



## Who where Les Trois Marchands ?

Once upon a time, more than two hundred years ago, when the new Sologne high-road had just been paved, a shrewd impressario transformed his home near the church into a tavern. Right in the middle of Cour-Cheverny village, and what a tavern! Travellers on foot, or more often straddling an old nag, or even riding in a coach stopped by, because the stables could shelter up to a hundred riding or cart horses. And so it wasn't long before it became one of the stagecoach inns between Blois and Romorantin. No sign hung over the door yet of this tavern, and the innkeeper wasn't bothered about putting one up.

However, one evening, three sturdy young men, each hammering on the shutters asked for accommodation. They were buffoons going from fair to fair, jokers giving away sweet nothings, whether needed or not; in other words they were sellers of enchantment.

The first was called FORGETFULNESS. When he put his haversack down on the table, a flurry of worries, grudges and insipidities immediately flew out. The next one arriving a little later, was called PLEASURE and his knapsack was loaded with goodwill, charms and cheeriness.

The third who came in soon after, was called HOPE. In a big basket hanging around his neck were reflected colours, images and shimmerings of sweet memories.

When all three were seated together, the innkeeper,

pouring them a drink, said:

"Passers-by, it's you I've been waiting for. And since you're together under my roof, buffoons, sellers of illusions, you will be remembered by future travellers who will buy your wares and carry them off as souvenirs, and so I shall hereafter call my inn "Les Trois Marchands".

And so it was done for the best.

