of fear and fury and hate. He laid his hand for an instant on the dog's neck, and felt the harsh hairs rising against his palm.