*MOLIÈRE.*

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**WARD, LOCK & Co., London, New York, & Melbourne.**



JEAN BAPTISTE POQUELIN DE MOLIÈRE.

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*Edited by G. T. BETTANY, M.A., B.Sc.*

# COMEDIES

BY

# MOLIÈRE

*THE WOULD-BE GENTLEMAN.*
*THE AFFECTED YOUNG LADIES.*
*THE FORCED MARRIAGE.*
*THE DOCTOR BY COMPULSION.*
*SCAPIN'S ROGUERIES.*
*THE BLUNDERER.*
*THE SCHOOL FOR HUSBANDS.*
*THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES.*
*THE MISER.*
*THE HYPOCHONDRIAC.*
*THE MISANTHROPE.*
*TARTUFFE.*
*THE BLUE-STOCKINGS.*

*A NEW TRANSLATION BY CHARLES MATHEW, M.A.*

THE TRANSLATION REVISED BY THE EDITOR.

WITH A PORTRAIT OF MOLIÈRE AND A BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

WARD, LOCK AND CO.
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# INTRODUCTION.

MOLIÈRE, who is to French comedy what Shakespeare is to English drama, needs only to be read to be appreciated, and few authors appeal to a larger public. To all it may be said, Read him in French if possible; but there are still many to whom a translation will always be the only accessible or the most agreeable form of Molière. Besides, so broad a moralist and humorist is fit for many languages and peoples, and there seems little reason for the rarity of dramatic representation of Molière in English but the school-notion of giving him as a means solely of displaying French acquirement. Thousands more could enjoy these great comedies if given in English, and it has been one of the objects of this translation to facilitate such renderings. It has been specially written and carefully revised, with a view to briskness of language and suitability for speaking on the stage. Few will question that the selection given in this volume includes most of Molière's best work, several other masterly plays containing matter which could hardly be represented in England at the present day. Some previous translations have been consulted on doubtful points, especially Mr. Van Laun's admirable edition in six volumes (1875–6), which contains, besides an excellent English translation, all the notes and elucidations that could be desired by the student of Molière, and which is especially full in its treatment of the history of each play, and the various forms in which the plays, or parts of them, have been presented by English adaptors; but the present is an independent translation, and will,

it is believed, be found to have some merits of its own. No attempt has been made to reproduce the style of Molière's time; rather a standard style of conversational English, brisk, clear, and straightforward, has been aimed at. It is scarcely necessary to mention that the verse-plays have been reproduced in prose. Verse, however suitable for French plays, would but injure these comedies in English. Names have been left in their French forms.

The collection in this volume, omitting any of the pastorals, early comedies, and short occasional pieces which form three of the six classes into which Mr. Van Laun divides Molière's plays, consists of five which he terms farces, beginning with *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, as perhaps the best known, and following with four others in order of composition; five comedies, ranging from *L'Étourdi*, in 1653, to *Le Malade Imaginaire* of 1673, his last; and three of those "plays which portray humanity in all its aspects," *Le Misantrope*, *Tartuffe*, and *Les Femmes Savantes*. Though I should be disposed to rank *L'Étourdi* among the farces, and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* among the comedies, and to link *L'Avare* with the third greatest group, this matters little. But the reader who may find in the first six plays matter less weighty than he desires, however amusing it may be, will find the later group as full as he can wish of that profound penetration of the mask of humanity, that admirable humour, that comprehension and characterisation of men and women in general, which make Molière as fresh nowadays as ever, and which refresh, charm, enlighten, and warn us at one and the same time. But of course the charm in reading will be most present to those who can, as Mr. Van Laun urges, call up, as they read, "the change of voice, the step, the smile, the gesture, the twinkle of the eye or movement of the head in the actor."

Jean Baptiste Poquelin, better known as Molière, the name he assumed on becoming an actor, was born at Paris on or before Jan. 15, 1622, his father, Jean Poquelin, having been Court upholsterer in the Rue St. Honoré. The youth was educated at the Collège de Clermont, the best school in Paris, where he distinguished himself both in classics and philosophy, following this by a course of civil law at Orleans. He thus grew up into manhood

at the dawn of Louis XIV.'s brilliant age, in which Corneille and Racine, La Fontaine, Pascal and Bossuet, Descartes and Madame de Sévigné flourished, and when the salon of the hotel Rambouillet sparkled with learned and witty women, whose affectations Molière so severely satirised. Molière, much to his father's disgust, in 1643 joined a new dramatic company, termed "L'Illustre Théatre," founded by Madeleine Béjart and several well-to-do young persons of bourgeois families; and he soon gained great influence in the company, and became responsible for considerable sums of money, which led to his not infrequent arrest. The company for a long time travelled in the provinces; and while it produced numerous indifferent plays, it certainly deserves the credit of being the means of bringing out Molière's talent. In 1653, *L'Étourdi* was played at Lyons, where its success fixed them for two or three years. Molière was in 1658 persuaded to return to Paris, where he was introduced to Cardinal Mazarin and Philip duke of Anjou, the king's brother. This led to the "Illustre Théatre" being asked to play before the king. From this time the company took the title of the "Comédiens de Monsieur," and success shone on them. Molière successively improved and brought out the plays he had already given in sketch in the provinces, and in 1859 made a great hit with his *Précieuses Ridicules*, which nevertheless made him many enemies. In 1660 Molière was transferred from the theatre of the Petit Bourbon to the great hall of the Palais Royal. In the same year he succeeded to his father's profitable place of Court upholsterer, and the king everywhere delighted to honour him. In 1662 he married Armande Béjart, youngest sister of Madeleine. He sincerely loved his wife, who, however, was fonder of pleasure than he could have wished, and not unfrequently gave him some cause for jealousy and melancholy. Henceforth Molière produced, in rapid succession, farces, comedies, and Court pieces, interspersed with ballets. The first three acts of *Tartuffe* (1664) and *Le Festin de Pierre* (1665) raised such a storm of clerical and orthodox opposition by their exposure of hypocrisy, that they were interdicted by the Church; but the king answered this by conferring on the company the title of "Comédiens du Roi," with a royal subsidy. Molière

d disagreeable moments with his company too, who now rough jealousy, now when a play was not greatly successful or a al piece was more in favour, showed their ingratitude. The ng's household troops, who had had free admission to the eatre, were very angry with Molière when this privilege was ken from them, and it required the king's intervention to pacify em.

Whether owing to his marriage, to the difficulties and opposin he met with, or to natural ill-health, Molière in his greatest riod was often melancholy, morose, and somewhat feeble and irm off the stage. His spasmodic cough and weak chest comlled him to lead a quiet, retired life as far as possible, and he is frequently laid up for months together towards the close of s career. *The Misanthrope* is the product of one of these illsses, wherein the dramatist has vividly depicted what he himself gely felt, while Célimène too truthfully represents his wife; d when it was played in June, 1666, by the two originals who uld best expound it, Paris was charmed, and it ran a month. *he Miser*, when first performed in the autumn of 1668, was her coldly received, a surprising thing to modern readers. It s only in February, 1669, that *Tartuffe*, complete, was given, the king's express permission, notwithstanding the strong position of ecclesiastics, and it scored a grand success, running several months. *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, still later, in 70, gave us the masterly portrait of M. Jourdain, which part olière played himself. In 1672 he produced the great comedy ainst Blue-Stockings and Pedants which closes this volume; ile the concluding months of his life were relieved by satirising s own feelings in the *Malade Imaginaire*, in which he acted the rt of Argan, on the 17th of February, 1673, though very ill. "In e evening of the same day," says Mr. Van Laun, "in his house in e Rue Richelieu, he burst a blood-vessel. Two nuns who had r some time past been living in the house stood by his bed, and them he expressed his complete resignation to the will of God. hey sent in succession for two priests to administer the last conlations of religion, but both refused to come. Before a third uld be found, Molière was dead. He was buried four days

later, almost without the rites of religion, in a churchyard adjoining the Rue Montmartre." The priests of that day resented unauthorised censure of hypocrisy and false appearances, and so Molière died under their ban. The archbishop of Paris had ordered that he should be buried without any ceremony. Could Molière awake now in France, what a welcome he would receive! His phrases, his ideas, his characters, are part of the national life.

Molière is described by Madame Poisson, who had seen him when she was very young, as rather tall, of noble figure, with a remarkably fine leg. "He walked measuredly, had a very serious air, a large nose, an ample mouth with full lips, brown complexion, and eyebrows black and thick; while the varied motion he gave to these latter rendered his physiognomy extremely comic." His fellow-actors, as La Grange declares, "loved their chief, who united to extraordinary genius an honourable character and charming manner." He was fond of rich dress, splendid furniture, and old books. The charms of his conversation were great, and he was remarkable for gentleness, delicacy, and generosity. As an actor he was most successful in comedy and in his own characters. "He is probably," says Mr. Lang in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," "the greatest of all comic writers within the limits of social and refined as distinguished from that of romantic comedy. He has the humour which is but a sense of the true value of life, and now takes the form of the most vivacious wit and the keenest observation, now of melancholy and pity and wonder at the fortunes of mortal men. . . . Besides his contemplative genius, he possessed an unerring knowledge of the theatre, the knowledge of a great actor and a great manager, and hence his plays can never cease to hold the stage, and to charm, if possible, even more in the performance than in the reading." Sir Walter Scott wrote: "Molière possessed, in a degree superior to all other men, the falcon's piercing eye to detect vice under every veil, or folly in every shape, and the talent to pounce upon either, as the natural prey of the satirist. No other writer of comedy ever soared through flights so many and so various."

G. T. B.

# THE WOULD-BE GENTLEMAN

## (*LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME*).

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MONS. JOURDAIN, *the citizen.*
MDME. JOURDAIN, *his wife.*
LUCILE, *M. Jourdain's daughter.*
NICOLE, *a maid-servant.*
CLÉONTE, *in love with Lucile.*
COVIELLE, *servant to Cléonte.*
———, *a Count, Dorimène's lover.*
DORIMÈNE, *a Marchioness.*
MUSIC-MASTER.
MUSIC-MASTER'S PUPIL.
DANCING-MASTER.
FENCING-MASTER.
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY.
MASTER-TAILOR.
JOURNEYMAN-TAILOR.
SERVANTS, MUSICIANS, ETC.

SCENE—PARIS.

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### ACT I. SCENE I.

MUSIC-MASTER, DANCING-MASTER, *Three Musicians, Two Violin-Players, and Four Dancers. In the middle of the scene a music-master's pupil at a table, composing an air for a serenade which the citizen has bespoken.*

*Music-Master* (*to his musicians*). Here, come into this room, and rest yourselves, till he comes.

*Dancing-Master* (*to the dancers*). And you, too, come this way.

*Music-M.* (*to his pupil*). Is it done?

*Pupil.* Yes, sir.

*Music-M.* Let me look at it. Ah! that's good.

*Dancing-M.* Is that something new?

*Music-M.* Yes, it is an air for a serenade, which I told him to compose here, while we are waiting till our gentleman is awake.

*Dancing-M.* May I have a look at it?

*Music-M.* You will hear it, with the dialogue, when he comes. He can't be long.

*Dancing-M.* We're pretty busy, you and I, just now.

*Music-M.* That's true. We have found a man here who just suits us both. This Monsieur Jourdain is a snug little income to

us, with the notions of nobility and gallantry that he has got into his head. Your dancing and my music might be well content if all the world were like him.

*Dancing-M.* Well, not exactly; for I should be better pleased if he knew more of the subjects on which we instruct him.

*Music-M.* It is true that his knowledge is bad, but his pay is good: and our arts have more need of that at present than of anything else.

*Dancing-M.* Well, for my part, I confess I have some little appetite for glory. Applause touches my feelings; and I hold that in the fine arts it is mortifying enough to have to display oneself to fools, and to submit one's compositions to the barbarism of stupid people. There is pleasure—don't tell me there isn't—in working for persons who understand all the delicate points of an art; who know how to give a kind reception to the beauties of a work, and by grateful approbation to make you take a relish in your labour. Yes, the pleasantest recompense one can receive for what one does is to see that it is understood; and to have it accepted with a kindly applause that does one honour. There is nothing, in my opinion, that pays us better for all our toils than this; and nothing gives more exquisite pleasure than discriminating praise.

*Music-M.* I quite agree with you, and I relish it as much as you do. There is certainly nothing that tickles one's fancy more than this applause which you speak of; but one cannot exist on this incense. Mere praise will not make a man live at his ease. There must be something solid mixed with it, and the best way of praising is to hand over some coin. This man's mental vision is indeed very limited; he speaks of everything at random, and never applauds but when he ought not; but then, his money makes up for his judgment. He has intelligence in his purse. His praises are current coin; and this ignorant citizen is worth more to us, as you see, than the intellectual nobleman who introduced us here.

*Dancing-M.* There is some truth in what you say; but I think you depend a little too much on money; and mere lucre is so base a thing, that no man of honour should ever show any attachment to it.

*Music-M.* For all that, you are willing enough to take the money that this man gives you.

*Dancing-M.* Certainly; but I don't place all my happiness in it; and I wish that with his fortune he had also some good taste.

*Music-M.* So do I, and it is what we are both working for, so far as we can. But anyhow, he gives us means of making our-

selves known in the world; and he will pay instead of others for what others will praise instead of him.

*Dancing-M.* Here he comes.

## SCENE II.

MONS. JOURDAIN (*in night-cap and dressing-gown*), *Music-Master, Dancing-Master, Violoncellists, Musicians, Dancers, and Two Footmen.*

*M. Jourdain.* Well, gentlemen, what have you got there? Will you let me see your silly thing?

*Dancing-Master.* Eh? What silly thing?

*M. Jour.* Why, the—what do you call it? Your prologue or dialogue of songs and dances.

*Dancing-M.* Ha! ha!

*Music-Master.* We are quite ready for you.

*M. Jour.* Oh, I know I kept you waiting a little; but that was because I am dressing to-day like the "upper ten," and my hosier sent me a pair of silk stockings that I thought I never should have got on.

*Music-M.* We are here only to wait your leisure.

*M. Jour.* I beg that you will neither of you go till they have brought me my coat, that you may see me in it.

*Dancing-M.* Just as you please.

*M. Jour.* You shall see me rigged out in the best style from head to foot.

*Music-M.* We don't doubt it.

*M. Jour.* I've had this chintz dressing-gown made for me.

*Dancing-M.* It's very handsome.

*M. Jour.* My tailor tells me that this is what gentlemen wear of a morning.

*Music-M.* It suits you wonderfully.

*M. Jour.* Here, you fellows, both of you!

*First Footman.* What's your pleasure, sir?

*M. Jour.* Oh! nothing. It was only to see whether you heard me properly. (*To the two Masters.*) What do you think of my livery?

*Dancing-M.* It's splendid.

*M. Jour.* (*throwing his dressing-gown half open, and showing a closely-fitting pair of crimson velvet breeches, and a green velvet vest*). Here, again, is a kind of morning dishabille to take exercise in.

*Music-M.* It's fine.

*M. Jour.* Footman!

*First Footman.* Sir?

*M. Jour.* No; the other fellow.

*Second Footman.* Sir?

*M. Jour.* Here, hold my dressing gown. Do I look well so?

*Dancing-M.* Excellently well. You couldn't look better.

*M. Jour.* Now let's see your production.

*Music-M.* I should greatly like you first to hear an air that he (*indicating his pupil*) has just composed for the serenade you wanted. He is one of my pupils, who has a remarkable talent for that kind of thing.

*M. Jour.* Yes; but that shouldn't have been done by a pupil. You are not too good for the work yourself.

*Music-M.* You must not allow yourself to be led away, sir, by the name of Pupil. Pupils of this sort know as much about this as the best masters; and the air is as good as can be made. Only listen to it.

*M. Jour.* Give me my dressing-gown, that I may hear it better—Stay, I think I shall do without it—No, give it me again; that will be best.

*Musician* (*singing*)—

*My pain is so extreme I languish day and night,*
*Since you have tam'd me with your eyes so bright;*
*But tell me, Iris, what dire fate attends*
*Your enemies, if thus you treat your friends?*

*M. Jour.* This song seems to me rather dismal; it sends one to sleep. I should be glad if you could enliven it a little here and there.

*Music-M.* But, sir, the air must suit the words.

*M. Jour.* I learnt a very pretty one some time ago. Stay—H'm—How did it begin?

*Dancing-M.* Really, sir, I don't know.

*M. Jour.* There's something about a lamb in it.

*Dancing-M.* What! a lamb?

*M. Jour.* Yes. Now I've got it. (*He sings.*)

*I thought my dear Jenny was gentle and fair,*
*I thought my dear Jenny's a soft, lamb-like air;*
*But alas! and alas! she's a thousand times worse*
*Than the tiger that lives in the woods.*

There, now, isn't that pretty?

*Music-M.* Extremely pretty.

*Dancing-M.* And then, you sing it so well!

*M. Jour.* Yet I never learnt music.

*Music-M.* You ought to learn it, sir, as you learn dancing. They are two arts which have a close connection with one another.

*Dancing-M.* And which open the human mind to see all that is beautiful.

*M. Jour.* Do fashionable people learn music, too?

*Music-M.* Yes, sir.

*M. Jour.* Then I'll learn it. But I don't know how I shall find time: for besides the fencing-master who teaches me, I have also engaged a Professor of Philosophy, who is to begin this morning.

*Music-M.* Philosophy is something; but music, sir, music——

*Dancing-M.* Music and dancing—music and dancing—that's all that's necessary.

*Music-M.* There's nothing so useful in a State as music.

*Dancing-M.* There's nothing so necessary for men as dancing.

*Music-M.* Without music a State cannot exist.

*Dancing-M.* Without dancing a man can do nothing.

*Music-M.* All the disorders, all the wars that one sees in the world, happen only from not having learnt music.

*Dancing-M.* All the disasters of mankind, all the fatal misfortunes that history is so full of, the blunders of politicians, the failures of great commanders, all have come from want of knowing how to dance.

*M. Jour.* How so?

*Music-M.* Does not war proceed from want of concord between men.

*M. Jour.* That's true.

*Music-M.* And if all men learnt music, would not that be the means of keeping them in accord together, and of seeing universal peace in the world.

*M. Jour.* You're quite right.

*Dancing-M.* When a man has been guilty of some slip in his conduct, whether it be in the affairs of his family, or in the government of the State, or in the command of an army, don't we always say such a one has made a false step in such a matter?

*M. Jour.* Yes, we certainly do say so.

*Dancing-M.* And can the making a false step proceed from anything but not knowing how to dance?

*M. Jour.* That's true, and you are both right.

*Dancing-M.* This is to show you the excellence and advantage of dancing and music.

*M. Jour.* Now I understand it.

*Music-M.* Would you like now to see our two compositions?

*M. Jour.* Yes.

*Music-M.* I have told you already that this is a slight attempt which I made some time ago to show how the various passions may be expressed by music.

*M. Jour.* Very well.

*Music-M.* (*to his musicians*). Here, come forward. (*To M. Jour.*) You must imagine that they are dressed like shepherds.

*M. Jour.* But why always shepherds? That's what one sees everywhere.

*Music-M.* When we have to introduce people speaking in music, in order to keep to probability we must have recourse to pastorals. Singing has always been appropriated to shepherds; and it is by no means natural in dialogue that princes and townspeople should sing their passions.

*M. Jour.* Well, well. Now let us see it.

A MUSICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THREE SINGERS (ONE LADY AND TWO MEN).

*Lady Singer.*

*The heart that yields to love's strong sway*
*Must look for cares unnumbered day by day;*
*Sweet are love's sighs and languishments they say:*
*But say whate'er they will, for me*
*Nought's so sweet as liberty.*

*First S.*

*Nought's so sweet as love's soft fire,*
*Which can two ardent hearts inspire*
*With but one love, and one desire.*
*Without love's passion none can happy be,*
*Take love from life, no pleasure more you'll see.*

*Second S.*

*How sweet beneath the law of love to live;*
*If only love true constancy would give:*
*But cruel fate!*
*No Nymph is true:*
*The faithless sex, more worthy of our hate,*
*To love should bid eternally adieu.*

*First S.*

*What pleasing heat!*

*Lady S.*
*What freedom blest!*
*Second S.*
*O, fair deceit.*
*First S.*
*How I love thee.*
*Lady S.*
*I approve thee!*
*Second S.*
*But I detest.*
*First S.*
*Begin to love, and leave this mortal hate.*
*Lady S.*
*I a shepherdess can find,*
*Who will prove a faithful mate.*
*Second S.*
*Ah! I fear 'tis but a blind.*
*Lady S.*
*Our glory to retrieve,*
*My heart I here bestow.*
*Second S.*
*But, Nymph, can I believe*
*That heart no change will know?*
*Lady S.*
*By experience you'll see,*
*Which can give the truest love.*
*Second S.*
*And who fails in constancy*
*Shall be punished from above.*
*All Three.*
*Then let us kindle soft desire,*
*Let us fan the amorous fire.*
*Ah! how sweet it is to love,*
*When hearts united constant prove.*

*M. Jour.* Is that all?
*Music-M.* Yes.
*M. Jour.* I find this very well put together, and there are some pretty little sayings in it.

*Dancing-M.* Now in my composition you have a little arrangement of the finest movements, and the most beautiful attitudes with which a dance can possibly be varied.

*M. Jour.* And are these shepherds too?

*Dancing-M.* That's just as you please. Now begin.

(*Four dancers execute all the different movements and kinds of steps which the Dancing-Master orders: and this dance makes the First Interlude.*)

## ACT II. SCENE I.

MONS. JOURDAIN, MUSIC-MASTER, DANCING-MASTER, *Servants.*

*M. Jourdain.* This is not amiss, and those fellows trip it right merrily.

*Music-Master.* When the dance is accompanied with music, that would have a still better effect, and you shall see something charming in the little ballet we have arranged for you.

*M. Jour.* However, that's for by and by, mind you; and the person for whom I have ordered all this, will do me the honour of dining with me here.

*Dancing-Master.* Everything is ready.

*Music-M.* But this is not enough, sir; a gentleman like yourself, who lives in such good style, and has such a taste for fine things, ought to have a concert at your house every Wednesday or Thursday.

*M. Jour.* Do fashionable people have them then?

*Music-M.* Yes, sir.

*M. Jour.* Then so will I. Will it be nice?

*Music-M.* Certainly. You must have three voices—a treble, a counter-tenor, and bass, which must be accompanied by a bass-viol, a theorbo-lute, and a harpsichord for the sustained bass, with two violins to play the symphonies.

*M. Jour.* You must add also a single-stringed viol, for that is an instrument which pleases me, and is extremely harmonious.

*Music-M.* Leave us to manage matters.

*M. Jour.* However, don't forget by and by to send the musicians to sing during dinner.

*Music-M.* You shall have everything that is necessary.

*M. Jour.* But, above all, let the ballet be first-rate.

*Music-M.* You shall be quite satisfied with it, and among other things with certain minuets which you will find in it.

*M. Jour.* Ah! the minuet is my favourite dance. I should like you to see me go through one. Come, master.

*Dancing-M.* A hat, sir, if you please. (*M. Jourdain takes the hat from his footman, and puts it on the top of his night-cap. The Dancing-Master takes his hands and makes him dance to a minuet air, which he sings.*) Now, Tol, lol, lol, lol, lol, lol; Tol, lol lol, twice; Tol, lol, lol; tol lol. Keep time, if you please. Tol, lol, lol, lol. The right leg forward. Tol, lol, lol. Don't shake your shoulders so much. Tol, lol, lol, lol, lol. Your arms hang as if they were crippled. Tol, lol, lol, lol, lol. Hold up your head, and turn out your toes. Tol, lol, lol. Your body upright.

*M. Jour.* Well!

*Music-M.* Couldn't be better.

*M. Jour.* By the way, show me how I ought to make a bow on receiving a marchioness. I shall have occasion for it before long.

*Dancing-M.* How you must make a bow to a marchioness?

*M. Jour.* Yes, a marchioness whose name is Dorimène.

*Dancing-M.* Give me your hand.

*M. Jour.* No. You've only got to do it. I shall remember how.

*Dancing-M.* If you would salute her with a great deal of respect you must first of all make a retiring bow, then, advancing towards her, bow three times, and the last time bow as low as her knees.

*M. Jour.* Just show me how. (*After the Dancing-Master has bowed three times.*) That'll do.

*First Footman.* Sir, your fencing-master is here.

*M. Jour.* Tell him to come in, and give me a lesson. I should like you to see how I do it.

## SCENE II.

MONS. JOURDAIN, FENCING-MASTER, MUSIC-MASTER, DANCING-MASTER, *and Footman carrying two foils.*

*Fencing-Master* (*after having taken two foils from the Footman, and having given one to M. Jourdain*). Now, sir. The salute. Your body upright, leaning slightly on the left thigh. Your legs not so far apart. Your feet both in line. Your wrist opposite

your hip. The point of your sword over against your shoulder. Your arm not stretched out quite so much. Your left hand on a level with your eyes. Your left shoulder more squared. Hold up your head with a firm look. Advance. Your body steady. Engage my sword in carte and lunge from that position. One, two. Recover. Again, your foot firm. One, two. A step back. When you make a thrust, sir, your sword should quit first, and your body well kept back. Come, thrust. Tierce, and finish the same. Advance. Your body firm. Advance. Deliver from there. One, two. As you were. Repeat the same. One, two. A step back. Parry, sir, parry. (*The Fencing-Master gives him two or three home-thrusts, saying at the same time, "Parry."*)

*M. Jourdain.* Eugh—I am out of breath!

*Music-Master.* You do wonders.

*Fencing-M.* I have already told you, that the whole secret of an assault-at-arms consists in giving and not receiving; and as I showed you the other day by demonstrative reasoning, it is impossible for you to be hit if you know how to turn your adversary's sword from the line of your body, which depends only on a small motion of your wrist, either inward or outward.

*M. Jour.* At that rate, then, a man, without any courage, is sure to kill his man, and not be killed himself?

*Fencing-M.* No doubt. Have not you seen the demonstration of it?

*M. Jour.* Yes, certainly.

*Fencing-M.* By this you may see how highly such persons as ourselves ought to be esteemed in the State; and how much the science of arms excels all the other useless sciences, such as music, dancing——

*Dancing-Master.* Gently, Mr. Master-at-Arms. Don't speak disrespectfully of dancing.

*Music-M.* And learn, I beg of you, to have a better appreciation of the excellence of music.

*Fencing-M.* You're comical fellows, to pretend to compare your sciences with mine.

*Music-M.* I beg of you to notice the importance of the man.

*Dancing-M.* He's a droll kind of animal, with his leathern breastplate.

*Fencing-M.* My little dancing-master, I'll give you something to dance for. And as for you, Mr. Musician, I'll soon make you tune up.

*Dancing-M.* Mr. Iron-smith, I'll soon teach you your trade.

*M. Jour.* (*to the Dancing-Master*). Are you mad to go and

quarrel with a man who understands all about tierce and carte, and who knows how to kill any one by demonstrative reasoning?

*Dancing-M.* Oh! I laugh at his demonstrative reasoning and at his tierce and carte too.

*M. Jour.* Gently, I tell you!

*Fencing-M.* What's that? You impertinent little wretch.

*M. Jour.* Now, my dear Fencing-Master.

*Dancing-M.* Eugh, you great coach-horse.

*M. Jour.* Now, really, my good Dancing Master.

*Fencing-M.* Let me just fall on you——

*M. Jour.* Come, come!

*Dancing-M.* Let me only get hold of you!

*M. Jour.* Gently.

*Fencing-M.* I'll comb your hair for you in a fine fashion——

*M. Jour.* Now, for goodness sake!

*Dancing-M.* I'll thrash you in such a way——

*M. Jour.* Let me beg of you!

*Music-M.* We must teach him a lesson in manners.

*M. Jour.* Good heavens! stop this.

## SCENE III.

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY, MUSIC-MASTER, DANCING-MASTER, MONS. JOURDAIN, *Servants.*

*M. Jourdain.* Ah, Mr. Professor, you are just in time with your philosophy. Come and make peace among these good people.

*Professor of Philosophy.* How now? What's the matter, gentlemen?

*M. Jour.* They have put themselves in such a passion over the superiority of their professions, that they have insulted each other and nearly come to blows.

*Prof.* Really, gentlemen, ought you to let yourselves be carried so far? Have you not read Seneca's learned treatise on anger? Is there anything more base and shameful than this passion which turns a man into a wild beast? And should not reason govern all our actions?

*Dancing-Master.* But, sir, he has been abusing us both, running down dancing which is my employment, and music, which is my friend's profession.

*Prof.* A wise man is above all insults that can be offered him, and the best answer to abuse is calmness and patience.

*Fencing-Master.* They both had the insolence to compare their professions to mine.

*Prof.* Why should this excite you? Men ought not to dispute about rank or empty glory; what distinguishes clearly one man from another is wisdom and virtue.

*Dancing-M.* I maintain against him that dancing is a science, which cannot be too much honoured.

*Music-Master.* And I, that music has been held in the greatest reverence in all ages.

*Fencing-M.* And I maintain against them both that the art of self-defence is the finest and most necessary of all the sciences.

*Prof.* What becomes of philosophy, then? I think you are all three of you very impertinent to speak in this way before me, and to have the impudence to give the name of Science to things that ought not even to be honoured with the name of Art; and which can only be described as the pitiful trade of a Gladiator, Ballad-singer, and Street-dancer.

*Fencing-M.* Get out, you dog of a philosopher!

*Music-M.* Away with you, you pedantic scoundrel!

*Dancing-M.* Be off, you arrant bottlewasher!

*Prof.* What! you rascals——

[*The Philosopher falls on them, and all three move off fighting.*

*M. Jour.* What, Mr. Philosopher!

*Prof.* Wretches, rogues, insolent curs!

*M. Jour.* But really, Mr. Philosopher.

*Fencing-M.* Plague on the animal!

*M. Jour.* Gentlemen! Gentlemen!

*Prof.* Impudent villains!

*M. Jour.* Come, Mr. Philosopher!

*Dancing-M.* Deuce take the dull ass!

*M. Jour.* Gentlemen! Gentlemen!

*Prof.* Scoundrels!

*M. Jour.* Oh! Mr. Philosopher.

*Music-M.* To the devil with this impudent fellow!

*M. Jour.* Now, gentlemen!

*Prof.* Rogues! Ragamuffins! Traitors! Impostors! [*Exeunt.*

*M. Jour.* Mr. Philosopher! Gentlemen! Mr. Philosopher! Gentlemen! Oh! well then, fight away as much as you like. I'm not going to spoil my dressing-gown in trying to part you. I should be a great fool to push myself into the fray, and get a blow that would hurt me.

## SCENE IV.

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY, MONS. JOURDAIN, *Servants.*

*Professor* (*arranging his collar*). Now let us come to our lesson.

*M. Jourdain.* Ah! sir, I am sorry for the blows they gave you.

*Prof.* Oh! that doesn't matter. A philosopher must take things as they come. I will write a satire against them, in Juvenal's style, and that will cut them up finely. But let us say no more about it. What would you like to learn?

*M. Jour.* All I can, for I have a great wish to be a scholar, and I am wild to think that my father and mother never made me study the sciences when I was young.

*Prof.* A very good sentiment, *Nam sine doctrinâ vita est quasi mortis imago.* You understand that, as of course you are acquainted with Latin?

*M. Jour.* Yes; but go on just as if I did not know it. Explain to me what it means.

*Prof.* Why, it means that without learning, life is as it were the likeness of death.

*M. Jour.* That Latin is right.

*Prof.* Have you not learnt some principles or rudiments of science?

*M. Jour.* Oh! yes, I can read and write.

*Prof.* Where would you like us to begin? Shall I teach you logic?

*M. Jour.* What's the meaning of logic?

*Prof.* It is that which teaches us the three operations of the mind.

*M. Jour.* And what are they?

*Prof.* The first, is the power of conceiving well, by means of universals. The second, that of judging well, by means of categories. The third, that of drawing a right conclusion, by means of the figures, *Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferio, Baralipton.*

*M. Jour.* Your words are too repulsive. I don't care for your logic. Let us learn something pleasanter.

*Prof.* Would you like to learn the science of Morals?

*M. Jour.* Of morals?

*Prof.* Yes.

*M. Jour.* Well, what is morals about?

*Prof.* Why it treats of happiness, shows men how to govern their passions, and——

and no morality will keep me back; I put myself into an awful rage when I choose.

*Prof.* Would you like to learn Physics, then?

*M. Jour.* What does physics drone about?

*Prof.* It explains the principles of Nature, and the properties of bodies; it treats of the nature of the elements, of metals, of minerals, stones, plants, and animals; it teaches us the cause of all the meteors, of the rainbow, will-o'-the-wisp, comets, lightnings, thunder, thunderbolts, rain, snow, hail, winds, and whirlwinds.

*M. Jour.* There's too much hubbub in this, too much confusion.

*Prof.* Well, what would you like me to teach you, then?

*M. Jour.* Teach me orthography.

*Prof.* With all my heart.

*M. Jour.* Then you can teach me the almanac; when there is a moon, and when there is none.

*Prof.* Very well; but to carry out this idea of yours properly, and to treat the matter philosophically, we must begin according to the order of things, with an exact knowledge of the nature of the letters, and the different manner of pronouncing each. And first I must tell you that letters are divided into vowels, so called because they express the distinct sounds; and into consonants, so named because they sound with the vowels, and only mark the different articulations of the sounds. There are five vowels or voices—A, E, I, O, U.

*M. Jour.* I understand all that.

*Prof.* The vowel A is pronounced by opening the mouth very wide—A.[1]

*M. Jour.* A, A. Yes.

*Prof.* The vowel E is formed by drawing the lower jaw a little nearer to the upper—A, E.

*M. Jour.* A, E, A, E. So it is. This is really quite pretty.

*Prof.* And the vowel I by bringing the jaws still nearer to each other, and stretching the two corners of the mouth towards the ears—A, E, I.

*M. Jour.* A, E, I, I, I, I. That's true. Science for ever!

*Prof.* The vowel O is formed by re-opening the jaws and drawing the lips together at the two corners, the upper and the lower—O.

*M. Jour.* O, O. Nothing could be more exact. A, E, I, O, I, O. This is admirable! I, O, I, O

*Prof.* The opening of the mouth makes a perfect little ring which resembles an O.

*M. Jour.* O, O, O. You are right. O. What a fine thing it is to know something!

*Prof.* The vowel U is formed by bringing the teeth close together, without letting them actually touch, and then, extending the lips outwards, bringing them also near together without absolutely joining them—U.

*M. Jour.* U, U. Nothing can be truer than that—U.

*Prof.* You extend your two lips as if you were making a face. So if you want to do that to any one, and to laugh at him, you need say nothing more than U.

*M. Jour.* U, U. That's true. Ah! I wish I'd studied sooner, to have known all this.

*Prof.* To-morrow we will consider the other letters, which are the consonants.

*M. Jour.* Is there anything as curious in them, as in these?

*Prof.* Undoubtedly. The consonant D, for example, is pronounced by placing the tip of the tongue above the upper teeth—D.

*M. Jour.* D, D. Yes; so it is. This is quite charming!

*Prof.* F, by resting the upper teeth upon the lower lip—F.

*M. Jour.* F, F. It's quite true. Oh, father and mother, what a grudge I owe you!

*Prof.* And R, by carrying the tip of your tongue up to the roof of your mouth, so that being lightly touched by the air which comes out sharply, it yields to it, and, returning to the same place, makes a kind of roll—R-rrr.

*M. Jour.* R, r, ra. R, r, r, r, r, ra. That's true. What a clever man you are! and how much time I've lost. R, r, r, ra.

*Prof.* I will explain all these curious things to you thoroughly.

*M. Jour.* Pray do: but now I must tell you a secret. I am in love with a lady of high rank, and I should like you to help me to write something to her in a short billet-doux which I wish to drop at her feet.

*Prof.* Very well.

*M. Jour.* It will be very gallant, will it?

*Prof.* Certainly. Would you like to write poetry to her?

*M. Jour.* Oh, no. None of your poetry for me.

*Prof.* So, then, you only want prose.

*M. Jour.* No; I don't want either poetry or prose.

*Prof.* But it must be one or the other.

*M. Jour.* Why so?

*Prof.* For the reason, sir, that there is no other way of expressing oneself except by poetry or prose.

*M. Jour.* Is there nothing else, then, but poetry or prose?

*Prof.* No, sir. Whatever is not poetry is prose, and whatever is not prose is poetry.

*M. Jour.* And when one talks, what is that then?

*Prof.* Prose.

*M. Jour.* What, when I say, "Nicole, bring me my slippers, and give me my night-cap," is that prose?

*Prof.* Yes, sir.

*M. Jour.* In good truth, then, I've been talking prose for more than forty years without knowing it, and I am extremely obliged to you for informing me of it. Well, then I want to put this into my note, *Beautiful Marchioness, your lovely eyes make me die of love*, but I should like this expressed in an extremely polite way, neatly turned, you know.

*Prof.* Say that the fire of her eyes has reduced your heart to ashes; that night and day you suffer on her account all the torments——

*M. Jour.* No, no, no, I don't want all that. I'll have nothing but what I told you, *Beautiful Marchioness, your lovely eyes make me die of love.*

*Prof.* But you must make a little more of it than that.

*M. Jour.* No, I tell you; I'll only have those words in the note, but expressed properly, and arranged as they should be. I beg you to do this for me, so that I may judge of the different ways in which the words can be placed.

*Prof.* They can be placed as you said at first, *Beautiful Marchioness, your lovely eyes make me die of love;* or, *Of love to die me make, beautiful Marchioness, your lovely eyes;* or, *Your lovely eyes, of love me make, beautiful Marchioness, to die;* or, *To die your lovely eyes, beautiful Marchioness, of love me make;* or, lastly, *Me make your eyes lovely to die, beautiful Marchioness, of love.*

*M. Jour.* But of all these ways, which is the best?

*Prof.* That which you said yourself, *Beautiful Marchioness, your lovely eyes make me die of love.*

*M. Jour.* Yet I never studied it, and I made it all at once. I thank you with all my heart, and I hope you will come in good time to-morrow.

*Prof.* I will not fail. [*Exit.*

*M. Jour.* (*to a servant*). What! are not my clothes come yet?

*Servant.* No, sir.

seeing I have so much to do to-day. I am enraged. Plague take this vagabond of a tailor! If I only had him here, this dog of a tailor, this treacherous tailor, I'd——

## SCENE V.

MASTER-TAILOR, JOURNEYMAN-TAILOR (*carrying Mons. Jourdain's suit of clothes*), MONS. JOURDAIN, *Servant.*

*M. Jourdain.* Oh! There you are; I was just getting into a frightful passion with you.

*Master-Tailor.* I could not possibly come sooner; I set twenty of my men to work at your clothes.

*M. Jour.* You sent me a pair of silk hose so tight, that I had the greatest difficulty in the world to get them on; and there are two stitches broken in them already.

*Master-T.* If anything, you'll find they'll get too large.

*M. Jour.* Yes, if I break some stitches every day. You've had a pair of shoes made for me, too, which pinch me terribly.

*Master-T.* Not at all, sir.

*M. Jour.* What do you mean by not at all?

*Master-T.* I mean they don't pinch you at all.

*M. Jour.* But I tell you they do.

*Master-T.* You fancy so.

*M. Jour.* I fancy so because I feel it. That's a good reason.

*Master-T.* Come, here is one of the finest court suits, and well matched. It's very clever to have invented a coat of such a quiet colour without being black; and I'll give the cleverest tailors six chances to beat it.

*M. Jour.* But what's the meaning of this? You've put the flowers upside down.

*Master-T.* You didn't tell me you wanted them the other way.

*M. Jour.* Was there any need to tell you that?

*Master-T.* Certainly; all gentlemen wear them this way.

*M. Jour.* What, gentlemen wear the flowers downwards?

*Master-T.* Yes, sir.

*M. Jour.* Oh, that will do very well then.

*Master-T.* If you like I will put them upwards.

*M. Jour.* No, no.

*Master-T.* You have only to say the word.

*M. Jour.* No, I tell you, you have done quite right. Do you think my coat suits me?

*Master-T.* What a question! I defy an artist with his brush to draw anything that could suit you better. I have a workman at home who will turn out a "Rhingrave"[1] against any one in the world, and another who for the cut of a doublet is the hero of our age.

*M. Jour.* How about the wig, and the feathers? Are they all right?

*Master-T.* Everything is perfectly right.

*M. Jour.* (*looking closely at the Tailor's own clothes*). Why, Mr. Tailor, this is the same stuff as you made my last suit of. I know it at once.

*Master-T.* The cloth seemed to me so handsome, that I thought I could not do better than cut a coat out of it for myself.

*M. Jour.* Yes; but you should not have cabbaged it out of mine.

*Master-T.* Will you try on your suit?

*M. Jour.* Yes, give it to me.

*Master-T.* Stop a minute. We can't do business like that. I have brought my men with me, who will dress you to an appropriate tune: for this kind of suit must be put on with ceremony. Here, come in (*to his men*). Now put on this gentleman's suit as you do with people of rank.

(*Four Journeyman-Tailors, dancing, approach M. Jourdain. Two take off the close-fitting breeches, two others his jacket; then they put on his new suit, and M. Jourdain walks about to see how it fits him. All this is done to the accompaniment of music.*)

*Journeyman-Tailor.* Squire, will you kindly give the tailors something to drink your health with?

*M. Jour.* What did you call me?

*Journeyman-T.* Squire.

*M. Jour.* See what it is to dress like people of quality! You may go all your life clothed like a citizen, and no one will ever call you Squire. Stay; here's something for you from the squire (*gives them some money*).

*Journeyman-T.* My lord, we're extremely obliged to you.

*M. Jour.* What! My lord! Here, stay, friend. "My lord" deserves something, and "My lord" is not an everyday word. Here, that's what "My lord" gives you.

*Journeyman-T.* My lord, we shall all go and drink your Grace's health.

[1] Large wide breeches, decked with ribbons.

*M. Jour.* Your Grace! Here, stop, don't go away. Only fancy "Your Grace" to me! (*Aside.*) Upon my word, if he goes as far as "Your Highness," he shall have the whole purse. Here, this is from His Grace.

*Journeyman-T.* My lord, we thank your Grace most humbly for your generosity.

*M. Jour.* That's all right. I was going to give him everything.

(*The four Tailors dance a merry dance, which forms the second Interlude.*)

## ACT III. SCENE I.

MONS. JOURDAIN, *and Two Footmen.*

*M. Jourdain.* Follow me; I am going to take a walk through the town, just to show my suit; and take particular care, both of you, to walk close behind me, so that people may see that you belong to me.

*Footmen.* Certainly, sir.

*M. Jour.* Call Nicole, as I have some orders to give her. No, don't go; here she comes.

## SCENE II.

NICOLE, MONS. JOURDAIN, *and Two Servants.*

*M. Jourdain.* Nicole.

*Nicole.* Your pleasure, sir?

*M. Jour.* Listen.

*Nic.* (*laughing*). Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* What are you laughing at?

*Nic.* Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* What does the hussy mean by this?

*Nic.* Ha, ha, ha! How you are rigged out! Ha, ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* Come now, this won't do.

*Nic.* Oh, my stars! Ha, ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* You jade, are you laughing at me?

*Nic.* Oh, no, sir! I should be very sorry to do so. Ha, ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* I shall give you a slap on the face, if you laugh any more.

*Nic.* Really, sir, I can't help it. Ha, ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* Won't you leave off?

*Nic.* I beg your pardon, sir; but you are so droll that I cannot help laughing. Ha, ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* Was there ever such impertinence?

*Nic.* But you are so very funny like that. Ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* I shall——

*Nic.* Oh, please excuse me. Ha, ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* Now, I tell you, if you laugh again, ever so little, I'll give you such a box on the ear as you never had before in your life.

*Nic.* Very well, sir, now I've done. *I won't laugh any more.*

*M. Jour.* Take care you don't. You must clean out——

*Nic.* Ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* You must clean out properly——

*Nic.* Ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* I say you must clean out the hall——

*Nic.* Ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* What, again!

*Nic.* Sir, I would rather you gave me a good beating, and let me have my laugh out; that will do me more good. Ha, ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* I am enraged.

*Nic.* For goodness sake, sir, I beg of you let me laugh. Ha, ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* If I do take you in hand——

*Nic.* Si-ir, I shall bu-urst if I do-on't laugh. Ha, ha, ha!

*M. Jour.* Did any one ever see such a wench as this, who laughs impudently in my face, instead of taking my orders.

*Nic.* What do you want me to do, sir?

*M. Jour.* Why, take care and get the house ready for the company that I'm expecting by and by.

*Nic.* Ah! I can tell you I don't want to laugh any more; for your company always make such a litter here, that the word is enough to put me in a bad temper.

*M. Jour.* And am I to shut my door, then, against everybody?

*Nic.* You ought at least to shut it against certain people.

## SCENE III.

MONS. JOURDAIN, MDME. JOURDAIN, NICOLE, *and Servants.*

*Mdme. Jourdain.* Now then. Here's a new tale. What's the meaning, husband, of this get-up? Do you despise the world, that you go and deck yourself out in this fashion? Do you want to make yourself a laughing-stock to every one?

*M. Jourdain.* Only foolish men and women, wife, will laugh at me.

*Mdme. Jour.* People haven't waited till now to do that; all the world has been laughing at your goings-on for a long time past.

*M. Jour.* And pray who is this world of yours?

*Mdme. Jour.* It is a world that is right and is much wiser than you are. For my part, I am quite ashamed of the life you are leading. I don't know what's come to our house. One would say that there was a constant carnival going on here; and from the first thing in the morning, in order to keep it up, there's nothing to be heard but an uproar of fiddlers and singers, who disturb the whole neighbourhood.

*Nicole.* What madame says is quite true. I shall never be able to get the place in order again, after all this heap of people you bring to the house. Their feet go all over the town and collect mud, in order to bring it here; and poor Françoise is almost worn off her feet with polishing the floors, which your fine "masters" come and dirty every day.

*M. Jour.* So, so! Maid Nicole, you've a pretty nimble tongue of your own, for a country wench.

*Mdme. Jour.* Nicole is quite right, and she has more sense than you have. I should like to know what you want with a dancing-master at your age.

*Nic.* And with a great big fencing-master, who comes here stamping about so as to shake the whole house, and tear up all the pavement of the hall.

*M. Jour.* That will do, wife and servant.

*Mdme. Jour.* Do you want to learn to dance against the time when you have no legs left?

*Nic.* Do you want to kill some one?

*M. Jour.* Be quiet, I tell you, you are ignorant creatures both of you, and don't know the advantage of all this.

*Mdme. Jour.* You ought to think much more about getting your daughter married, since she is of an age now to be settled.

*M. Jour.* I shall think of marriage for my daughter when a

good match presents itself; but at the same time I mean to devote myself to polite studies.

*Nic.* I've heard say, to crown all, he has engaged a professor of philosophy to-day.

*M. Jour.* Quite right. I desire to have some wit, and to be able to reason with persons of intelligence.

*Mdme. Jour.* Won't you go to school one of these days and get flogged, at your age?

*M. Jour.* Why not? I would be flogged this very moment, and in sight of all the world, if only I knew what they learn at school.

*Mdme. Jour.* Yes, forsooth; I suppose that would improve the shape of your legs.

*M. Jour.* No doubt.

*Mdme. Jour.* That is very necessary for the management of your house!

*M. Jour.* Certainly. You both of you talk like idiots, and I am ashamed of your ignorance. (*To Mdme. Jourdain.*) For example, do you know what you are speaking at this moment?

*Mdme. Jour.* Yes, I know that what I am speaking is quite right, and that you ought to live in a very different fashion.

*M. Jour.* I am not talking about that. I ask you what the words are which you are uttering?

*Mdme. Jour.* They are very sensible words, more than your conduct is.

*M. Jour.* I'm not talking about that, I tell you. I ask, what is it that I am speaking to you, and saying to you this very instant?

*Mdme. Jour.* Nonsense.

*M. Jour.* No, it is not that. What are we both saying? what is the language we are speaking now?

*Mdme. Jour.* Well, what is it?

*M. Jour.* What is it called?

*Mdme. Jour.* It is called just whatever we please to call it.

*M. Jour.* It is called Prose, you ignorant woman.

*Mdme. Jour.* Prose?

*M. Jour.* Yes, prose. Whatever is prose is not poetry, and whatever is not poetry is prose. See what it is to study. And you (*to Nicole*), do you know what you must do to say U?

*Nic.* What do you mean?

*M. Jour.* What is it you do when you say U?

*Nic.* What?

*M. Jour.* Just say U now, to see.

*Nic.* Well, U.

*M. Jour.* What is it you do?

*Nic.* Why, I say U.

*M. Jour.* Yes, but when you say U, what do you do?

*Nic.* I do as you tell me.

*M. Jour.* What a strange thing it is to have to do with stupid people. You extend your lips outwards, you bring your under-jaw near your upper one—U; do you see? I make a mouth, U.

*Nic.* Yes, that's all very fine.

*Mdme. Jour.* Quite wonderful!

*M. Jour.* It is quite different, if you had seen O, and D, and F.

*Mdme. Jour.* What's the meaning of all this rubbish?

*Nic.* What are we the better for it all?

*M. Jour.* It makes me wild to listen to these ignorant women.

*Mdme. Jour.* Come, come, you should send all these folks about their business, with their rigmaroles.

*Nic.* Yes; and above all that great hulking fencing-master, who fills all the place with dust.

*M. Jour.* Ha, ha! This fencing-master seems to stick in your gizzard. I'll show you your impertinence presently. (*He orders the foils to be brought, and gives one to Nicole.*) Now reason demonstrative; the line of the body. When one thrusts in Carte, one has only to do so; and when one thrusts in Tierce, one has only to do so. That is the way never to be killed. Is not that clever, to be safe when you are fighting a duel with any one? There now, thrust a little at me; just try.

*Nic.* What, so? (*Nicole gives him several thrusts.*)

*M. Jour.* All right. Ah, gently. Deuce take the hussy!

*Nic.* You told me to thrust.

*M. Jour.* Yes, but you thrust at me in Tierce before you do in Carte; and you have not patience to wait while I parry.

*Mdme. Jour.* You're out of your mind, husband, with all your fantastic notions; and all this has come to you because you have chosen to keep company with the nobility.

*M. Jour.* And because I do so I show my good sense. I am sure it is much better than herding with your citizens.

*Mdme. Jour.* Oh dear, yes. There's a great deal to be got by keeping company with the nobility, isn't there? And a fine job you've made of it with that Count you are so taken up with!

*M. Jour.* Silence! Take care what you are saying. Are you aware, wife, that you do not know of whom you are speaking when you mention him? He's a more important person that you think.

He's a nobleman of consideration at Court, who speaks to the King just as I speak to you. Is it not a great honour to me to see a person of his position come often to my house, call me his friend, and treat me as his equal? He has shown me more kindness than you can conceive; and he embraces me before all the world, till I feel quite ashamed.

*Mdme. Jour.* Oh, yes, he has a great regard for you, and embraces you; but he borrows money of you.

*M. Jour.* Well, and is it not a great honour to lend money to any one in his position? Can I do less for a lord who calls me his dear friend?

*Mdme. Jour.* And what does this lord do for you?

*M. Jour.* Things that would astonish you, if you only knew them.

*Mdme. Jour.* And what may they be?

*M. Jour.* That will do. I can't explain myself. It is sufficient that if I have lent him money he will pay it honourably, and before long.

*Mdme. Jour.* Yes! and so you really expect that?

*M. Jour.* Certainly. Did he not tell me so?

*Mdme. Jour.* Yes, yes; and he will not fail to disappoint you.

*M. Jour.* He swore to me on the faith of a gentleman.

*Mdme. Jour.* Rubbish!

*M. Jour.* Ah! my good wife, you're very obstinate; but I tell you that he will keep his word with me. I'm sure of it.

*Mdme. Jour.* And I am sure he will not; and all the fuss he makes with you is only to take you in.

*M. Jour.* Will you hold your tongue? Here he comes.

*Mdme. Jour.* We've had quite enough of him. I dare say he has come to borrow some more money of you. The very sight of him takes my appetite away.

*M. Jour.* Hold your tongue, I tell you.

## SCENE IV.

, MONS. JOURDAIN, MDME. JOURDAIN, NICOLE.

*Dorante.* My dear friend, Monsieur Jourdain, how do you do?

*M. Jourdain.* Quite well enough, sir, to render you any little service I can.

*Dor.* And Madame Jourdain there, how is she?

*Mdme. Jourdain.* Madame Jourdain is as well as she can be.

*Dor.* Ah, Monsieur Jourdain, you're dressed in first-rate style.

*M. Jour.* As you see.

*Dor.* Your appearance is charming in that suit. I can assure you there are no young fellows about Court better got up than you are.

*M. Jour.* Ah, ha!

*Mdme. Jour.* He scratches him where he itches.

*Dor.* Turn round. Ah, that's very fine!

*Mdme. Jour.* Yes; as foolish behind as before.

*Dor.* Indeed, Monsieur Jourdain, I was strangely impatient to see you. I have the greatest possible esteem for you, and I was only talking of you this morning at the King's Levée.

*M. Jour.* You do me too much honour, sir. (*Aside to Mdme. Jourdain.*) At the King's Levée!

*Dor.* Pray put your hat on.

*M. Jour.* Sir, I know the respect that I owe you.

*Dor.* Come, come, put on your hat. No ceremony, I beg, between us.

*M. Jour.* Really, sir——

*Dor.* I insist on your putting on your hat, Monsieur Jourdain; you're my friend.

*M. Jour.* Sir, I am your humble servant.

*Dor.* I won't keep my hat on if you won't.

*M. Jour.* I'd rather be unmannerly than presuming.

*Dor.* I am your debtor, as you know.

*Mdme. Jour.* Yes, we know that only too well.

*Dor.* You have generously lent me money on several occasions, and have obliged me with the utmost grace.

*M. Jour.* Oh, sir, you're laughing at me.

*Dor.* But I know how to repay what is lent me, and to be grateful for favours.

*M. Jour.* I don't doubt it, sir.

*Dor.* I want to get out of your debt, and came here to have a settlement with you.

*M. Jour.* Now then, wife, you see your impertinence.

*Dor.* I am a man who likes to be out of debt as soon as I can.

*M. Jour.* (*to Mdme. Jour.*). There, I told you so.

*Dor.* Just let us see what I owe you.

*M. Jour.* (*to Mdme. Jour.*). How much now for your absurd suspicions?

*Dor.* Do you remember perfectly all the money you have me?

*M. Jour.* Yes, I think so. I have made a little memorandum of it. Here it is. Given you on one occasion, two hundred louis d'ors.

*Dor.* That is right.

*M. Jour.* Another time, a hundred and twenty.

*Dor.* Just so.

*M. Jour.* And another time, a hundred and forty.

*Dor.* Quite correct.

*M. Jour.* These three sums make up four hundred and sixty louis d'ors, or five thousand and sixty livres.

*Dor.* Your account is quite right—five thousand and sixty livres.

*M. Jour.* Then, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-two livres to your plume-maker.

*Dor.* Right.

*M. Jour.* Two thousand seven hundred and eighty livres to your tailor.

*Dor.* That's true.

*M. Jour.* Four thousand three hundred and seventy-nine livres, twelve sols, and eight deniers to your merchant.

*Dor.* Twelve sols and eight deniers. The account is quite correct.

*M. Jour.* And one thousand seven hundred and forty-eight livres, seven sols, four deniers to your saddler.

*Dor.* That's perfectly right. Now what does it all come to?

*M. Jour.* Total, fifteen thousand eight hundred livres.

*Dor.* That's exactly the sum—fifteen thousand and eight hundred livres. Add to this the two hundred pistoles which you are going to give me, and that will make just eighteen thousand francs, which I will pay you on the first opportunity.

*Mdme. Jour.* (*aside to her husband*). Well now, didn't I guess well?

*M. Jour.* Silence.

*Dor.* Will it inconvenience you to give me what I ask for?

*M. Jour.* Oh, no; not at all.

*Mdme. Jour.* This man is making a milch cow of you.

*M. Jour.* Will you hold your tongue!

*Dor.* If it will inconvenience you, I will go elsewhere for it.

*M. Jour.* Oh, no, sir.

*Mdme. Jour.* He will never be content until he has ruined you.

*M. Jour.* I tell you to be quiet.

*Dor.* If it embarrasses you, you have only to say so.

*M. Jour.* Not at all, sir.

*Mdme. Jour.* He is a regular wheedler.

*M. Jour.* Won't you hold your tongue?

*Mdme. Jour.* He'll drain the last farthing out of you.

*M. Jour.* Will you be quiet!

*Dor.* There are plenty of people who would be glad enough to lend it to me, but as you are my best friend I thought I should do you wrong if I asked any one else for it.

*M. Jour.* It is too great an honour that you do me, sir. I will go and get what you want.

*Mdme. Jour.* What! are you going to lend him still more?

*M. Jour.* What can I do? Would you have me refuse a man of his rank, who spoke about me this morning at the King's Levée.

*Mdme. Jour.* Go; you are completely duped.

## SCENE V.

DORANTE, MDME. JOURDAIN, NICOLE.

*Dorante.* You seem to me very melancholy. What is the matter, Madame Jourdain?

*Mdme. Jour.* My head is bigger than my fist, and yet it is not swollen.

*Dor.* I do not see your daughter; where is she?

*Mdme. Jour.* My daughter is very well where she is

*Dor.* How does she get on?

*Mdme. Jour.* She goes on her two legs.

*Dor.* Won't you come with her one of these days to see the ballet and the comedy that are being acted at Court?

*Mdme. Jour.* Yes, indeed, we have a great wish to laugh; a great wish to laugh have we.

*Dor.* I fancy, Madame Jourdain, that you must have had plenty of admirers when you were young, as I am sure you were handsome and good-humoured.

*Mdme. Jour.* By our Lady! Pray, has Madame Jourdain grown decrepit, and does her head shake with the palsy?

*Dor.* Oh, really, Madame Jourdain, I beg your pardon. I did not remember that you are still young; and I am often absent-minded. I pray you to excuse my impertinence.

## SCENE VI.

MONS. JOURDAIN, MDME. JOURDAIN, DORANTE, NICOLE.

*M. Jourdain.* Here are the two hundred louis, hard cash.

*Dorante.* I assure you, Monsieur Jourdain, that I am your evoted servant, and I am longing to be of some use to you . Court.

*M. Jour.* I am extremely obliged to you.

*Dor.* If Madame Jourdain would like to see the royal diver- ons, I will get her the best place in the ballroom.

*Mdme. Jour.* Madame Jourdain kisses your hand.

*Dor.* (*whispering to Mons. Jourdain*). Our pretty Marchioness, s I informed you by letter, will be here by and by for your ballet nd collation. I got her consent at last to come to the entertain- ient you mean to give her.

*M. Jour.* Let us move a little farther off. I have my reasons.

*Dor.* It is a week since I saw you last, and I have sent you o news of the diamond you entrusted to me to present to her om you. But I had the greatest difficulty in the world to get ver her scruples, and it is only to-day that she has decided to ccept it.

*M. Jour.* How did she like it ?

*Dor.* Wonderfully; and I am very much mistaken if the eauty of the diamond will not produce an excellent effect pon her.

*M. Jour.* Heaven grant it !

*Mdme. Jour.* When he's once with him, there's no getting rid f him.

*Dor.* I made her value as she ought the richness of the present, nd the strength of your passion.

*M. Jour.* Sir, these kindnesses quite overwhelm me; and I m in the greatest confusion to see a person of your rank lower imself to do for me what you do.

*Dor.* Why, you're laughing at me ! Does one stop at such ort of scruples between friends? And would not you do as uch for me if the occasion offered ?

*M. Jour.* Yes, certainly, with all my heart.

*Mdme. Jour.* How his presence weighs on my mind.

*Dor.* For my part, I never mind anything when I can serve a riend; and when you confided to me your ardent passion for this harming Marchioness, with whom I am acquainted, you saw that at once offered to further your interests.

*M. Jour.* It is true. This goodness overcomes me.

*Mdme. Jour.* Will he never be gone?

*Nic.* They seem wonderfully thick together.

*Dor.* You have taken the right way to reach her heart. Women like above everything the expense we are at on their account; and your frequent serenades, and continual bouquets, that magnificent display of fireworks which you arranged for her upon the water, the diamond ring which she received from you, and the entertainment which you are preparing for her—all this speaks much more in favour of your love for her than all the words you could have spoken to her yourself.

*M. Jour.* There is no expense I would not gladly be at, if only I could find the way to her heart. A woman of rank has the most engaging charms for me, and it is an honour that I would purchase at any price.

*Mdme. Jour.* (*aside, to Nicole*). What on earth can they have to talk about together? Go quietly and listen.

*Dor.* Presently you will enjoy the sight of her at your ease; your eyes will have full time to be satisfied.

*M. Jour.* In order to be quite free, I have arranged for my wife to go and dine with my sister, where she will——

*Dor.* You have acted with great prudence; your wife might have been in the way. I have given proper orders to the cook for you, and for all things necessary for the ballet. It is one of my own invention; and if the execution is only equal to the idea, I am sure it will be found to be——

(*Mons. Jourdain perceives that Nicole is listening, and gives her a box on the ear.*)

*M. Jour.* You are very impertinent. (*To Dorante.*) Let us walk out, if you please.

## SCENE VII.

MADAME JOURDAIN, NICOLE.

*Nicole.* Well, madame, my curiosity has cost me something; but I think there's a snake in the grass, for they were talking about some affair that they didn't want you to be present at.

*Mdme. Jourdain.* This is not the first time, Nicole, that I've had suspicions of my husband. Unless I am greatly deceived, there is some intrigue in hand, and it shall be my business to find it out. But I must think of my daughter. You know how deeply

Cléonte is in love with her. He is a man that I have a liking for, and I shall be glad to forward his suit, and to help him with Lucile, if I can.

*Nic.* Indeed, madame, you cannot conceive how delighted I am to hear your sentiments; for if the master suits your taste, the valet suits mine equally well, and I could wish that our marriage could be concluded under the wing of theirs.

*Mdme. Jour.* Go and talk to him about it, as from me; and tell him to come to me directly, that we may go together to my husband to ask for my daughter's hand.

*Nic.* I shall fly, madame, for I could not have received a more agreeable commission. (*Alone.*) I am going, I believe, to give them a great deal of happiness.

## SCENE VIII.

CLÉONTE, COVIELLE, NICOLE.

*Nicole.* Ah, most luckily met! I am an ambassadress of joy, and I come——

*Cléonte.* Begone, you perfidious creature, and don't come to amuse me with your treacherous speeches.

*Nic.* Is it thus you receive——

*Clé.* Begone, I say, and go and tell your faithless mistress that never again as long as she lives shall she take advantage of the too simple Cléonte.

*Nic.* What infatuation is this? My dear Covielle, tell me a little what this means.

*Cov.* Your dear Covielle! you little wretch. Be off out of my sight at once, you hussy, and leave me alone.

*Nic.* What! are you too going to——

*Cov.* Out of my sight, I tell you, and don't talk to me ever again.

*Nic.* Dear, dear! What bee has stung them both? Well, I must go and tell this fine tale to my mistress.

## SCENE IX.

CLÉONTE, COVIELLE.

*Cléonte.* What! treat a lover in this fashion! and that lover the most faithful and impassioned possible.

*Cov.* It is a frightful trick that they have played us both.

*Clé.* I show a lady all the ardour of love and all the tenderness imaginable; I love nothing in the world but her, and have nothing in my thoughts besides her. She is the cause of all my cares, of all my desires, of all my joy. I speak but of her, think but of her, dream but of her, breathe only for her, my heart lives wholly in her; and now see the worthy recompense for such love. I am two days without seeing her, which seems to me two terrible ages. I meet her by chance; at the sight of her my heart feels transported with joy, my face beams with happiness. I fly to her in an ecstasy; and the faithless creature turns away her eyes, and brushes hastily by me as if she had never seen me in her life!

*Cov.* I can say just the same as you.

*Clé.* Is it possible, Covielle, to conceive any perfidy equal to that of this ungrateful Lucile?

*Cov.* Or to that, sir, of the hussy Nicole?

*Clé.* After so many ardent sacrifices of sighs and vows that I made to her charms!

*Cov.* After such constant homage, attentions and services that I have rendered her in the kitchen!

*Clé.* So many tears that I have shed at her feet!

*Cov.* So many buckets of water that I have drawn from the well for her!

*Clé.* Such ardour as I have shown in loving her more than myself!

*Cov.* Such heat as I have borne in turning the spit in her stead!

*Clé.* She flies from me with disdain.

*Cov.* She turns her back on me with impudence.

*Clé.* It is a perfidy deserving the severest punishment.

*Cov.* It is a treachery that ought to receive a thousand boxes on the ear.

*Clé.* Now I beg of you never to speak to me again on her behalf.

*Cov.* I, sir? Heaven forbid!

*Clé.* And never try to excuse the action of this perfidious woman.

*Cov.* You need not fear my doing so.

*Clé.* No, for all discourse in her favour will be useless.

*Cov.* Who dreams of such a thing?

*Clé.* I am determined to keep up my resentment against her, and to break off all intercourse.

*Cov.* I have no objection.

*Clé.* This same Count that visits her perhaps pleases her eye, and I see plainly that her fancy is dazzled by his rank. But I must, for my own honour, forestall the open exposure of her inconstancy. I will make as much haste as she can do towards the change which I see she is hurrying to, and will not leave her all the glory of giving me up.

*Cov.* That is very well said; and for my part I quite enter into all your sentiments.

*Clé.* Deepen my resentment and support my resolution against all the remains of love that may still plead for her. Tell me, I entreat you, all the ill you can against her. Paint me her person so as to make her despicable; and, to disgust me, point out well to me all the faults that you can find in her.

*Cov.* She, sir! Why, she's a mass of affectation, a showily dressed doll to be so much enamoured about! I see nothing in her but what is very ordinary, and you will find a hundred others more worthy of your notice. First of all, she has small eyes.

*Clé.* It is true that she has small eyes; but they are full of fire, the most sparkling, the most piercing in the world; the most melting that one can see.

*Cov.* She has a wide mouth.

*Clé.* Yes, but there is a grace in it not to be seen in other mouths, and the sight of it inspires love; it is the most attractive and charming mouth in the world.

*Cov.* Then as to her height—she is not tall.

*Clé.* No, but she is graceful and well shaped.

*Cov.* She affects a certain carelessness in all her words and actions.

*Clé.* That is true, but she does it in such an easy way, and her manner is so attractive, that it has an unspeakable charm, and finds its way into the heart of every one.

*Cov.* As to her mind——

*Clé.* Oh, Covielle, she has the most delicate and refined intelligence.

conversation-

*Clé.* Is charming.

*Cov.* But she is always grave.

*Clé.* Would you have extravagant pleasantry, and constant outbreaks of mirth? Can you find anything more unpleasant than those women who are always giggling at everything?

*Cov.* But, in short, she is the most capricious creature in the world.

*Clé.* Yes, I grant you she is capricious; but everything becomes a beautiful woman—we can put up with anything from her.

*Cov.* Since that is the case, I see plainly that you mean to love her always.

*Clé.* I! I'd rather die; and I am going now to hate her as much as ever I loved her.

*Cov.* But how can you, if you think her so perfect?

*Clé.* That will make my revenge all the more striking, and I shall thereby the better show the strength of my resolution in hating her, by quitting her, most beautiful as she is, most charming and amiable as I think her. Here she comes.

## SCENE X.

CLÉONTE, LUCILE, COVIELLE, NICOLE.

*Nicole.* For my part, I was perfectly shocked at it.

*Lucile.* It can be nothing but what I say. There he comes.

*Cléonte* (*to Covielle*). I won't so much as speak to her.

*Covielle.* I will follow your example.

*Luc.* What is it, Cléonte? What is the matter with you?

*Nic.* What ails you, Covielle?

*Luc.* What grief possesses you?

*Nic.* What ill-temper has got hold of you?

*Luc.* Are you dumb, Cléonte?

*Nic.* Have you lost your speech, Covielle?

*Clé.* Oh, the wretch!

*Cov.* How Judas-like!

*Luc.* I see that our late meeting has troubled your mind.

*Clé.* (*to Covielle*). Ah! she sees what she has done.

*Nic.* The reception of this morning has put you in a huff.

*Cov.* (*to Cléonte*). She has guessed the sore.

*Luc.* Is it not true, Cléonte, that this is the reason of your being out of temper?

*Clé.* Yes, perfidious girl, if I must speak, it is so; and I can tell you that you shall not triumph, as you think you will do, by

...ut I shall gain my point, and
...o the heart than have the weakness to return to you.

*Cov.* (*to Nicole*). Ditto, ditto.

*Luc.* Here's much ado about nothing. I want to tell you, Cléonte, what made me avoid joining you this morning.

*Clé.* (*makes as if he would go, but returns on the stage*). No, I'll hear nothing.

*Nic.* (*to Covielle*). I'll tell you the reason which made us pass you so quickly.

*Cov.* (*follows Lucile*). I will hear nothing.

*Luc.* (*follows Cléonte*). You must know that this morning——

*Clé.* No, I tell you.

*Nic.* (*follows Covielle*). Learn, then—— *Cov.* No, traitress.

*Luc.* Hear me. *Clé.* Not a bit.
*Nic.* Let me speak. *Cov.* I am deaf.
*Luc.* Cléonte! *Clé.* No.
*Nic.* Covielle! *Cov.* No.
*Luc.* Stay. *Clé.* Rubbish.
*Nic.* Hear me. *Cov.* Idle talk.
*Luc.* One moment. *Clé.* Not one.
*Nic.* A little patience. *Cov.* Fiddlesticks.
*Luc.* Two words. *Clé.* No, there's an end of it.
*Nic.* One word. *Cov.* I've no more to do with you.

*Luc.* (*stopping*). Very well, since you won't listen to me, keep your opinion, and do what you like.

*Nic.* (*stopping also*). Since you act in this way, take it as you will.

*Clé.* (*turning towards Lucile*). Let us know, then, the cause of this fine reception.

*Luc.* (*going off in her turn to avoid Cléonte*). I don't care to tell it now.

*Cov.* (*turning towards Nicole*). Tell us a little about this business.

*Nic.* (*going off also to avoid Covielle*). No, I don't choose to now.

*Clé.* (*following Lucile*). Tell me.

*Luc.* (*walking on without looking at Cléonte*). No, I'll tell you nothing.

*without looking at Covielle*). No, I tell

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | ...iness sake. | *Luc.* | No, I tell you. |
| | ...charity. | *Nic.* | Not a bit. |
| | ...beg of you. | *Luc.* | Let me alone. |
| | I entreat you. | *Nic.* | Be off. |
| | Lucile! | *Luc.* | No. |
| | Nicole! | *Nic.* | Not at all. |
| *Clé.* | For heaven's sake. | *Luc.* | I will not. |
| *Cov.* | Speak to me. | *Nic.* | Not a word. |
| *Clé.* | Clear up my doubts. | *Luc.* | No, I'll do nothing towards it. |
| *Cov.* | Set my mind at rest. | *Nic.* | No, I don't choose to. |

*Clé.* Well, since you care so little about easing me of my pain, and justifying the unworthy treatment my ardent love has received from you, ungrateful creature, you see me for the last time; I shall go far from you, and die of grief and love.

*Cov.* And I am going to follow his steps.

*Luc.* Cléonte!

*Nic.* Covielle!

*Clé.* (*stopping*). What?

*Cov.* (*also stopping*). Your pleasure?

*Luc.* Where are you going?

*Clé.* Where I told you.

*Cov.* We are going to die.

*Luc.* What? Are you going to die, Cléonte?

*Clé.* Yes, cruel one, since you will have it so.

*Luc.* I! I want you to die?

*Clé.* Yes, you wish it.

*Luc.* Who told you so?

*Clé.* Don't you wish it, when you will not clear up my suspicions?

*Luc.* Is that my fault? If you had only listened to me, I should have told you that the affair you make such a fuss about was caused this morning by the presence of an old aunt, who will have it that the very approach of a man is a disgrace to a girl, and who is always preaching to us on that text, and represents men as so many devils that one ought to avoid.

*Nic.* There's the secret of the whole affair.

*Clé.* Aren't you deceiving me, Lucile?

*Cov.* Is not this a trick you're playing?

*Luc.* Nothing can be more true.

*Nic.* That's just what's the matter.

*Cov.* Shall we give in on this?

*Clé.* Ah, Lucile, a word from your mouth can calm all the tumult of my heart! And how easily we allow ourselves to be persuaded by those we love!

*Cov.* How easily one is coaxed by these artful creatures!

## SCENE XI.

MDME. JOURDAIN, CLÉONTE, LUCILE, COVIELLE, NICOLE.

*Mdme. Jourdain.* I am very glad to see you, Cléonte, and you have come just at the right time. My husband is coming, so lose no time in asking for the hand of Lucile.

*Cléonte.* Oh, madame, what a kindly word; and how it flatters my wishes! Could I receive a more charming order or a more valued favour!

## SCENE XII.

MONS. JOURDAIN, MDME. JOURDAIN, CLÉONTE, LUCILE, NICOLE.

*Cléonte (to M. Jourdain).* I have been unwilling to employ any one else to ask of you a favour which I have long meditated asking. It concerns me so much that I must undertake it myself; and without further preface, I will tell you that the honour of being your son-in-law is a distinguished favour which I beg you to grant me.

*M. Jourdain.* Before giving you an answer, sir, I must ask you to tell me whether you are of noble birth.

*Clé.* Most people would answer such a question without hesitation. One can say the word easily. People make no scruple about using it, and custom seems to authorise the assumption. For my part, I must confess that I have more delicate sentiments on the matter. I consider imposture unworthy of an honourable man, and that it is cowardly to deny the birth that Heaven has given us, to trick ourselves out in the eyes of the world with a stolen title, to wish to pass ourselves off for what we are not. I was born of parents who unquestionably held an honourable position. I served in the army for six years with credit, and I find myself well enough off to hold a fair rank in the world; but for all that, I do not choose to give myself a description which others in my place might think they had a right to, and so I will tell you

*M. Jour.* Then, sir, my daughter is no wife for you.

*Clé.* Why not?

*M. Jour.* You are not of noble family; you shall not have my daughter.

*Mdme. Jour.* What have you to say about noble birth? Do you think that such people as we are are descended from St. Louis?

*M. Jour.* Hold your tongue, wife. I see what you're coming to.

*Mdme. Jour.* Are not we both descended from plain citizens?

*M. Jour.* There's a pretty statement for you!

*Mdme. Jour.* Was not your father a tradesman as well as mine?

*M. Jour.* Plague take the woman! She'll never have done with it. If your father was a tradesman, so much the worse for him; but as for mine, they are mistaken who say he was one. All I have to say to you is that I choose to have a gentleman for my son-in-law.

*Mdme. Jour.* Your daughter should have a suitable husband; and a honest man who is rich and well-made is much better for her than a gentleman who is deformed and a beggar.

*Nic.* That's true. We have the son of a squire in our village who is the greatest gawky and the stupidest booby I ever set eyes on.

*M. Jour.* Will you hold your tongue, you impertinent creature? You are always thrusting yourself into the conversation. I have sufficient fortune for my daughter, so I want nothing but rank for her, and I choose her to be a marchioness.

*Mdme. Jour.* A marchioness?

*M. Jour.* Yes, a marchioness.

*Mdme. Jour.* Heaven forbid!

*M. Jour.* It's what I've made up my mind to.

*Mdme. Jour.* Then it's what I shall never consent to. Matches with people above one always cause unpleasantness. I don't want to have a son-in-law who could reproach my daughter with her parents, or that her children should be ashamed to call me grandmama. If she should come and pay me a visit with the equipage of a grand lady, and if from inadvertence she did not notice some one of the neighbours, there would be a hundred disagreeable things said at once. "Oh," they would say, "look at this marchioness who gives herself such airs! Why, she's only the daughter of Mons. Jourdain; she was glad enough when she was little to play at ladies and gentlemen with us. She was not always so stuck up as she is now; and both her grandfathers were drapers

near St. Innocent's Gate. They managed to get a fortune for their children, and perhaps are now paying dear enough for it in another world. And honest people don't generally become so rich." I don't choose to have all this tittle-tattle, and I want a man who shall be beholden to me for my daughter, and to whom I can say, "Son-in-law, come and dine with me, and sit there."

*M. Jour.* Those are the ideas of a small mind, which desires always to continue in an inferior condition. I want no more words. My daughter shall be a marchioness in spite of all the world, and if you put me in a passion I'll make her a duchess.

*Mdme. Jour.* Cléonte, don't lose heart, for all this. Follow me, my daughter, and tell your father boldly that if you can't have him you won't marry anybody at all.

## SCENE XIII.

CLÉONTE, COVIELLE.

*Covielle.* You've made a nice piece of work of it with your fine sentiments.

*Cléonte.* What would you have me do? I have scruples in the matter that no precedents can overcome.

*Cov.* Are you jesting, that you talk seriously to a man like that? Don't you see that he's off his head? And what would it cost you to accommodate yourself to his fancies?

*Clé.* You're right. But I never dreamt that it would be necessary to bring proofs of noble birth to be son-in-law to Mons. Jourdain.

*Cov.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Clé.* What are you laughing at?

*Cov.* At a thought that came into my head to have a game with our good man, and help you to obtain what you wish for.

*Clé.* How?

*Cov.* It's a most amusing idea.

*Clé.* What is it, then?

*Cov.* A short time ago there was a certain masquerade performed which will come in excellently now, and which I mean to turn to account as a means of playing off a joke on our coxcomb. It will be a bit of a comedy; but we can risk anything with him, and we need not be too particular, for he's a man who'll play his part wonderfully well, and will easily take in all the absurdities we may choose to put before him. I have the actors and

*Clé.* But let me know of it.

*Cov.* I will tell you all about it. Let us withdraw. Here he comes.

## SCENE XIV.

MONS. JOURDAIN, *Servant.*

*M. Jourdain.* What the deuce does this mean? They do nothing but reproach me about great lords; and for my part I know nothing better than keeping company with the nobility. There's nothing but honour and civility among them, and I would cut off two fingers of my hand to have been born a count or a marquis.

*Servant.* Sir, here's the Count, and a lady whom he is handing in.

*M. Jour.* Good gracious! and I have some orders to give. Tell them I'm coming in a minute.

## SCENE XV.

DORIMÈNE, DORANTE, *Servant.*

*Servant.* My master says as how he's a-coming in a minute.

*Dorante.* All right.

*Dorimène.* I don't know, Dorante, but it seems to me that I am taking a strange step in allowing you to bring me to a house where I know no one.

*Dor.* What place, then, would you choose for your lover to entertain you in, since to avoid scandal you will not use your own house or mine?

*Dori.* But you forget that every day I am gradually being led on to receive too great proofs of your devotion to me. It is of no use for me to refuse things; you weary me out of resisting, and you have a civil kind of obstinacy which forces me gently to yield to all you wish. Frequent visits came first, declarations next, followed by serenades and entertainments, ending with presents. I opposed all this, but you do not give way; and step by step you overcome my resolutions. For my part, I cannot answer for the consequences, and I believe in the end you will bring me to marriage, which I have kept off for so long.

*Dor.* Indeed, madame, you ought to have reached it already. You are a widow, and independent. I am my own master, and

love you more than my life. What hinders you, then, from completing my happiness from this day forward?

*Dori.* But, Dorante, there must be a great many qualities on both sides for people to live together happily; and the most reasonable people in the world often have much difficulty in arranging a union to their mutual satisfaction.

*Dor.* You jest, madame, in representing so many difficulties in the way; and the experience you have had has nothing to do with the rest of the world.

*Dori.* However, I must always come back to this point. The expense to which you put yourself on my account disturbs me for two reasons; one is that it compromises me more than I wish, and the other is that I am sure, without offence, that you must put yourself to great inconvenience, which I do not wish.

*Dor.* Oh, madame, these are but trifles, and it is not by that——

*Dori.* I know what I am saying; and among other things, the diamond which you forced me to accept is of a value——

*Dor.* Oh, madame, pray do not make so much of a thing which my love finds unworthy of you; and allow me——Here is the master of the house.

## SCENE XVI.

MONS. JOURDAIN, DORIMÈNE, DORANTE, *Servant.*

*M. Jourdain* (*after having made two bows, finding himself too close to Dorimène*). A little farther off, madame.

*Dorimène.* What?

*M. Jour.* One step, if you please.

*Dori.* What then?

*M. Jour.* Fall back a little for the third.

*Dor.* Madame, Mons. Jourdain knows his manners.

*M. Jour.* Madame, it is a very great honour for me to see myself fortunate enough, happy enough, to have the felicity, that you should have had the goodness to do me the honour, to honour me with the favour of your presence; and had I also the merit to merit a merit like yours, and that Heaven—envious of my happiness—had granted me—the advantage of seeing myself worthy—of——

*Dor.* That will do, Mons. Jourdain; madame does not like too many compliments, and she knows you are a man of in-

telligence (*Whispers to Dorimène.*) He is only a citizen, absurd enough, as you see, in all his behaviour.

*Dori.* It is easy enough to perceive that.

*Dor.* Madame, this is one of my best friends.

*M. Jour.* It is too much honour that you do me.

*Dor.* A thoroughly gallant man.

*Dori.* I have a very great esteem for him.

*M. Jour.* I have done nothing yet to deserve this favour.

*Dor.* (*whispering to M. Jourdain*). Take good care, however, not to speak to her of the diamond you gave her.

*M. Jour.* Mayn't I just ask her how she likes it?

*Dor.* What? On no account. It would be very mean on your part, and if you wish to act gallantly, you must seem as if you had not given it to her. Madame, Mons. Jourdain says that he is delighted to see you at his house.

*Dori.* He does me a great deal of honour.

*M. Jour.* I am under great obligation, sir, to you for having spoken to her in that manner on my account.

*Dor.* I had the greatest difficulty in getting her to come here.

*M. Jour.* I do not know how to thank you enough for it.

*Dor.* He says, madame, that he thinks you the most charming person in the world.

*Dori.* It is very good of him.

*M. Jour.* Madame, it is you who do favours, and——

*Dor.* Let us think of eating.

*Servant.* Everything is ready, sir.

*Dor.* Come, then, let us sit down to table; and send for the musicians.

(*Six Cooks who have prepared the feast dance together, and perform the third Interlude; after which they bring in a table covered with various dishes.*)

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

DORANTE, DORIMÈNE, MONS. JOURDAIN, *Three Musicians, Servant.*

*Dorimène.* Why, Dorante! Here's a most magnificent repast.

*M. Jourdain.* You are joking, madame, I only wish it were more worthy of you.

(*They sit down to the table, the Musicians included.*)

*Dorante.* Mons. Jourdain is right, madame, to speak as he does, and I thank him for doing the honours of this house so well. I agree with him that the repast is not worthy of you. As it was myself who ordered it, and as I am not so clear-sighted in these matters as some of our friends, you will not have here any learned feast, and you will find incongruities of good cheer, and some offences against good taste. If our friend Damis had had a hand in it, everything would have been done according to rule; elegance and erudition would have appeared everywhere, and he would not have failed to exaggerate the excellence of all the dishes, and have made you own his capacity in the science of good eating; he would have told you of a fancy loaf, with golden edge, and a crust too all round, that would crumble softly between your teeth; of wine with a velvety body, heightened by just a taste of sharpness; of a breast of mutton stuffed with parsley; of a loin of veal, from the riverside meadows, as long as this (*stretching out his hands*), white, delicate, and like almond paste in your mouth; of partridges served up in a wonderful ragout; and then, by way of masterpiece, a pearl soup, supported by a young plump turkey-poult, flanked with pigeons and garnished with bleached onions and chicory. But, for my part, I must confess my ignorance, and as Mons. Jourdain has very well said, I wish the repast were more worthy of you.

*Dori.* My only answer to that compliment is to eat as I am doing.

*M. Jour.* Ah! what beautiful hands.

*Dori.* The hands are passable, Mons. Jourdain; but you mean the diamond, which is very handsome.

*M. Jour.* I, madame! heaven forbid I should speak of that; that would not be gentlemanly; and the diamond is only a trifle.

*Dori.* You are very difficult to satisfy.

*M. Jour.* You have too much goodness.

*Dor.* (*having made signs to Mons. Jourdain*). Come, give some wine to Mons. Jourdain, and to those gentlemen who will do us the favour to sing us a drinking song.

*Dori.* It gives a wonderful relish to good cheer, to mix music with it. I am being admirably entertained.

*M. Jour.* Madame, it is not——

*Dor.* Come, Mons. Jourdain, let us listen to these gentlemen; they will entertain us better than anything we can possibly say.

(*The Singers take their glasses, sing two catches, and are accompanied by all the instruments.*)

FIRST DRINKING SONG.

*Just a thimbleful, Phyllis, and send round the glass;*
*Oh! what charms to the crystal those fingers impart!*
*You and Bacchus combined, all resistance o'erpass*
*And with passion redoubled have ravish'd my heart.*
*'Twixt him, you, and me, my charmer, my fair,*
*Eternal affection let's swear.*

*At the touch of your lips how it sparkles more bright!*
*How its touch in return those sweet lips doth embellish:*
*I could quaff it all day and drink bumpers all night:*
*What longing each gives me, what joy and what relish!*
*'Twixt him, you, and me, my charmer, my fair,*
*Eternal affection let's swear.*

SECOND DRINKING SONG.

*Since time flies so nimbly away,*
*Come drink, my dear friends, drink about;*
*Let's profit by life while we may,*
*For all may be ended before the cup's out.*

*When Charon has got us aboard,*
*Our drinking and wooing are past;*
*We ne'er to lose time can afford,*
*For drinking's a joy not always to last.*

*Let your numskulls dispute in the schools,*
*As to what is the Bonum of man;*
*Philosophers dry are but fools,*
*The secret is this, drink, drink while you can.*

*Wealth, knowledge, and glory are vain,*
*And never relieve us of care,*
*'Tis drinking alone that's a gain,*
*And gives us a joy that's ever more fair.*

*Why ho, there! some wine, boy, come fill the glass, fill,*
*Round, round, let it go till we bid it stand still.*

*Dori.* I don't think anything could be better sung; it really is extremely good.

*M. Jour.* I see something here, madame, much better.

*Dori.* Really! Mons. Jourdain is more of a courtier than I supposed.

*Dor.* Why, madame, whom do you take Mons. Jourdain for?

*M. Jour.* I wish she would take me for what I could name.

*Dori.* What! again?

*Dor.* You don't know him.

*M. Jour.* She shall know me whenever she pleases.

*Dori.* Oh, I give in.

*Dor.* He's a man who has always a repartee at hand. But you don't notice, madame, that Mons. Jourdain eats all the dishes you partake of.

*Dori.* Mons. Jourdain is a man I am greatly taken with.

*M. Jour.* If I could take your heart I should be——

## SCENE II.

MADAME JOURDAIN, MONS. JOURDAIN, DORIMÈNE, DORANTE, *Musicians, Servants.*

*Madame Jourdain.* Well-a-day! Here's a nice company, and I can see very well I was not expected. So, husband, it was for this fine affair, was it, that you were in such a hurry to send me off to dine with my sister? I have just found a stage downstairs, and here I find a banquet fit for a wedding. This is how you spend your money, and feast grand ladies when I am away, and give them music and a play, while you send me out anywhere.

*Dorante.* What do you mean, Mdme. Jourdain? And what queer ideas you've got into your head, that your husband spends his money, and that it is he who is giving this entertainment to my lady! I beg you to understand that this is my affair; he only lends me his house, and I must ask you to be more careful in what you say.

*Mons. Jourdain.* Yes, impertinent woman, it is his honour the Count who gives all this to my lady, who is a person of rank. He does me the honour to borrow my house, and is pleased to let me be with him.

*Mdme. Jour.* That's all nonsense. I know what I know.

*Dor.* Pray, Mdme. Jourdain, put on better spectacles.

*Mdme. Jour.* I don't want any spectacles, sir; I can see quite well. I am no fool, and for a long time I've had an inkling of what has been going on. It is shameful of you, who are a great lord, to lend a helping-hand to the follies of my husband. And for you, madame, who are a great lady, it is neither handsome

nor honest in you to sow dissension in a family, and to allow my husband to make love to you.

*Dorimène.* What is the meaning of all this? Why, Dorante, it is wrong of you to expose me to the silly notions of this raving woman. [*Exit Dorimène.*

*Dor.* Why, madame, madame, where are you going?

*M. Jour.* Madame—my lord, make my excuses to her, and try to bring her back. (*To his wife.*) Oh, you wretched creature, this comes of your fine doings. You have affronted me before everybody, and you have driven away from my house persons of rank.

*Mdme. Jour.* I don't care a fig for their rank.

*M. Jour.* I don't know what keeps me, you cursed woman, from breaking your head with the dishes of the feast, which you have come here to disturb.

(*The servants clear the table.*)

*Mdme. Jour.* I despise all this. I stand up for my own rights, and all the wives will be on my side. [*Exit.*

*M. Jour.* You do well to get out of the way of my rage. (*Alone.*) She came at most unlucky time. I was just in the humour to make pleasant speeches, and I never felt so witty. Hullo, whom have we here?

## SCENE III.

COVIELLE (*disguised as a traveller*), MONS. JOURDAIN, *Servant.*

*Covielle.* Sir, I do not know whether I have the honour to be recognised by you.

*Mons. Jourdain.* No, sir.

*Cov.* I saw you when you were no taller than that (*showing with his hand*).

*M. Jour.* What? Me?

*Cov.* Yes, you were one of the prettiest children in the world, and all the ladies used to take you in their arms to kiss you.

*M. Jour.* To kiss me?

*Cov.* Yes, I was an intimate friend of the late gentleman, your father.

*M. Jour.* What, of the late gentleman, my father?

*Cov.* Yes, he was a very worthy gentleman.

*M. Jour.* What is it you say?

*Cov.* I say that he was a very worthy gentleman.

*M. Jour.* You're speaking of my father?

*Cov.* Certainly, I am.

*M. Jour.* Did you know him very well?

*Cov.* I did.

*M. Jour.* And you knew him to be a gentleman?

*Cov.* Without any doubt.

*M. Jour.* I don't know then what to make of the world.

*Cov.* Why?

*M. Jour.* There are a lot of stupid people who will have it that he was a shopkeeper.

*Cov.* He a shopkeeper! Mere scandal; he never was one. All that he did was, to go out of his way to be obliging, and as he was a great connoisseur in cloth, he used to buy it here, there, and everywhere; had it taken to his house, and then used to give it to his friends for money.

*M. Jour.* I am delighted to make your acquaintance, as you can bear witness that my father was a gentleman.

*Cov.* I'll stand to it in the face of all the world.

*M. Jour.* You will do me a great service. May I ask what business brings you here?

*Cov.* Since I knew your late father (honest gentleman as he was), I have travelled through the whole world.

*M. Jour.* What! Through the whole world?

*Cov.* Yes.

*M. Jour.* I fancy that country must be a long way off.

*Cov.* You're right. I only returned four days ago from my long journeyings: and as I have an interest in all that concerns you, I have come to tell you the best news in the world.

*M. Jour.* What is that?

*Cov.* Of course you know that the son of the Grank Turk is here?

*M. Jour.* I? No.

*Cov.* Is it possible? He has a most magnificent suite. Every one goes to see him, and he has been received here as a personage of great importance.

*M. Jour.* Indeed; I was not aware of it.

*Cov.* But what concerns you so much is that he is in love with your daughter.

*M. Jour.* What, the son of the Grand Turk?

*Cov.* Yes, and wishes to be your son-in-law.

*M. Jour.* My son-in-law? The son of the Grand Turk?

*Cov.* The son of the Grand Turk, your son-in-law. As I have been to see him, and perfectly understand his language, he held a conversation with me, and said, "*Acciam croc, toler, onch alla*

*oustaph gidelum amanahem varahini ouffere carbulath"*; that is to say, "Have you not see a handsome young person, who is the daughter of Mons. Jourdain, a gentleman of Paris?"

*M. Jour.* The son of the Grand Turk said that of me?

*Cov.* He did. So I replied that I knew you perfectly well, and that I had seen your daughter. "Ah," he said to me, *Marababa sahem!*" that is to say, "Ah! how I am in love with her!"

*M. Jour.* So, *Marababa sahem* means, "Ah! how I am in love with her?"

*Cov.* Yes.

*M. Jour.* Indeed; you did well to tell me so, since for my part I should never have believed that *Marababa sahem* meant, "Ah! how I am in love with her!" This Turkish is an admirable language!

*Cov.* More admirable than any one would believe. Are you aware what *Cacaramouchen* means?

*M. Jour.* *Cacaramouchen?* No.

*Cov.* It is as much as to say, "My dear soul!"

*M. Jour.* *Cacaramouchen* means, then, "My dear soul!"

*Cov.* Yes.

*M. Jour.* Well, it's very wonderful! *Cacaramouchen*, "My dear soul!" Who would ever have thought it? It quite gets over me.

*Cov.* In short, to finish my embassy, he is coming to ask for the hand of your daughter; and in order to have a father-in-law worthy of him, he wishes to make you a *Mamamouchi*, a great dignity in his own country.

*M. Jour.* *Mamamouchi?*

*Cov.* Yes, *Mamamouchi;* that is, in our language, a Paladin. Paladins are the ancient—Paladins in short. There's nothing more noble; and you will rank with the greatest lords upon earth.

*M. Jour.* The son of the Grand Turk does me a great deal of honour, and I beg you to conduct me to him, that I may return him my thanks.

*Cov.* What! Why, he is on the point of coming here.

*M. Jour.* He's coming here?

*Cov.* Certainly; and he is bringing with him everything necessary for your installation.

*M. Jour.* He seems to be in a great hurry.

*Cov.* His love will suffer no delay.

*M. Jour.* All that troubles me is, that my daughter is extremely obstinate, and she has taken it into her head to fall in love with a

fellow called Cléonte, and she vows that she will marry no one but him.

*Cov.* Ah, she'll change her mind when she has seen the son of the Grand Turk; and this is a most extraordinary circumstance, that the son of the Grand Turk has a sort of likeness to this Cléonte. I have just seen him—he was pointed out to me; and the love which she bears to one may easily be transferred to the other.—I hear him coming; here he is!

## SCENE IV.

CLÉONTE, *dressed like a Turk, with three Pages carrying his vest;* MONS. JOURDAIN, COVIELLE, *disguised.*

*Cléonte. Amboussahim oqui boraf, Tordina, salamalequî.*

*Covielle.* That is to say, "Mons. Jourdain, may your heart be all the year like a rose-tree in flower." These are polite forms of expression in that country.

*M. Jourdain.* I am his Turkish Highness's most humble servant.

*Cov. Carigar camboto ovstin moraf.*

*Clé. Ovstin yoc catamalequi basum base alla moran.*

*Cov.* He says, "May Heaven give you the strength of lions, and the wisdom of serpents.

*M. Jour.* His Turkish Highness honours me too much, and I wish him all manner of prosperity.

*Cov. Ossa binamen sadoc babally oracaf ovram.*

*Clé. Bel-men.*

*Cov.* He says that you are to go quickly with him and prepare yourself for the ceremony, in order afterwards to see your daughter, and to conclude the marriage.

*M. Jour.* So many things in two words?

*Cov.* Yes, Turkish is like that; it says a great deal in a few words. Go quickly where he desires you.

## SCENE V.

DORANTE, COVIELLE.

*Covielle.* Ha, ha, ha! Indeed this is extremely droll. What a dupe! If he had learnt his part by heart he could not have played it better. Ha, ha! (*Seeing Dorante.*) I beg of you, sir, to help us here in a certain matter which we have in hand,

*Dorante.* Ha, ha! Covielle, who would have known you? How you are dressed up!

*Cov.* So you see. Ha, ha!

*Dor.* What are you laughing at?

*Cov.* At something, sir, which is very droll.

*Dor.* What is it?

*Cov.* I would give you a good many guesses, sir, before you found out the trick we are playing on Mons. Jourdain to induce him to give up his daughter to my master.

*Dor.* I can't guess what the trick is, but I guess it is not likely to fail if you have a hand in it.

*Cov.* I know, sir, that you are acquainted with the animal.

*Dor.* Tell me what it is.

*Cov.* Will you mind stepping aside a little, so as to make room for what I see coming. You can see one part of the story, while I tell you the rest.

TURKISH CEREMONY. *The Mufti, Dervishes, Turks, Assistants of the Mufti, singing and dancing. First entrance of the Ballet.*

Six Turks enter gravely together, two and two, to music. They carry three carpets, which they lift very high and form into various figures while dancing. The singing Turks and musicians pass under these carpets, and range themselves on both sides of the stage; the Dervishes who accompany the Mufti close the procession.

Next the Turks spread the carpets on the ground, and kneel upon them; and then the Mufti, standing in the middle, invokes Mahomet with contortions and grimaces, and says not another word. The Turkish assistants prostrate themselves on the ground, singing *Alli;* then they raise their arms to heaven, singing *Alla*, and so they continue alternately to the end of the Invocation. Then they all rise up singing *Alla ekber.*

Then the Dervishes bring the Citizen before the Mufti, dressed as a Turk, shaven, without a turban, without a sabre, to whom the following words are sung in Lingua Franca:—

The Mufti. *If thou understandest,*
*Answer;*
*If thou dost not understand,*
*Hold thy peace, hold thy peace.*
*I am Mufti,*
*Thou! who thou art*
*I know not:*
*Hold thy peace, hold thy peace.*

Two Turks lead the Citizen back, while the Mufti demands of the Turks to what religion he belongs, and then sings—

*Say, Turk, who is this; an Anabaptist, an Anabaptist?*

Turks. *No.*
Mufti. *A Zwinglian?*
Turks. *No.*
Mufti. *A Copt?*
Turks. *No.*
Mufti. *A Hussite, a Moor, a Fronist?*
Turks. *No, no, no.*
Mufti repeats, *No, no, no. Is he a pagan?*
Turks. *No.*
Mufti. *Is he a Lutheran?*
Turks. *No.*
Mufti. *A Puritan?*
Turks. *No.*
Mufti. *A Brahmin, a Mossian, a Zurian?*
Turks. *No, no, no.*
Mufti repeats, *No, no, no. A Mahometan, a Mahometan?*
Turks. *There you have it; there you have it!*
Mufti. *How is he called; how is he called?*
Turks. *Jourdain, Jourdain.*
Mufti. *Jourdain?*
The Mufti (dancing and looking on all sides). *Jourdain, Jourdain, Jourdain?*
Turks repeat, *Jourdain, Jourdain, Jourdain?*

Mufti.
*To Mahomet for Jourdain*
*I pray night and day;*
*I wish to make a Paladin*
*Of Jourdain, of Jourdain.*
*Give him a turban, and a sabre,*
*With a galley and a brigantine,*
*To defend Palestine.*
*To Mahomet for Jourdain,* &c.

o the Turks.) *Will he be a good Turk, Jourdain?*
Turks. *That he will, that he will.*
Mufti sings and dances. *Ha la ba, ba la chou, ba la ba.*
After the Mufti has retired, the Turks dance, and sing the same rds—*Ha la ba, ba la chou, ba la ba, ba la da.*

Second Entry of the Ballet.

The Mufti returns, wearing the State turban, which is of an

enormous size, decorated with four or five rows of lighted wax candles.

Two Dervishes accompany him, with pointed caps, also decked with lighted candles, carrying the Alcoran. The two other Dervishes lead the Citizen, who is almost frightened to death at the ceremonies. They make him kneel down, with his back to the Mufti; then making him bend his body till his hands touch the ground, they place the Alcoran on his back, and make him serve as a desk to the Mufti, who makes a burlesque Invocation, knitting his eyebrows and opening his mouth without saying a word; then speaking with vehemence, now softening his voice, then raising it enthusiastically, enough to make them tremble; holding his sides with his fists, as if to make his words come out; sometimes striking the Alcoran and tossing the leaves over hastily. He concludes at last by lifting up his hands and crying with a loud voice, *Hou!*

During this Invocation the Assistant Turks, bending down and rising three times, sing, *Hou, hou, hou!*

After the Invocation is over, the Dervishes take the Alcoran from the Citizen's back, who cries, *Ough!* Then they help him up.

The Mufti (addressing the Citizen). *Thou wilt not be a thief?*

Turks. *No, no, no.*

Mufti. *Not a cheat?*

Turks. *No, no, no.*

Mufti (to Turks). *Give the turban, give the turban.* Then goes away.

Turks. *You are not a thief?*
*No, no, no.*
*Not a cheat?*
*No, no, no.*
*Give a turban.*

Third Entry of the Ballet.

Turks put the turban on M. Jourdain, singing and dancing.

The Mufti returns, and gives the sabre to M. Jourdain, saying, *Be brave, be no scoundrel, take the sabre.* Then he retires.

Fourth Entry of the Ballet.

The Turks repeat the same words, all drawing their sabres, and six of them, dancing round M. Jourdain, make as though they would give him several cuts with their sabres.

The Mufti returns and commands the Turks to bastinado the Citizen, singing these words—

*Give, give a bastinado, a bastinado, a bastinado.*

Then he goes away.

Fifth Entry of the Ballet.

The Turks repeat the same words, and give M. Jourdain several strokes with the stick in cadence.

The Mufti returns and sings—

*Not to have shame,*
*Is the last affront.*

Turks.

*Not to have shame,*
*Is the last affront.*

The Mufti begins another Invocation; the Dervishes support him under the arms respectfully, and all the Turks, leaping, dancing, and singing round the Mufti, retire with him and lead out M. Jourdain.

## ACT V. SCENE I.

MADAME JOURDAIN, MONS. JOURDAIN.

*Mdme. Jourdain.* Bless us and save us, what's all this? What a figure! Are you going mumming? Is this the time to go masquerading? Speak then, and say what is the meaning of it all. Who has been making a guy of you like this?

*M. Jourdain.* How impertinent to speak in that way to a *Mamamouchi!*

*Mdme. Jour.* What do you say?

*M. Jour.* I say you must treat me with respect now. I've just been made a *Mamamouchi.*

*Mdme. Jour.* What do you mean, with your *Mamamouchi?*

*M. Jour.* *Mamamouchi*, I tell you I am a *Mamamouchi.*

*Mdme. Jour.* What sort of an animal is that?

*M. Jour.* *Mamamouchi*—that is to say, in our language, a Paladin.

*Mdme. Jour.* A Baladin?[1] At your age are you going to turn Morris-dancer?

*M. Jour.* How stupid you are! I said Paladin: it is a dignity, the ceremony of which I have just gone through.

[1] A ballet-dancer.

*Mdme. Jour.* What ceremony then?
*M. Jour. Mahameta per Jordina.*
*Mdme. Jour.* What does that mean?
*M. Jour. Jordina*, that is to say Jourdain.
*Mdme. Jour.* Well, Jourdain, and what then?
*M. Jour. Voler far un Paladin de Jordina.*
*Mdme. Jour.* What?
*M. Jour. Dar Turbanta con Galera.*
*Mdme. Jour.* What's the meaning of that?
*M. Jour. Per deffender Palestina.*
*Mdme. Jour.* What do you mean?
*M. Jour. Dara, dara bastonnara.*
*Mdme. Jour.* What is all this jargon about?
*M. Jour. Non tenir honta, questa star l'ultima affronta.*
*Mdme. Jour.* What in the world can all this be?
*M. Jour.* (*dances and sings*). *Hou la ba, ba la chou, ba la ba, ba la da* (*and falls down*).
*Mdme. Jour.* Alas, alas! My husband has gone out of his mind.
*M. Jour.* Hold your tongue, impudence, and show respect to *Monsieur le Mamamouchi.*
*Mdme. Jour.* I wonder how he came to lose his senses. I must run and prevent his going out. (*Seeing Dorante and Dorimène.*) Ah! this is the last straw. I see nothing but vexation on all sides. [*Exit.*

## SCENE II.

### DORANTE AND DORIMÈNE.

*Dorante.* Yes, madame, you shall see the most amusing sight possible. I don't believe that in all the world you could find another such a fool as this one. And then, madame, we must try and forward Cléonte's suit, and support his masquerade. He is a very gentlemanly fellow, and deserves that we should interest ourselves in his behalf.
*Dorimène.* I've a great regard for him, and he deserves good fortune in his suit.
*Dor.* Besides which, madame, we have here an entertainment that may suit us, and which we ought not to lose; and I must see too whether my idea can be carried out.
*Dori.* I saw some magnificent arrangements, and these are things, Dorante, which I can no longer allow. Yes, I must put

a stop to all your extravagance, and in order to break off the expense which I see you are incurring on my account, I have determined to marry you at once. That is the true secret of it, and all these things end, as you know, with marriage.

*Dor.* Ah! madame, is it possible that you should form so kind a resolution in my favour?

*Dori.* I only do it to prevent you ruining yourself; otherwise I see plainly that before long you will not have a shilling.

*Dor.* How deeply I am indebted to you, madame, for the care you take to preserve my estate. It is entirely at your service as well as my heart, and you may dispose of them both as you please.

*Dori.* I shall make a proper use of them. But here comes your man. What an extraordinary figure!

## III.

MONS. JOURDAIN, DORANTE, DORIMÈNE.

*Dorante.* We have come, my Lady and I, to pay our homage to your new dignity, and to congratulate you on the marriage you are concluding between your daughter and the son of the Grand Turk.

*M. Jourdain* (*having made his bow in the Turkish manner*). Sir, I wish you the strength of serpents, and the wisdom of lions.

*Dorimène.* I am extremely glad, sir, to be one of the first to congratulate you on the high degree of glory to which you have risen.

*M. Jour.* Madame, I wish that your rose tree may flourish all the year round: I am infinitely obliged to you for taking an interest in the honours which have come to me, and I am greatly pleased to see you return here, so that I may make my excuses for the impertinence of my wife.

*Dori.* Oh, that was nothing. I can quite excuse her being upset; your heart ought to be precious to her, and it is not at all strange that the possession of such a man as you should give her some anxiety.

*M. Jour.* The possession of my heart is a thing that you have entirely gained.

*Dor.* You see, madame, that Mons. Jourdain is not one of those people who are blinded by prosperity, and that in his glory he still owns his friends.

*Dori.* It is the mark of a truly generous soul.

*Dor.* Where is His Turkish Highness? We should be glad, as your friends, to pay our respects to him.

*M. Jour.* Here he comes, and I have sent for my daughter that I may bestow her hand upon him.

## SCENE IV.

CLÉONTE (*in a Turkish dress*), COVIELLE, MONS. JOURDAIN, DORIMÈNE, DORANTE.

*Dorante.* Sir, we are come to pay our homage to your Highness, as the friends of this gentleman—your future father-in-law—and to assure you respectfully of our most humble services.

*M. Jourdain.* Where's the Dragoman, to tell him who you are, and to make him understand what you say. You shall see that he will answer you, and he speaks Turkish perfectly. Here! where the deuce is he gone? (*To Cléonte, pretending to talk Turkish.*) *Stref, strif, strof, straf.* The gentleman is a *grande Signore*, and madame is a *granda Dama, granda Dama. Ahi*, sir, he is a *French Mamamouchi*, and madame a French *Mamamouchess:* I can't speak plainer. Good, here's the Dragoman. Where have you been too? We can say nothing without you. Tell him shortly that the gentleman and lady are people of high rank, who have come to pay their respects to him, as friends of mine, and to assure him of their services. You will see how he will answer.

*Covielle. Alabala crociam, acci boram alabamen.*

*Cléonte. Catalequi tubal ourin sotor Amalouchan.*

*M. Jour.* Do you hear?

*Cov.* He says that the rain of prosperity waters at all seasons the garden of your family.

*M. Jour.* Didn't I tell you that he speaks Turkish?

*Dor.* This is admirable.

## SCENE V.

LUCILE, MONS. JOURDAIN, DORANTE, DORIMÈNE, CLÉONTE, COVIELLE.

*M. Jourdain.* Come, daughter, come nearer, and give your hand to this gentleman, who does you the honour of asking it in marriage.

*Lucile.* Why, father, what have you been doing to yourself? re you playing a comedy?

*M. Jour.* No, no, it is no comedy, but a very serious affair; nd the greatest honour I can desire for you. This is the husband give to you.

*Luc.* To me, father?

*M. Jour.* Yes, to you. Come, take him by the hand and hank heaven for your good fortune.

*Luc.* I don't wish to marry.

*M. Jour.* Then I'll make you, as I am your father.

*Luc.* I'll have nothing to do with it.

*M. Jour.* What a noise to be sure! Come, I tell you. Give our hand.

*Luc.* No, father; I've told you already that there is no power hat can force me to take any other husband than Cléonte, and I m determined to proceed to all extremities rather than—(*recognising Cléonte*)—It is true that you are my father, and I owe you bsolute obedience, so you may dispose of me as you please.

*M. Jour.* Ah! I am delighted to see you return so quickly to our duty; and it is a pleasure to me to have such an obedient laughter.

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## SCENE VI.

MDME. JOURDAIN, MONS. JOURDAIN, CLÉONTE, *&c.*

*Mdme. Jourdain.* How now? What's all this about? They tell me you mean to give your daughter to some carnival-mummer.

*M. Jourdain.* Will you hold your tongue, impertinent woman. You are always coming to mix up your ridiculous notions with everything: there is no possibility of teaching you common sense.

*Mdme. Jour.* It is you who will never learn sense. You go from one folly to another. What is your intention? and what do you want with all this crowd of people?

*M. Jour.* I intend to marry my daughter to the son of the Grand Turk.

*Mdme. Jour.* To the son of the Grand Turk?

*M. Jour.* Yes, go and give him your compliments, by the Dragoman there.

*Mdme. Jour.* I'll have nothing to do with any Dragoman, and I'll tell the other one to his face that he shall have no daughter of mine.

*Dorante.* What, Madame Jourdain, would you set yourself against such happiness as that? Do you refuse His Turkish Highness for your son-in-law?

*Mdme. Jour.* Good gracious, sir, will you mind your own business?

*Dorimène.* It is a great honour, by no means to be rejected.

*Mdme. Jour.* Madame, I must beg of you not to trouble yourself with what does not concern you.

*Dor.* It is the friendship which we feel for you that makes us interest ourselves in your well-being.

*Mdme. Jour.* I can do very well without your friendship.

*Dor.* But your daughter consents to her father's wishes.

*Mdme. Jour.* My daughter consents to marry a Turk?

*Dor.* Undoubtedly.

*Mdme. Jour.* Can she forget Cléonte?

*Dor.* What would not one do to be a great lady?

*Mdme. Jour.* I would strangle her with my own hands, if she did a thing like that.

*M. Jour.* Come, come, there's too much cackle. I tell you this marriage shall be carried through.

*Mdme. Jour.* And I say it shall not.

*M. Jour.* What a noise, to be sure!

*Lucile.* Mother!

*Mdme. Jour.* Oh, you're a good-for-nothing hussy!

*M. Jour.* What! do you scold her for obeying me?

*Mdme. Jour.* Yes; for she's as much mine as yours.

*Covielle* (*to Mdme. Jourdain*). Madame!

*Mdme. Jour.* What have *you* got to say?

*Cov.* Only one word.

*Mdme. Jour.* I'll have nothing to do with your word.

*Cov.* (*to Mons. Jourdain*). Sir, if she will only give me one minute's private conversation, I promise to make her conform to your wishes.

*Mdme. Jour.* I will not consent.

*Cov.* Only listen to me.

*Mdme. Jour.* No.

*M. Jour.* Give him a hearing.

*Mdme. Jour.* No, I will not.

*M. Jour.* He'll tell you——

*Mdme. Jour.* I will not have him say anything to me.

*M. Jour.* Did you ever see anything like the woman's obstinacy? Will it do you any harm to hear him?

*Cov.* Only hear me; you may do as you please afterwards.

*Mdme. Jour.* Well, what?

*Cov.* (*to Mdme. Jourdain, apart*). We have been making signs to you, madamè, for the last hour. Can't you see that all this is only done to suit ourselves to your husband's notions, that we are imposing upon him under this disguise, and that it is Cléonte himself who is the son of the Grand Turk?

*Mdme. Jour.* Ah! ah!

*Cov.* And it is I, Covielle, who am the Dragoman.

*Mdme. Jour.* Well, in that case, I must give in.

*Cov.* Don't seem to know anything about it.

*Mdme. Jour.* (*returning*). Yes. It is settled. I consent to the marriage.

*M. Jour.* Ah! now every one is becoming reasonable. (*To Madame Jourdain.*) You would not hear him. I knew he would explain to you who the son of the Grand Turk is.

*Mdme. Jour.* He has explained to me quite enough, and I am satisfied. Now let us send for a Notary.

*Dor.* That is very well said. And Madame Jourdain, that you may set your mind perfectly at rest, and may be free from any jealousy you may have conceived about your husband, my lady and I will make use of the same Notary to marry us.

*Mdme. Jour.* I have no objection to that.

*M. Jour.* (*apart to Dorante*). It is to make her believe.

*Dor.* (*apart to Mons. Jourdain*). We must by all means amuse her by this pretence.

*M. Jour.* (*aloud*). Good, good. Let some one go for the Notary.

*Dor.* In the meantime, till he comes, and has drawn up the contract, let us see our entertainment and give his Turkish Highness some amusement.

*M. Jour.* Well said. Come, let us take our places.

*Mdme. Jour.* And Nicole?

*M. Jour.* I give her to the Dragoman, and my wife to whoever pleases to take her.

*Cov.* Sir, I thank you. (*Apart.*) If it's possible to find a greater fool than this man, I'll go and tell it at Rome.

(*The Comedy ends with a short Ballet which had been prepared by Dorante.*)

# THE AFFECTED YOUNG LADIES

## (*LES PRÉCIEUSES RIDICULES*).

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LA GRANGE, } *repulsed lovers.*
DU CROISY, }
GORGIBUS, *a good citizen.*
MADELON, *daughter of Gorgibus,* } the affected young ladies.
CATHOS, *niece of Gorgibus,* }
MAROTTE, *the young ladies' maid.*
ALMANZOR, *the young ladies' footman.*
MARQUIS DE MASCARILLE, *La Grange's valet.*
VICOMTE DE JODELET, *Du Croisy's valet.*
TWO CHAIRMEN.
LUCILE AND CÉLIMÈNE, *neighbours.*
FIDDLERS.

SCENE—PARIS, IN THE HOUSE OF GORGIBUS.

### ACT I. SCENE I.

LA GRANGE, DU CROISY.

*Du Croisy.* Seigneur La Grange!

*La Grange.* What?

*Du Cr.* Look at me a moment without laughing.

*La Gr.* Well?

*Du Cr.* What do you think of our visit? Were you quite pleased with it?

*La Gr.* Do you believe either of us has reason to be so?

*Du Cr.* Well, to tell the truth, not altogether.

*La Gr.* For my part, I assure you, I feel quite shocked at it. Pray did ever any one see two country wenches give themselves more airs than they did, or two men treated with more contempt than we were? They could scarcely bring themselves to ask us to sit down. I never saw such whispering, such yawning, such rubbing of eyes and asking so often what o'clock it was. Did they answer more than "yes," or "no," to anything we could say to them? And, in short, don't you agree with me that

if we had been the greatest scoundrels they could not have used us worse than they did.

*Du Cr.* You seem to take it very much to heart.

*La Gr.* Certainly I do, and so much so that I shall revenge myself for this impertinence. I know very well the cause of their slighting us. This affected air has not only infected Paris, but has spread into the provinces, and our absurd young ladies have imbibed a good share of it. In a word, they are a curious mixture of coquetry and affectation. I see what a man must be to be on good terms with them, and if you'll trust me we'll play them a trick, which shall make them see their folly, and teach them to distinguish people a little better.

*Du Cr.* But how can this be done?

*La Gr.* I have a valet named Mascarille, who passes for a sort of wit in the opinion of many people—for nothing is cheaper than wit nowadays. He is a mad fellow who takes it into his head to assume the air of a person of quality. He goes in for gallantry and poetry, and despises other valets, so much so as to call them brutes.

*Du Cr.* Well, what do you mean to do with him?

*La Gr.* What do I mean to do with him? Why he must—but first let us quit this place.

## SCENE II.

GORGIBUS, DU CROISY, LA GRANGE.

*Gorgibus.* Well, gentlemen, have you seen my daughter and my niece? Are matters progressing? What is the result of this visit?

*La Grange.* You can learn that better from them than from us. All we can say is, that we return you thanks for the honour you have done us, and we remain your most humble servants.

*Du Croisy.* Your most humble servants.

*Gor.* (*alone*). Oho! It seems that they came away very dissatisfied. What could be the cause of their discontent? I must find out something about it. Ho! come here!

## SCENE III.

MAROTTE, GORGIBUS.

*Marotte.* What do you please to want, sir?

*Gorgibus.* Where are your mistresses?

*Mar.* In their room, sir.

*Gor.* What are they doing?

*Mar.* Making a salve for the lips.

*Gor.* There's too much of this salve-making. Tell them to come down. (*Alone.*) These hussies, I think, want to ruin me with their salves. I see nothing about the place but whites of eggs, milk of roses, and a thousand other fooleries I know nothing of. Since we have been here, they have used the lard of at least a dozen pigs, and one could keep four servants every day on the sheeps' trotters they use.

## SCENE IV.

MADELON, CATHOS, GORGIBUS.

*Gorgibus.* Truly, it is very necessary for you to go to all this expense to grease your faces! But give me some idea what you have been doing to those gentlemen, whom I saw leaving with so much coldness. Did I not command you to receive them as your future husbands?

*Madelon.* My dear father, I should like to know how you would have us receive the irregular proceedings of these people.

*Cathos.* And pray, uncle, how can a woman with a spark of understanding put up with their persons?

*Gor.* What fault do you find with them?

*Mad.* Talk of manners! Why they began at once to speak of marriage.

*Gor.* Well, how would you have them begin? With concubinage? Surely both of you as well as myself ought to be pleased with such a mode of paying addresses. Is there anything more polite than that? And the sacred bond to which they aspire, is it not a proof of their honourable intentions?

*Mad.* Why, father, you talk like the lowest shopkeeper. I am ashamed to hear you speak in such a way; you ought now to get some lessons in the proper air of things.

*Gor.* I've nothing to do with the air, nor the song. I tell you that marriage is a holy and sacred thing, and it's quite right and proper to begin with it.

*Mad.* Why, if all the world were like you, what would become of romance? It would have been a fine state of things if Cyrus had married Mandane off hand, and if Aronce had at once espoused Clélie.

*Gor.* What is all this talk about?

*Mad.* Ask my cousin, father, and she will tell you as well as I can, that marriage should come after other adventures. A lover, to be agreeable, should know how to utter fine sentiments, how to breathe soft, tender, and passionate thoughts, and to make his suit according to rule. In the first place, he must see his lady-love at church, in the park, or at some public ceremony; or else he must meet his fate by being introduced to her through a relation or friend, and leave her presence pensive and melancholy. For some time he conceals from the beloved object the devotion he feels for her, but he pays her several visits, in the course of which he always introduces the subject of love-making so as to give opportunity for discussion by the company. At last the day comes for his making his proposal, which should be done in the side-walk of some garden, when others are at a distance. This proposal is followed by a display of anger, as shown by our blushes, and which keeps the would-be lover for some time at a distance. He finds by degrees some mode of appeasing us, and *then again* paves the way for a fresh declaration of love, and for drawing forth that avowal which causes so much trouble. Then comes a series of exciting adventures; rivals who thwart an established affection; persecution of fathers; jealousies arising from misconceptions, complaints, despair, runaway matches, and the necessary results. This is how love affairs should be carried on according to good manners, which ought always to be followed in true gallantry. But to come point-blank to a matrimonial engagement, to make love only with a marriage contract, and to take romance by the wrong end! Once more, dear father, nothing could be more tradesman like than such a proceeding, and I feel quite upset at the mere notion.

*Gor.* What devilish nonsense is this? This is nothing but high-flying rubbish.

*Ca.* In short, uncle, my cousin tells you the truth of the matter. How is it possible to receive people who are utterly innocent of all proprieties? I wouldn't mind wagering that they have never seen the Map of True Love, and that "billets doux," Tender Attentions, Polite Notes, and Sonnets, are unknown regions to them. Cannot you see how their whole bearing shows this, and that they have not the air about them which prepossesses one at once in their favour. The idea of coming love-making in plain breeches, a hat without any feathers, a head with undressed locks, and a coat without any ribbons on it! Good gracious! What lovers are these? What stinginess in dress! What dryness of conversation! One can never stand it. I

noticed, too, that their ruffs were not at all well-made, and that their breeches did not fit them properly.

*Gor.* I think they are both out of their mind. I can make nothing out of this gibberish. Cathos, and you Madelon——

*Mad.* Oh, father, pray leave off these outlandish names, and call us differently.

*Gor.* What on earth do you mean? Outlandish! Are they not your Christian names?

*Mad.* Goodness, how vulgar you are! It really does surprise me that you could have had so witty and refined a daughter as myself. Did any one in society ever speak of Cathos or Madelon? And you must acknowledge that either of these names would be enough to ruin the finest novel in the world.

*Ca.* Really, uncle, an ear of any delicacy of sense must be excruciated at hearing such names, whereas Polixène, which my cousin has chosen, and Aminte, which I have taken for myself, have a certain grace which you must allow.

*Gor.* Now listen, I have just one word to say to you. I allow no other names than those given you by your godfathers and godmothers; and as regards the gentlemen in question, I know their families and their fortunes, and I tell you plainly that I have made up my mind you shall receive them as husbands. I am tired of having you on my hands, and the care of a couple of young girls is really too heavy a burden for a man of my age.

*Ca.* Well, uncle, I must tell you frankly that, for my part, I consider marriage quite shocking.

*Mad.* Give us a little breathing-time now that we have come into Parisian society, and allow us to weave at leisure the tissue of our romance and don't hurry it to its conclusion too fast.

*Gor.* (*aside*). There can be no doubt about it. They've both gone off their heads. (*Aloud.*) Once more I tell you I know nothing about all this nonsense, but I choose to be absolute master; and to put an end to all this dispute, let me tell you both that either you'll get married out of hand, or I'll have you shut up in a convent. And I give you my solemn word on it.

## SCENE V.

CATHOS, MADELON, *afterwards* MAROTTE.

*Cathos.* Heavens! my dear, how dense your father is! How gross his understanding is, how dark his soul!

*Madelon.* What can I say, my dear? I am quite upset about him. I can hardly believe that I am really his daughter, but

vulgar way. Say, Here is an indispensable who desires to know whether it is convenient to you to be visible.

*Mar.* By our Lady! I don't understand Latin, and I ain't never learnt flossophy out of Cyrus like you.

*Mad.* Impertinent creature. Who can put up with such insolence? And who is the master of this footman.

*Mar.* He said he was called the Marquis de Mascarille.

*Mad.* Oh, my dear, a Marquis! a Marquis! Yes, go and tell him that we will see him. No doubt he's a wit that has heard us spoken of.

*Ca.* Unquestionably, my dear.

*Mad.* We must receive him downstairs, and not in our own room. Let us arrange our hair properly, and maintain our reputation. Come here quickly and hold to us the counsellor of the Graces.

*Mar.* Truly, I can't tell what sort of an animal that is. If you want me to understand you, you must talk like a Christian.

*Ca.* Bring the looking-glass, you stupid creature, and take care not to defile it with the image of your own face.

## Scene VI.

Mascarille, *and Two Chairmen.*

*Mascarille.* Hold, chairmen, hold. La, la, la, la! I think these varlets intend to knock me to pieces, by jostling me against the walls and pavement.

*First Chairman.* Ay, because the gate's narrow. You would have us bring you right in here.

*Mas.* Quite true. Would you have me expose the beauty of my feathers to the inclemency of the rainy season, or leave the impression of my shoes in the mud? Be off, and take away your chair.

*Second Chairman.* Then pay us, sir, if you please.

*Mas.* Eh?

*Chair.* Please to give us our money, sir, I say.

*Mas.* (*giving him a box on the ear*). What! you rascal, ask for money from a person of my rank?

2*nd Chair.* Are poor people to be paid in this way? And will your rank get us a dinner?

*Mas.* Ha, ha! I'll teach you to know your place. Dare these scoundrels take liberties with me?

1*st Chair.* (*taking one of the poles of the chair*). Come, pay us quickly.

*Mas.* What?

1*st Chair.* I say I'll have the money at once.

*Mas.* Ah, now, this is a reasonable man.

1*st Chair.* Make haste then.

*Mas.* Well, you speak as you ought to do, but the other fellow is a rascal who does not know what he says.—There now, are you contented?

1*st Chair.* No, I'm not contented; you struck my mate and——(*raising his pole*).

*Mas.* Here, then, is something for the blow. People may get anything out of me if they go the right way to work. Go now, but come again for me by and by, to take me to the royal bed-chamber.

## SCENE VII.

MAROTTE, MASCARILLE—*afterwards* MADELON, CATHOS, ALMANZOR.

*Marotte.* Sir, my mistresses will come directly.

*Mascarille.* Oh, they need not hurry themselves. I can wait here very comfortably.

*Mar.* Here they are.

*Enter* MADELON AND CATHOS.

*Mas.* (*after having bowed to them*). You'll be doubtless surprised, ladies, at the boldness of my visit, but your reputation brings this infliction on you. Merit has such potent charms for me, that I run everywhere after it.

*Madelon.* If you pursue merit, it is not on our grounds that you must hunt.

*Cathos.* To find merit here, you must have brought it with you.

*Mas.* Ah, I engage to prove the contrary. Fame told the truth in relating your worth, and you are going to make a clean sweep of all the gallants of Paris.

*Mad.* Your courtesy pushes the liberality of its praises somewhat too far, and my cousin and I must not take too seriously the sweetness of your flattery.

*Ca.* My dear, we should call for chairs.

*Mad.* Almanzor.

*Almanzor.* Madame.

*Mad.* Convey to us quickly the conveniences of conversation.

*Mas.* But tell me, am I safe here?

*Ca.* What are you afraid of?

*Mas.* Some robbery of my heart, some attempt upon my freedom. I see there a pair of eyes which look like two very naughty boys, who would play with liberty and treat a heart no better than a Turk would a slave. Why the deuce do they put themselves on their murdering guard as soon as they see any one approach them? Ah, in truth I distrust them, and must either run away or get good security that they will not do me any harm.

*Mad.* My dear, this is lively wit.

*Ca.* I see plainly that he is a Hamilcar.[1]

*Mad.* You need not be afraid; our eyes have no evil designs, and your heart may repose in the assurance of their harmlessness.

*Ca.* But, my dear sir, I hope you will not be inexorable to the advances of the easy chair which has been stretching out its arms to you for a quarter of an hour; pray yield to its desire to embrace you.

*Mas.* (*having combed his hair and adjusted his lace-fringes*). Well, ladies, and what do you think of Paris?

*Mad.* Ah! What can we say? It would be the antipodes of reason not to acknowledge that Paris is the greatest storehouse of wonders, the centre of good taste, wit, and gallantry.

*Mas.* For my part, I think outside of Paris there is no salvation for people of fashion.

*Ca.* There's no denying that.

*Mas.* It is rather dirty; but one can always call a sedan-chair.

*Mad.* Ah, that is a wonderful safeguard against the insults of mud and bad weather.

*Mas.* You doubtless have plenty of visitors? What great wit do you reckon among them?

*Mad.* The fact is that we are not much known yet, but we are in the way to be so, for we have a particular friend who has

[1] A lively character in "Clélie," by Mdlle. de Scudéry.

promised to bring here all the gentlemen who write for the "Select Miscellany."

*Ca.* And some others who have been mentioned to us as being the supreme judges of fine things.

*Mas.* I can do that for you better than any one. They all visit me, and I can truly say that I never rise without having half a dozen wits about me.

*Mad.* Really we shall be under the greatest obligation if you can do us this service, for one must have the acquaintance of all these gentlemen, if one would be in good society. They can give one a name in Paris, and merely to be seen in the company of some of them is enough to give one a reputation as a judge, even if one had no other claim. But what I think most of is, that by these intellectual visits one learns a hundred things that one should know, and which are the very essence of wit. Thereby one learns every day the latest scandals, the pleasant interchanges in prose and verse. Thus one learns at the right time that such a person has composed the finest piece in the world on such a subject; that such a lady has set words to such a tune; this person has made a madrigal upon a favour done him: that one has written stanzas on one who has betrayed him. Mr. So-and-So wrote a poem of six lines yesterday evening to Mrs. So-and-So, to which she sent him an answer this morning at eight o'clock. Such an author has made such a plan; this writer has completed the third part of his novel, that other is just sending his work to the press.—It is this which makes you thought much of in society, and if people are ignorant of these things I would not give a pin for all their talent.

*Ca.* In fact I think it extremely ridiculous for any one to make pretensions to talent, who does not know even the least little sonnet that is made every day; and for my part I should be completely ashamed of myself if any one should ask me if I had seen something new and I had not done so.

*Mas.* It really is shameful not to be among the first to know what is going on; but do not trouble about that. I will establish in your house an Academy of Talent, and I can promise you there shall not be a rhyme made in Paris which you shall not have by heart before any one else. As for myself, you see what I am; I scribble a little when I am in the mood for it, and you may meet with what I have written in all the best private circles of Paris—some two hundred songs, as many sonnets, four hundred epigrams, and more than a thousand madrigals, without reckoning riddles and portraits.

*Mad.* I must acknowledge that I am perfectly wild after portraits. I think nothing is more delightful.

*Mas.* Portraits in words are difficult, and call for a very special talent. I will show you some of mine that I think will not displease you.

*Ca.* For my part, I am awfully fond of riddles.

*Mas.* Well, they exercise the wit. I have made four already this morning, which I will submit to you to guess.

*Mad.* Madrigals are agreeable, when they are well turned.

*Mas.* That is my peculiar talent, and I'm going to turn all the history of Rome into madrigals.

*Mad.* Ah, that will be wondrously fine. I must have at least one copy if you print it.

*Mas.* I promise you each one, and bound in the best style. It is rather beneath my rank; and I only do it for the benefit of the booksellers who pester me.

*Mad.* I fancy it must be a great pleasure to see one's self in print.

*Mas.* Certainly: but now I think of it, I must tell you some extempore verses that I made yesterday at a Duchess's, a friend of mine, where I was paying a visit, for I am tremendously strong in impromptus.

*Ca.* I think they are the very touchstone of wit.

*Mas.* Listen then.

*Mad.* So we will, with all our ears.

*Mas.* *Oh! oh! quite off my guard was I,*
*And no harm thinking,*
*While you I view*
*Slily your eyes my heart surprise—*
*"Stop thief, stop thief, stop thief!" I cry.*

*Ca.* My goodness! that may rank among the finest pieces of gallantry.

*Mas.* What I do has the touch of a gentleman; there's nothing of the pedant about it.

*Mad.* Oh no! It's thousands of miles from that.

*Mas.* Did you mark the beginning—*Oh, oh!* Because it is extraordinary—*Oh, oh!* Like a man who bethinks himself all at once—*Oh, oh!* Taken by surprise—*Oh, oh!*

*Mad.* I find that *Oh, oh!* admirable.

*Mas.* It is nothing.

*Ca.* Good gracious! What do you say? One cannot think too highly of such things.

*Mad.* No doubt. I would rather have made that *Oh, oh!* than have composed an epic poem.

*Mas.* Egad, you have good taste.

*Mad.* Well, I don't think that it is very bad.

*Mas.* But don't you also admire, "*Quite off my guard was I*"? "Quite off my guard was I." I paid no special attention to it; quite a natural way of speaking. "*Quite off my guard was I.*" "*And no harm thinking*"—innocently, without malice, like a poor sheep; "*While you I view*"—that is to say, while I amuse myself with considering, with observing, with contemplating you. "*Slily your eyes.*" What do you think of that word "*Slily*"? Isn't it well chosen?

*Ca.* Excellently.

*Mas.* "*Slily,*" cunningly—it seems as if it were a cat coming to catch a mouse. "Slily."

*Mad.* Nothing could be better.

*Mas.* "*My heart surprise,*" snatch it away, force it from me; "*Stop thief, stop thief, stop thief!*" Would not you think it was a man crying out, and running after a thief to seize him—"*Stop thief, stop thief, stop thief!*"

*Mad.* It must be owned that it has a most witty and gallant turn.

*Mas.* I should like to sing you the tune I set it to.

*Ca.* What! have you learned music?

*Mas.* I? Not at all.

*Ca.* How can that be?

*Mas.* Persons of quality know everything, without having ever learnt anything.

*Mad.* He's quite right, my dear.

*Mas.* Listen, and tell me if you like it. *Hem, hem, hem, la, la, la, la.* The roughness of the season has seriously injured the delicacy of my voice—but all the same I sing like a gentleman. (*He sings.*) *Oh, oh! quite off my guard was I.*

*Ca.* Oh what an impassioned air! It makes one die with pleasure.

*Mad.* Delightful chromatics indeed!

*Mas.* Don't you find the thought well expressed in the tune, "*Stop thief, stop thief*"? And then as if some one cried out violently, "*Stop, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop*"; and then all at once, like a person out of breath, "*Stop thief!*"

*Mad.* Now I see what it is to understand the refinement of things, the great refinement—the refinement of refinements. It is quite marvellous, I assure you; I am in ecstasy with both the tune and the words.

*Ca.* I never met with anything so powerful.

*Mas.* All I do comes naturally, without any study.

*Mad.* Nature has treated you like a true fond mother; and you are her spoiled child.

*Mas.* How do you pass your time, ladies?

*Ca.* In nothing at all.

*Mad.* Up to now we have been suffering from a terrible dearth of all amusement.

*Mas.* I'm at your service to take you, one of these days, to the play, if you would like to go; indeed, a new one is to be acted and I should be very glad to see it with you.

*Mad.* That is not to be refused.

*Mas.* But I must ask you to applaud it well when we are there for I have engaged to make the piece successful; the author came this morning to beg me to do so. It is the custom here for authors to come and read their new plays to people of distinction like myself that they may engage us to approve of them, and give them reputation, and I leave you to imagine whether, when we say anything the pit dares to contradict us. For my part, I am very scrupulous in this; and when I've promised any poet, I always call out "Excellent!" even before the curtain rises.

*Mad.* Say no more about it. Paris is a wonderful place; a hundred things happen in it every day, of which we know nothing in the provinces, however talented one may be.

*Ca.* That is enough; now we have been told, we'll do our part in applauding as we ought every word that's said.

*Mas.* I don't know whether I am mistaken, but you look for all the world as if you had written a play.

*Mad.* Well, there may be something in what you say.

*Mas.* Ah, then we must see it. Between ourselves, I have composed one which I mean to have acted.

*Ca.* And to which company do you mean to give it?

*Mas.* What a question! Why of course to the Royal actors. No others are able to gain pieces a reputation; the rest are ignorant creatures, who speak their parts just as one talks; they don't understand how to roll out their words, or pause at a beautiful passage. How is one to know where the fine lines are, if the actor does not stop at them, and thereby show you when to applaud?

*Ca.* Really, there is a way of making an audience sensible of the beauties of a work, and things are only valued at what one makes them valued.

*Mas.* How do you like my trimming? Do you think it suits the dress?

*Ca.* Perfectly.

*Mas.* The ribbon is well chosen.

*Mad.* Awfully well. It's Pedrigeon's genuine thing.

*Mas.* What do you say to my rolls?

*Mad.* They look extremely well.

*Mas.* At any rate I may boast that they are a quarter of a yard wider than ever were made before.

*Mad.* I must confess that I never saw the elegance of dress carried to such perfection.

*Mas.* Pray exercise your olfactory organs on these gloves.

*Mad.* They smell awfully nice.

*Ca.* I never breathed a more delightful odour.

*Mas.* And this—(*giving them his powdered wig to smell*).

*Mad.* There is something distinguished in it; the sublime is hit off deliciously.

*Mas.* You say nothing of my feathers; how do you like them?

*Ca.* They're dreadfully beautiful.

*Mas.* Do you know that this ostrich feather cost me a louis d'or? For my part, I have a mania for indulging in the best of everything.

*Mad.* You and I sympathize, I assure you. I am frightfully delicate about everything I wear, and even to my socks I cannot bear anything that is not perfectly well made.

*Mas.* (*crying out suddenly*). Oh, gently, gently! Zounds, ladies, this is very ill-usage; I have reason to complain of your treatment of me: it is not fair.

*Ca.* What now? What is the matter?

*Mas.* What! both against my heart at the same time! Attacking me right and left! Ah, it is contrary to the law of nations; it is not an equal match. I shall cry out, Murder!

*Ca.* One must own that he says things in a very original manner.

*Mad.* He has an admirable turn of wit.

*Ca.* You're more afraid than hurt. Your heart complains before it's wounded.

*Mas.* What the deuce! Why it's wounded from head to foot!

*Enter* MAROTTE.

*Marotte.* Madame, some one is asking to see you.

*Mad.* Who?

*Mar.* The Vicomte de Jodelet.

*Mas.* What, the Vicomte de Jodelet?

*Mar.* Yes, sir.

*Ca.* Do you know him?

*Mas.* He's my best friend.

*Mad.* Beg him to come in at once.

*Mas.* It is some time since we have met, and I am delighted at the chance.

*Ca.* Here he is.

## SCENE VIII.

JODELET, MASCARILLE, CATHOS, MADELON, MAROTTE.

*Mascarille.* Ah, Vicomte!

*Jodelet* (*embracing one another*). Ah, Marquis!

*Mas.* How glad I am to meet you!

*Jod.* I am delighted to find you here!

*Madelon* (*to Cathos*). We are beginning to be known, my dearest, when gentlemen of rank find their way here.

*Mas.* Ladies, allow me to present this gentleman to you. I can assure you, he is worthy of your acquaintance.

*Jod.* It is only right to come and offer you your due, and your charms demand their sovereign rights from all sorts of people.

*Mad.* You are urging your civilities to the extreme limit of flattery.

*Cathos.* This day ought to be marked in our almanac, as a very fortunate one.

*Mad.* Come, boy (*to Almanzor*), must you be told the same thing again and again? Don't you see that the addition of another chair is required?

*Mas.* You must not be surprised to see the Vicomte as he is. He is only just recovering from an illness, which leaves him as pale as you see him.

*Jod.* It is the result of dancing attendance at Court, and of the fatigues of war.

*Mas.* Are you aware, ladies, that in the Vicomte you behold one of the bravest men of the age? He is a hero of tried metal.

*Jod.* You are no way behind me, Marquis; we are well aware of what you can do.

*Mas.* It is true we have met before now.

*Jod.* Yes, and in places where it was very warm.

*Mas.* Ah, but (*looking at the ladies*), not so warm as it is here. Ah, ha!

*Jod.* Our acquaintance was made in the army, and the first time we saw each other, the Marquis was commanding a regiment of horse, on board the galleys at Mâlta.

*Mas.* That is true, but for all that you were before me in the service, for I remember that I was but a young officer, when you commanded two thousand horse.

*Jod.* War is a fine thing in its way, but, on my word, the Court rewards people very badly who, like us, have seen service.

*Mas.* That's why I mean to hang up my sword.

*Ca.* For my part, I've a tremendous liking for men of the sword.

*Mad.* I love them too, but I like wit to temper bravery.

*Mas.* Do you remember, Vicomte, that half-moon that we carried against the enemy at the siege of Arras?

*Jod.* What do you mean by a half-moon? Why, man, it was a whole moon.

*Mas.* I think you are right.

*Jod.* I ought, in truth, to remember it well enough, for I was wounded there in the leg by the bursting of a hand-grenade, the marks of which I still carry about me. Feel a little, if you please, and you will see what a wound it was.

*Ca.* (*after touching the spot*). It is true there is a terrible scar.

*Mas.* Give me your hand a moment, and feel this—there—just in the back of my head. Have you found it?

*Mad.* Yes, I feel something.

*Mas.* It is a musket-shot that I received in my last campaign.

*Jod.* (*uncovering his chest*). Here is where a shot went right through me at the attack on Gravelines.

*Mas.* They are honourable marks which show what one is.

*Ca.* We make no doubt what you are.

*Mas.* Vicomte, have you your carriage there?

*Jod.* Why?

*Mas.* We could take the ladies for a drive in the suburbs, and give them a little dinner.

*Mad.* We cannot go out to-day.

*Mas.* Let us have some fiddles, then, and dance.

*Jod.* That's a very good idea.

*Mad.* We shall be very pleased, but we shall want some more company.

*Mas.* Who's in waiting there—"*Champagne, Picard, Bour-*

*gognon, Casquarat, Basque, La Verdure, Lorrain, Provençal, Violette,*"—I wish all footmen were at the devil. I don't think there's a gentleman in France worse served than I am. These rascals always leave me alone.

*Mad.* Almanzor, tell his lordship's servants to go for some fiddlers, and ask the ladies and gentlemen about here to come and fill the solitude of our ball. [*Exit Almanzor.*

*Mas.* Vicomte, what do you think of those eyes?

*Jod.* Well, Marquis, what do you think of them yourself?

*Mas.* I? I say that our liberty is in danger, and I fear we shall not be able to escape. At least, for my part, I receive a succession of shocks, and my heart is held by a single thread.

*Mad.* How naturally he speaks. He gives such an agreeable turn to everything.

*Ca.* It is true. He spends his wit extravagantly.

*Mas.* To show you that I am in earnest, I will make an impromptu on the subject. (*He muses.*)

*Ca.* Oh, I beg and pray of you, do let us have something made for us specially.

*Jod.* I should like to do as much myself, but my power has been lessened by having been bled freely for the last three or four days.

*Mas.* What the deuce is the matter? I can always make the first verse well enough, but I am bothered to make the rest. In fact, this is too much of a hurry; I will make you an impromptu at my leisure, and it shall be the finest in the world.

*Jod.* He's as witty as the deuce himself.

*Mad.* Yes, as polite, and as charmingly turned.

*Mas.* Vicomte, tell me, how long is it since you saw the Comtesse?

*Jod.* It is more than three weeks since I paid her a visit.

*Mas.* Do you know that the Duke came to see me this morning, and wanted to take me down into the country, for some stag-hunting?

*Mad.* Ah! here come our friends.

## SCENE IX.

JODELET, MASCARILLE, CATHOS, MADELON, MAROTTE, LUCILE, CELIMÈNE, ALMANZOR, *and Musicians.*

***Madelon.*** My dears, we hope you will excuse us. These

gentlemen had a fancy to put some life into our feet, and so we sent to you to ask you to fill up the vacancies in our assembly.

*Lucile.* You have laid us under an obligation to you.

*Mascarille.* This is only an extempore dance, but one of these days we'll give you a ball in proper style. Are the fiddlers come?

*Almanzor.* Yes, sir, they are here.

*Cathos.* Come then, my dears, take your places.

*Mas.* (*dancing alone by way of prelude*). La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

*Mad.* He has a most elegant shape.

*Ca.* And looks as if he could dance finely.

*Mas.* (*having taken out Madelon.*) My liberty is about to dance a courant as well as my feet. Play in time, fiddlers, in time. Oh what ignorant fellows! One cannot dance with them. Deuce take you, can't you play in measure? La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la—Oh stop, you country fiddlers.

*Jodelet* (*dancing afterwards*). Hold, don't play so fast; I'm only just recovering from an illness.

## SCENE X.

DU CROISY, LA GRANGE, MASCARILLE, JODELET, CATHOS, MADELON, MAROTTE, LUCILE, CELIMÈNE.

*La Grange* (*with a stick in his hand*). So ho! Rascals, what are you doing here? We have been looking for you for the last three hours!

*Mascarille* (*feeling himself beaten*). Oh, oh, oh! you didn't tell me the blows would be like this.

*Jodelet.* Oh, oh, oh, oh!

*La Gr.* You rascal; the idea of your giving yourself the airs of a gentleman!

*Du Croisy.* This will teach you to know your place.

*Madelon.* What is the meaning of this?

*Jod.* It's a wager.

*Cathos.* What, let yourselves be beaten in this manner!

*Mas.* I wouldn't seem to take any notice of it, because I've a violent temper, and could not answer for the consequences.

*Mad.* But to put up with an affront like that in our presence!

*Mas.* Oh, it's nothing—don't let us leave off. We've known each other for a long time, and between friends one does not notice trifles.

*La Gr.* I tell you, you rascals, you shall not laugh at us—Come in, you there.

(*Enter three or four Roughs.*)

*Mad.* What is the meaning of this impudence?—to come and make this disturbance in our own house.

*Du Cr.* What, ladies, shall we endure to have our footmen better received than ourselves? Shall they come and make love to you at our expense, and offer you a ball?

*Mad.* What! your footmen?

*La Gr.* Yes, our footmen, and it is neither decent nor honourable that you should spoil them for our service, as you are doing.

*Mad.* O heavens! What insolence!

*La Gr.* But they shall not have the advantage of using our clothes, to dazzle your eyes with. If you choose to love them, it shall be for their good looks alone. Quick, take off their things at once.

*Jod.* Good-bye, then, to our finery.

*Mas.* The Marquisate and Viscountship are at an end.

*Du Cr.* What, you rascals, you've had the impertinence to attempt to be our rivals! You must go and look elsewhere for the chance of making yourselves agreeable in your mistresses' eyes.

*La Gr.* It is too much that they should supplant us, and in our own clothes too!

*Mas.* O Fortune, how great is thy inconstancy!

*Du Cr.* Make haste, take everything away from them.

*La Gr.* Look sharp, and carry off these clothes. Now, ladies, in the condition in which they are, you can carry on your flirtations with them as long as you please. We leave you full liberty for that, and my friend and I assure you that we shall not be jealous, in the slightest degree. [*Exeunt Lucile and Célimène.*

*Ca.* Oh! what confusion!

*Mad.* I am bursting with vexation.

*Fiddlers* (*to the Marquis*). What is the meaning of this? Who is going to pay us?

*Mas.* Ask Monsieur le Vicomte.

*Fid.* (*to the Vicomte*). Who's going to give us our money?

*Jod.* Ask Monsieur le Marquis.

## SCENE XI.

GORGIBUS, MASCARILLE, JODELET, CATHOS, MADELON, *and Fiddlers.*

*Gorgibus.* Ah, you miserable creatures, you've brought things to a pretty pass! I've heard of your fine doings from the ladies and gentlemen who have just gone out.

*Madelon.* Oh, father, it's a cruel trick they've played us.

*Gor.* Yes, a cruel trick, but the result of your own folly. They have resented the way in which you treated them, and I, unhappy that I am, must put up with the affront.

*Mad.* Ah, but I swear we'll be avenged, or I shall die of vexation. And you, you wretches, you dare to stay here after your insolence!

*Mascarille.* Is that how you speak to a Marquis? But this is the way of the world; the least disgrace makes those turn against us who lately caressed us. Come along, my friend, let us go and seek our fortune somewhere else; I see plainly that all they care for here is vain show. They do not care for virtue unadorned.

[*They both go.*

*Fiddlers.* Sir, we look to you to pay us in their stead.

*Gorgibus* (*beating them*). Yes, yes, I'll pay you, and in this coin too. (*To Cathos and Madelon.*) And as for you, you idle wenches, I hardly know why I don't do as much for you. We shall become the common talk and ridicule of everybody, and this is what you have brought on yourselves by your fooleries. Go and hide yourselves, you wretches. Never let me see you again. (*Alone.*) And as for you who are the occasion of their disgrace, with your stupid folly, your mischievous amusements for idle minds, with your romances, verses, songs, sonnets, and sonatas, I say, Deuce take you all!

# THE FORCED MARRIAGE

(*LE MARIAGE FORCÉ*).

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SGANARELLE, *lover of Dorimène.*
GERONIMO, *friend of Sganarelle.*
DORIMÈNE, *daughter of Alcantor, betrothed to Sganarelle.*
ALCANTOR, *father of Dorimène.*
ALCIDAS, *brother of Dorimène.*
LYCASTE, *lover of Dorimène.*
PANCRACE, *an Aristotelian doctor.*
MARPHURIUS, *a Pyrrhonian doctor.*
TWO GIPSY-WOMEN.

SCENE—A PUBLIC PLACE.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

SGANARELLE, GERONIMO.

*Sganarelle* (*speaking to the people in the house*). I'll be back again in a moment. Let good care be taken of the house, and let everything go on right. If any one brings me money, let me be sent for at once from Seigneur Geronimo's; but if any one comes to ask for any, say that I'm gone out and sha'n't return all day.

*Geronimo.* That's a very prudent order.

*Sga.* Oh, Seigneur Geronimo, I meet you most opportunely. I was just going to your house to look for you.

*Ger.* For what purpose, please?

*Sga.* To tell you of a matter I have in my mind, and to beg you to give me your advice upon it.

*Ger.* Most willingly. I am very glad to have met you, and we can talk here quite freely.

*Sga.* Pray be covered. It is a matter of some consequence that has been proposed to me, and it is good to do nothing without the advice of one's friends.

*Ger.* I am obliged to you for having chosen me for that purpose. You have but to tell me what it is.

*Sga.* But first, I must implore you to give me your opinion plainly, and in no way to flatter me.

*Ger.* I will, since you wish it.

*Sga.* I think there is nothing more blamable than a friend who does not speak frankly.

*Ger.* You're quite right.

*Sga.* Then promise me, Seigneur Geronimo, to speak to me with perfect frankness.

*Ger.* I promise you.

*Sga.* Swear on your word.

*Ger.* Yes, on the word of a friend. Only tell me what the affair is.

*Sga.* What I want to know of you is whether I should do well to marry?

*Ger.* Who?—you!

*Sga.* Yes; I, myself, my own self. What's your advice about it?

*Ger.* I should like you to tell me one thing first.

*Sga.* Well, what?

*Ger.* What age may you really be now?

*Sga.* I?

*Ger.* Yes.

*Sga.* On my word, I don't know, but I'm perfectly well.

*Ger.* What! don't you know your age within a little?

*Sga.* No. Is that a point to be considered?

*Ger.* Well, tell me, how old were you when we first became acquainted?

*Sga.* Indeed, I was then only twenty.

*Ger.* How long were we in Rome together?

*Sga.* Eight years.

*Ger.* How long did you live in England?

*Sga.* Seven years.

*Ger.* And in Holland, where you went afterwards?

*Sga.* Five years and a half.

*Ger.* How long have you been back?

*Sga.* I returned in fifty-two.

*Ger.* From fifty-two to sixty-four makes, I think, a dozen years, five years in Holland makes seventeen, seven years in England makes twenty-four, eight years we stayed in Rome makes thirty-two, and twenty, which was your age when we became acquainted, makes exactly fifty-two. So that, Seigneur Sganarelle, by your own account you are about fifty-two or three.

*Sga.* Who, I? That can't be!

*Ger.* Indeed, the calculation is exact, and I must tell you as a friend (you made me promise I would), that matrimony is

scarcely in your line. That's a thing that young people ought to think of seriously before they enter on it, but folks of your age ought not to think of it at all. And if, as it is said, marrying is one of the greatest follies, I know nothing more absurd than to commit this folly at an age when we ought to be wiser. In short, I tell you my opinion plainly, I advise you not to think of matrimony; and I should take you for the most ridiculous creature in the world, if, having hitherto been at liberty, you were now to load yourself with the heaviest of all chains.

*Sga.* And for my part, I tell you, I'm resolved to marry; and I shall not be at all ridiculous in marrying the girl I mean to marry.

*Ger.* Oh, that's another matter. You did not tell me that.

*Sga.* It's a girl that pleases me, whom I love with all my heart.

*Ger.* You love her with all your heart?

*Sga.* Most certainly; and I've proposed to her father for her.

*Ger.* You've proposed for her?

*Sga.* Yes; it's a marriage that must be settled this evening, as I've given my word.

*Ger.* Oh, marry then. I won't say a word more.

*Sga.* Shall I give up my design? Do you imagine, Seigneur Geronimo, that I'm no longer fit to think of a wife? Don't let us talk of what age I may be, but let us only regard facts. Is there a man of thirty who seems more fresh and vigorous than you see me? Haven't I all the use of my limbs as well as ever? And does any one ever see me want a carriage or a sedan-chair? (*Showing his teeth.*) Don't I eat my four meals a day heartily? And can you find any one with a better digestion than mine? Ahem! ahem! Well, what do you say to that?

*Ger.* You're right. I was mistaken. You will do well to marry.

*Sga.* I was against it myself formerly, but I've strong reasons for it now. Besides the pleasure I shall have in possessing a pretty woman who will fondle me, coddle me, and rock me when I am tired; I say besides that pleasure, I consider that by remaining a bachelor I shall suffer the race of the Sganarelles to become extinct; but that by marrying, I may see myself live again in others. I shall have the satisfaction of seeing little creatures sprung from me who will be as like me as two drops of water; who will be continually playing about the house, will call me their papa when I come back from town, and will talk their little nonsense to me in the most agreeable manner possible. Hold, I fancy I am already among them, and see half a dozen round me!

*Ger.* There is nothing pleasanter than that, and I desire you to marry as quickly as you can.

*Sga.* Indeed, do you advise me to it?

*Ger.* To be sure. You can't do better.

*Sga.* Really, I am delighted that you have given me this advice as a true friend.

*Ger.* Well, and who is the person, pray, that you are going to marry?

*Sga.* Dorimène.

*Ger.* That young Dorimène, who is so gay and well-dressed?

*Sga.* Yes.

*Ger.* Seigneur Alcantor's daughter!

*Sga.* The same.

*Ger.* And sister of one Alcidas, who takes on him to wear a sword?

*Sga.* That's the one.

*Ger.* Good gracious!

*Sga.* What do you say to it?

*Ger.* A good match. Marry off hand.

*Sga.* Have I not made a good choice?

*Ger.* No doubt. Ah, you will be well married. Make haste about it.

*Sga.* You overwhelm me with joy by saying so. I thank you for your advice, and invite you this evening to my wedding.

*Ger.* I'll not fail, and I'll come masked, to do you the more honour.

*Sga.* Your servant, sir.

*Ger.* (*aside*). Young Dorimène, Seigneur Alcantor's daughter, with Seigneur Sganarelle, who is only fifty-three years old. Oh! a fine match! a fine match! (*This he repeats several times in going away.*)

*Sga.* (*alone*). This marriage must needs be happy, for it rejoices every one; and I make every one laugh to whom I speak of it. I am now the most contented man in the world.

## SCENE II.

DORIMÈNE, SGANARELLE.

*Dorimène* (*to her page-boy*). Now then, my little page, hold up my train properly, and don't amuse yourself by playing tricks.

*Sganarelle* (*aside, seeing Dorimène*). Here's my lady-love coming. How charming she is! What an air she has! What a figure! Could any one see her without longing to marry her?

(*To Dorimène.*) Where are you going, beautiful darling!—dear future wife of your future husband?

*Dor.* I'm going shopping.

*Sga.* Well, my pretty one, we are now both of us going to be happy. You'll no longer have the right to refuse me anything, and I can do what I like with you and no offence to any one. You are going to be mine from head to foot, and I shall be master *of all—of your little twinkling eyes, of your little roguish nose, of your provoking lips, of your lovely ears, of your pretty little chin,* your plump little breasts, your—in short, you will be mine altogether, and I can caress you as I like. Aren't you very glad of this marriage, my dear little darling?

*Dor.* Yes, extremely, I can assure you. For indeed the severity of my father has, till now, kept me in the most tiresome subjection. You can't think how provoked I feel at the little liberty he gives me; and I've wished a hundred times to be married so that I might have a little more liberty, and be in a condition to do as I like. Thank God, you've come luckily for that purpose, and I'm preparing myself from now to take my pleasure, and make up, as I ought to do, for the time I've lost. As you are an extremely polite man, and know the ways of the world, I think we shall get on perfectly well together, and I am quite sure you're not like one of those foolish husbands who would have their wives live like were-wolves. I assure you that would not suit me at all, and solitude makes me mad. I love play, visits, presents, assemblies, walks—in a word, all sorts of pleasure, and you ought to be overjoyed to have a wife of my temper. We shall never have any difference, for I won't restrain your actions, as I hope on your part you won't put any restraint on mine. For my part, I hold that there must be a mutual forbearance, and people should not marry to plague one another. In a word, when we're married, we will live like people that know the world. No jealous suspicion shall trouble our brain; it will be enough that you are persuaded of my fidelity, as I shall be equally persuaded of yours—But what's the matter with you? Your face is quite changed.

*Sga.* 'Tis the vapours that have risen to my head.

*Dor.* Oh, that happens to many people, but our marriage will drive all that away. Good-bye. I'm longing to have some decent clothes, that I may throw off these rags at once. I'm going to buy all that I want, and I shall send the bills in to you.

## SCENE III.

GERONIMO, SGANARELLE.

*Geronimo.* Oh, Seigneur Sganarelle, I'm delighted to find you still here, for I've just met with a goldsmith who heard that you were looking for a fine diamond ring to give to your bride, and he has begged me to come and speak to you for him, and to tell you that he has one to sell, the finest in the world.

*Sganarelle.* Bless me, there's no hurry about that!

*Ger.* What do you mean? Where's the eagerness you showed just now?

*Sga.* A minute or two ago some scruples came into my head with regard to this marriage. Before I go any farther, I should like to get to the bottom of the affair, and find some one to interpret a dream I had last night, and which I have just now recollected. Dreams, you know, are like mirrors, in which one sometimes discovers what is going to happen to one. I thought I was in a ship, on a stormy sea, and that——

*Ger.* Seigneur Sganarelle, I've got a little matter of business in hand, which will not allow me to stop and hear you. I don't understand anything about dreams; and as for reasoning about matrimony, you have a couple of learned philosophers, neighbours of yours, who will tell you all that can be said on the subject. As they are of different schools of thought, you can compare their different opinions on the matter. For my part, I'm quite satisfied with what I said to you just now, and I remain your obedient servant.

*Sga.* (*alone*). He's right. I must consult these people a little, in the uncertainty I'm in.

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## SCENE IV.

PANCRACE, SGANARELLE.

*Pancrace* (*turning to the side by which he had entered, without seeing Sganarelle*). Be off, you're an impertinent fellow, ignorant of all good manners, who ought to be banished from the republic of letters.

*Sganarelle.* Ah! That's well! Here's one of them just at the right time.

*Pan.* (*still not seeing Sganarelle*). Ay, I'll maintain by strong reasons, I'll prove to you by Aristotle, the philosopher of all philosophers, that you are an Ignorans, Ignorantissimus; Ignoranticans, and Ignorantificatus, through all the cases and moods imaginable.

*Sga.* (*aside*). He's quarrelling with some one. (*To Pancrace.*) Sir——

*Pan.* You attempt to argue, and don't know the elements of logic.

*Sga.* (*aside*). Anger prevents him from seeing me. (*To Pancrace.*) Sir——

*Pan.* It is a proposition to be condemned in all the regions of philosophy.

*Sga.* (*aside*). Some one must have provoked him terribly. (*To Pancrace.*) I——

*Pan.* Toto cœzo, totâ viâ aberras.

*Sga.* I kiss your hand, Doctor.

*Pan.* Your servant.

*Sga.* May I——

*Pan.* (*returning to the place where he had entered*). Do you know what you have done? A syllogism in Balordo!

*Sga.* I tell you——

*Pan.* The *major* is absurd, the *minor* is irrelevant, and the *conclusion* ridiculous.

*Pan.* I'd die rather than uphold what you say, and I'll maintain my opinion to the last drop of ink I've got in my pen.

*Sga.* May I——

*Pan.* Yes. I'll defend that proposition, *pugnis et calcibus, unguibus et rostro* (tooth and nail).

*Sga.* Seigneur Aristotle, may I ask what makes you so angry?

*Pan.* The best reason in the world.

*Sga.* What is it, pray?

*Pan.* An ignoramus wanted to maintain an erroneous proposition, a frightful, execrable proposition.

*Sga.* May I ask what it is?

*Pan.* Ah, Seigneur Sganarelle, everything, nowadays, is turned topsy-turvy, and the world is fallen into a general corruption. A terrible license reigns everywhere, and the magistrates, who are appointed to keep order in the state, ought to blush with shame, for suffering such an intolerable scandal as I am going to tell you of.

*Sga.* What is the matter?

*Pan.* Is it not a dreadful thing, a thing that cries to heaven for vengeance, that any one should be allowed publicly to speak of the form of a hat?

*Sga.* How's that?

*Pan.* I maintain that we should say "the figure of a hat," and

not "the form." Since there is this difference between the form and the figure: the form is the exterior conformation of bodies that are animated, and the figure is the exterior disposition of bodies that are inanimate. Therefore as a hat is an inanimate body, one should say the *figure* of a hat and not the *form*. (*Returning to the side from which he entered.*) Yes, you ignorant fellow, thus it is that you should speak, and these are the express terms of Aristotle in his chapter on qualities.

*Sga.* (*aside*). I thought we had all been done for. (*To Pancrace.*) Seigneur Doctor, think no more of that. I——

*Pan.* I am in such a rage, I don't know what I am doing.

*Sga.* Leave the form and the hat in peace. I have something to communicate to you. I——

*Pan.* Impertinent blockhead!

*Sga.* Now I beg of you to command yourself. I——

*Pan.* Ignorant ass.

*Sga.* Good Lord, I——

*Pan.* To think I could bear such a proposition!

*Sga.* He is wrong. I——

*Pan.* A proposition condemned by Aristotle!

*Sga.* That's true. I——

*Pan.* In express terms.

*Sga.* You're right. (*Turning to the side where Pancrace entered.*) Yes, you're a fool and an impudent rascal to try and dispute with a doctor who can read and write. There's an end of that matter. Now I beg you to listen to me. I've come to ask your advice in a matter that troubles me. I think of taking a wife who will help me to keep house. The lady is handsome and well-made; I like her very much, and she is most anxious to marry me. Her father consents to it, but I'm rather fearful of you know what, that disgrace which no one pities a man for, and I beg of you, as a philosopher, to tell me your sentiments. Now, what is your opinion on the matter?

*Pan.* Rather than allow that one should say the *form* of a hat, I'd allow that *datur vacuum in rerum naturâ*, and that I'm an ass.

*Sga.* (*aside*). Plague on the man. (*To Pancrace.*) Come, master doctor, listen to me a little. I've been talking to you for an hour, and you give no answer to what is said to you.

*Pan.* I beg your pardon. A just anger occupies my mind.

*Sga.* Well, have done with all that, and take the trouble to listen to me.

*Pan.* Good. What have you got to say to me?

*Sga.* I want to talk to you about something.

*Pan.* And what tongue will you make use of in talking with me?

*Sga.* What tongue?

*Pan.* Yes.

*Sga.* Bless my soul! Why the tongue I've got in my mouth. I don't suppose I shall borrow my neighbour's.

*Pan.* I ask you what idiom, what language?

*Sga.* Oh! That's another matter.

*Pan.* Will you speak Italian with me?

*Sga.* No.

*Pan.* Spanish? *Sga.* No.

*Pan.* Dutch, then? *Sga.* No.

*Pan.* English? *Sga.* No.

*Pan.* Latin? *Sga.* No.

*Pan.* Greek? *Sga.* No.

*Pan.* Hebrew? *Sga.* No.

*Pan.* Syriac? *Sga.* No.

*Pan.* Turkish? *Sga.* No.

*Pan.* Arabic? *Sga.* No, no, French, French, French.

*Pan.* Oh! French. *Sga.* Quite right.

*Pan.* Go to the other side then; for this ear is set apart for learned and foreign languages, and the other for the vulgar and mother tongue.

*Sga.* (*aside*). One must use a great deal of ceremony with this sort of people.

*Pan.* Well, then, what's your business?

*Sga.* To consult you on a little difficulty.

*Pan.* Just so; no doubt on a philosophical difficulty?

*Sga.* Pardon me. I——

*Pan.* Perhaps you wish to know whether substance and accident are synonymous or equivocal terms with regard to entity?

*Sga.* Not at all. I——

*Pan.* Or whether logic is an art or a science?

*Sga.* It is not that. I——

*Pan.* If it has for its object the three operations of the mind, or the third only?

*Sga.* No. I——

*Pan.* Whether there are ten categories, or no more than one?

*Sga.* No. I——

*Pan.* Whether the conclusion be the essence of the syllogism?

*Sga.* No, no. I——

*Pan.* Whether the essence of good be placed in desirability or in suitability.

*Sga.* No. I——

*Pan.* Whether good is reciprocal with its end?

*Sga.* Oh! no. I——

*Pan.* Whether the end can affect us by its real essence or by its intent?

*Sga.* No, no, no. The devil take you, no——

*Pan.* Explain your meaning, then, for I cannot guess it.

*Sga.* I will explain it, but then you must listen to me. (*Speaking at the same time as the doctor.*) The matter I have to tell you about is this, I wish to marry a girl who is young and handsome. I love her very much, and I have asked her of her father, but I fear——

*Pan.* (*at the same time as Sganarelle*). Speech was given to man in order to express his thoughts; and just as thoughts are the portraits of things, even so our words are the portraits of our thoughts. (*Sganarelle, being impatient, stops the doctor's mouth with his hand, several times, and the doctor goes on talking as soon as Sganarelle takes his hand away.*) But these portraits are different from other portraits, because other portraits are distinguished in every part from their originals, but speech includes its original in itself; since it is nothing else but thought expressed by an exterior sign: whence it comes to pass that those who think well are likewise those who speak the best. So express to me your thought by speech, which is the most intelligible of all the signs.

*Sga.* (*pushing the doctor into the house, and pulling the door to in order to prevent his coming out*). Plague the man!

*Pan.* (*within the house*). Yes, speech is, *Animi index et speculum;* it is the interpreter of the heart, it is the image of the soul. (*He gets up to the window and goes on.*) It is a mirror that plainly represents to us the most hidden secrets of ourselves as individuals. Then since you have the faculty of ratiocination, and also of talking, how comes it that you don't make use of speech to make me understand your thoughts?

That's what I want to do; but you won't hear me.

I hear you; go on.

I say, then, Master Doctor, that——

*Pan.* But, above all things, be brief.

*Sga.* I will.

*Pan.* Avoid prolixity.

*Sga.* Oh! sir——

*Pan.* Abridge me your discourse into a laconic apothegm.

*Sga.* I——

*Pan.* No round-about talk, no circumlocution.

(*Sganarelle, in his anger at not being able to speak, picks up stones to throw at the Doctor's head.*)

*Pan.* What now? Do you want to get into a passion instead of explaining yourself? Go along, you are more impertinent than the man who would maintain that one should say the *form* of a hat; and I'll prove to you on all occasions, by reasons demonstrative and convincing, and by arguments in *Barbara*, that you are not, nor ever will be, any other than a loggerhead, and that I am, and shall be always, *in utroque jure*, Doctor Pancratius.

*Sga.* What a fearful chatterbox this man is.

*Pan.* (*coming on the stage*). A man of letters, a man of learning.

*Sga.* What, again!

*Pan.* A man of sufficiency, a man of capacity; (*going away*) a man perfect in all the sciences, natural, moral, political. (*Coming back.*) A man learned, most learned *per omnes modos et casus*. (*Going away.*) A man that possesses in the superlative degree fables, mythologies, and histories; (*coming back*) grammar, poetry, rhetoric, dialectics, and sophistry; (*going away*) mathematics, arithmetic, optics, onirocritics, physics, and metaphysics; (*coming back*) cosmometry, geometry, architecture, speculation and ultra-speculation; (*going away*) medicine, astronomy, astrology, physiognomy, metoposcopy, chiromancy, geomancy. [*Exit.*

*Sga.* The devil take these learned professors who won't listen to any one. I was rightly told that his master, Aristotle, was a man full of words. I must go and look up the other; perhaps he will be more quiet and reasonable. Hullo! there.

## SCENE V.

MARPHURIUS, SGANARELLE.

*Marphurius.* What's your will with me, Seigneur Sganarelle?

*Sganarelle.* Seigneur Doctor, I've occasion for your advice about a little matter I have in hand, and am come here on that account. (*Aside.*) Ah, this looks better. This man can listen when one talks.

*Mar.* Seigneur Sganarelle, please to change your way of speaking. Our philosophy commands us not to put forward a proposition positively; to speak of everything with uncertainty; always to suspend one's judgment; and by that rule you ought not to say, *I have come*, but, *I think that I have come.*

*Sga.* I think?

*Mar.* Yes.

*Sga.* I must needs think so, because it is so.

*Mar.* That's not a consequence; for you may think so, without the thing being really so.

*Sga.* What! Is it not true that I have come?

*Mar.* That's uncertain, and we should doubt about everything.

*Sga.* What! am I not here, and am I not speaking to you?

*Mar.* It appears to me that you are there, and I think that I am speaking to you; but it is not certain that it is so.

*Sga.* Eh? What, are you joking? I am here and you are there, very plainly, and there's nothing of *I think* in all that. Pray let's have done with these subtleties, and talk of my affair. I've come to tell you that I wish to marry.

*Mar.* I know nothing of the matter.

*Sga.* I tell it to you.

*Mar.* That may be.

*Sga.* The girl that I would marry is very young and very handsome.

*Mar.* That is not impossible.

*Sga.* Shall I do well or ill to marry her?

*Mar.* Either the one or the other.

*Sga.* (*aside*). Ah! here's another tune. (*To Marphurius.*) I ask you whether I shall do well to marry the girl I told you of?

*Mar.* Just as it happens.

*Sga.* Shall I do ill?

*Mar.* Perhaps.

*Sga.* I beg of you to answer me properly.

*Mar.* I intend to do so.

*Sga.* I have a great liking for the girl.

*Mar.* That is possible.

*Sga.* Her father has given his consent.

*Mar.* He may have done so.

*Sga.* But by marrying her I am afraid of being made a fool of.

*Mar.* It's possible.

*Sga.* What do you think of it?

*Mar.* There's no impossibility in it.

*Sga.* But what would you do if you were in my place?

*Mar.* I don't know.

*Sga.* What do you advise me to do?

*Mar.* What you please.

*Sga.* You drive me mad!

*Mar.* I wash my hands of it.

*Sga.* Devil take the old fool!

*Mar.* That must be as it will.

*Sga.* (*aside*). Plague on the worrying fool! Now I'll make you change your note, you mad dog of a philosopher! (*Beating Marphurius.*)

*Mar.* Oh, oh, oh!

*Sga.* That's payment for your foolery; and now I'm satisfied.

*Mar.* How now? What insolence to affront me like this! To have the impudence to beat a philosopher such as I am!

*Sga.* Please to correct your way of speaking. One should doubt of all things, and you ought not to say that I have beaten you, but that you *think* that I have beaten you.

*Mar.* Ah! I'll go and make my complaint to a magistrate about the blows that I've received.

*Sga.* I wash my hands of it.

*Mar.* I have the marks of them on my body.

*Sga.* That may be.

*Mar.* It is you who have treated me in this manner.

*Sga.* It is not impossible.

*Mar.* I'll take out a summons against you.

*Sga.* I know nothing about it.

*Mar.* You'll pay the penalty.

*Sga.* That's as it happens.

*Mar.* Let me alone for that. [*Exit.*

*Sga.* (*alone*). How's this? One cannot get one word from that dog of a fellow there! and one's as wise at the end as at the beginning. What shall I do, being so uncertain of the consequences of my marriage? Never was a man more perplexed than I am. Oh! here are some Gipsies; I must make them tell me my good fortune.

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## SCENE VI.

*Two Gipsy Women, with their tambourines, singing and dancing.*

*Sganarelle.* They are merry people. Come, can't you tell me my good fortune?

1*st Gipsy.* Ay, my good master, both of us will tell it you.

2*nd Gip.* You've only got to give us your hand, and cross it with silver, and we'll tell you something to your advantage.

*Sga.* Well, here are both of them, and what you ask for besides.

1*st Gip.* You've got an excellent physiognomy, my good gentleman, an excellent physiognomy.

2*nd Gip.* Ay, a good physiognomy. The physiognomy of a man who some day will be somebody.

1*st Gip.* You'll be married before long, my good gentleman; you'll be married before long.

2*nd Gip.* You'll marry a charming woman, a charming woman.

1*st Gip.* Yes, a woman that shall be caressed and beloved by every one.

2*nd Gip.* A woman that will get you plenty of friends, my good gentleman, plenty of friends.

1*st Gip.* A woman who will bring great plenty to your house.

2*nd Gip.* A woman that will get you a great name.

1*st Gip.* You will be respected for her sake, my good gentleman, you will be respected for her sake.

*Sga.* That's very well, but I beg of you to tell me whether I shall be made a fool of.

2*nd Gip.* A fool?

*Sga.* Yes.

1*st Gip.* A fool?

*Sga.* Yes; whether I sha'n't be made a fool of.

(*The two Gipsies sing and dance.*)

*Sga.* What the deuce! This is not answering me. Come here. I ask you both whether I shall be made a fool of?

2*nd Gip.* Made a fool of! You?

*Sga.* Yes, whether I shall be made a fool of?

1*st Gip.* You? Made a fool of?

*Sga.* Yes, whether I shall be one, or not?

(*The two Gipsies go off, singing and dancing.*)

*Sga.* (*alone.*) Plague on the hussies for leaving me in this uncertainty. I must absolutely know the result of my marriage, and so I'll go and find out that famous magician every one is talking about, and who by his wonderful art can show one all one desires to know. In truth, I believe I've only to go to a magician, and he will tell me all I ask.

## SCENE VII.

DORIMÈNE, LYCASTE, SGANARELLE (*unseen in a corner of the Stage.*)

*Lycaste.* Well, fair Dorimène, do you speak seriously?

*Dorimène.* Yes, quite seriously.

*Ly.* Are you really going to be married?

*Dor.* Really.

*Ly.* And your wedding is to take place this evening?

*Dor.* This evening.

*Ly.* And can you, cruel as you are, forget in this manner the ove that I bear you, and the kindly promises that you made me.

*Dor.* I forget them? Not at all. I regard you still in the same manner, and this marriage need not disturb you. I am not marrying this man for love; it is his fortune alone which leads me to accept him. I have no fortune, nor have you, and without means, you know, one's time does not pass very pleasantly in this world; therefore at any rate one must endeavour to acquire it. I have made use of this chance of making myself independent, and I have done it in the hope of seeing myself soon freed from the greybeard I'm taking. He'll die before long; at most he hasn't above six months to live. I'll warrant him dead within the time I mention, and I sha'n't have long to pray heaven for a happy state of widowhood. (*To Sganarelle.*) Oh, we were talking of you, and saying all the best things of you.

*Ly.* Is that the gentleman——

*Dor.* Yes, that's the gentleman who is going to marry me.

*Ly.* Allow me, sir, to congratulate you on your marriage, and at the same time to present you my best respects. I assure you that you are about to marry a most honourable lady—and I rejoice with you also, madame, on the happy choice you have made. You could not have found a better, for the gentleman has all the appearance of making an excellent husband. Really, sir, I should like to be friendly with you, and to arrange an interchange of visits and amusements.

*Dor.* You do us too much honour. But come, time presses, and we shall have many opportunities of conversing together.

[*Exeunt.*

*Sga.* (*alone*). I am now altogether disgusted with this match, and think that I shall do well to go and get clear of this engagement. It has cost me some money, but it is better to lose that than to expose myself to something worse. I must endeavour to get out of the matter cleverly. Hullo! (*Knocking at Alcantor's door.*)

## SCENE VIII.

ALCANTOR, SGANARELLE.

*Alcantor.* Ah, son-in-law, you're welcome.

*Sganarelle.* Your servant, sir.

*Al.* So, you've come to settle about the marriage?

*Sga.* Pardon me.

*Al.* I promise you I'm as impatient for it as you are.

*Sga.* I've come here on another matter.

*Al.* I've given all the necessary orders about the wedding breakfast.

*Sga.* That's not the matter in question.

*Al.* The musicians have been engaged, the entertainment ordered, and my daughter is already dressed to receive you.

*Sga.* It is not that which brings me here.

*Al.* In short, you are going to be satisfied, and there is nothing to hinder your happiness.

*Sga.* Good gracious! That's another matter.

*Al.* Come, son-in-law, walk in.

*Sga.* But I've a word to say to you.

*Al.* Oh, pray don't stand on ceremony; please to walk in at once.

*Sga.* No, I tell you. I want to speak to you first.

*Al.* You want to say something to me?

*Sga.* Yes.

*Al.* Well, what is it?

*Sga.* Seigneur Alcantor, it is true that I have asked your daughter in marriage, and you have agreed to give her to me; but I find myself rather too much advanced in years for her, and I feel that I'm not quite suitable for her.

*Al.* I beg your pardon. My daughter likes you very well as you are; and I'm sure she will live quite contentedly with you.

*Sga.* No; sometimes I've terrible fancies, and it would be too much for her to put up with my ill-temper.

*Al.* My daughter is very accommodating, and you will find that she will entirely conform herself to your ideas.

*Sga.* I have some bodily infirmities which might disgust her.

*Al.* That's nothing. A virtuous woman is never disgusted with her husband.

*Sga.* In short, let me tell you, I advise you not to give her to me.

*Al.* Are you laughing at me? I would rather die than not keep my word.

*Sga.* Oh, I'll let you off from that, and I——

*Al.* Not at all; I've promised her to you, and you shall have her, in spite of all who may want her.

*Sga.* (*aside*). The deuce I shall!

*Al.* You see, I've a very special regard and friendship for you, and I would refuse my daughter to a prince in order to give her to you.

*Sga.* Seigneur Alcantor, I'm obliged to you for the honour you do me, but I declare to you that I shall not marry.

*Al.* What, you?

*Sga.* Yes, I.

*Al.* For what reason?

*Sga.* The reason is because I find myself unfitted for marriage; and because I wish to imitate my father and all my other relations, who never would marry.

*Al.* Listen. Every one's will is free, and I'm never a man to force anybody. You are engaged to marry my daughter, and every preparation has been made for the wedding, but, since you wish to go from your word, I'll see what can be done in the matter, and you shall hear from me soon.

*Sga.* (*alone*). He's more reasonable than I could have supposed, and I thought I should have had much more difficulty in freeing myself. Indeed, when I come to think of it, I find that I have acted very wisely in extricating myself from this affair, which I should perhaps have repented for long afterwards. But here comes the son to give me an answer.

## SCENE IX.

ALCIDAS, SGANARELLE.

*Alcidas* (*speaking all the time in a mild tone*). Sir, I am your most humble servant.

*Sganarelle.* So am I yours, sir, with all my heart.

*Al.* My father told me that you had come to——

*Sga.* Yes, sir, I do so with regret, but——

*Al.* Oh, sir! There's no harm in that.

*Sga.* I can assure you I'm sorry for it. I could have wished—

*Al.* Oh! that's nothing, I tell you. (*Presenting two swords to Sganarelle.*) Will you have the goodness, sir, to choose one of these two swords?

*Sga.* Of these two swords?

*Al.* Yes, if you please.

*Sga.* For what purpose?

*Al.* Sir, as you refuse to marry my sister, having given your word to do so, I believe you will not take amiss the little compliment I have come to pay you.

*Sga.* What's that?

*Al.* Other people would make more noise, and put themselves in a passion with you; but we like to do things in a quiet way, so

I've come to tell you civilly that, if you please, we must cut one another's throats.

*Sga.* That's a very ill-turned compliment.

*Al.* Come, sir, pray make your choice.

*Sga.* I'm your humble servant, but I've no throat to be cut. (*Aside.*) What a confounded way of talking this is!

*Al.* Sir, by your leave it must be so.

*Sga.* Pray, sir, forbear that compliment, I beg of you.

*Al.* Let us make haste, sir; I have a litttle matter that is waiting for me.

*Sga.* I don't want anything of this sort, I tell you.

*Al.* Won't you fight, then?

*Sga.* No, indeed I won't.

*Al.* Really?

*Sga.* Really.

*Al.* (*after beating him with his cane*). However, sir, you have no reason to complain. You see, I do all things in order. You break your word to us: I wish to fight you. You refuse to fight: I beat you. All this is according to rule and order, and you're too honourable a man to disapprove of my conduct.

*Sga.* (*aside*). What a devil of a man this is!

*Al.* (*presenting the swords to him again*). Come, sir, do things in a gentlemanly manner, and don't force me to pull your ears.

*Sga.* What, again?

*Al.* Sir, I don't force any one; but you must either marry my sister or fight.

*Sga.* Sir, I assure you I can do neither the one nor the other.

*Al.* Positively?

*Sga.* Positively.

*Al.* With your permission, then—(*beating him again with his cane*).

*Sga.* Oh, oh, oh!

*Al.* Sir, it gives me the greatest possible concern to treat you in this way; but I shall not leave off till you promise either to fight, or to marry my sister. (*He lifts up the cane.*)

*Sga.* Well, then, I'll marry, I'll marry——

*Al.* Oh, sir, I'm delighted that you've come to a reasonable state of mind, and that things are put upon a right footing; for indeed I esteem you more than any one in the world, and it would have heartily vexed me to have used you ill. I'll go and call my father, and tell him that all is settled satisfactorily.

## SCENE X.

ALCANTOR, DORIMÈNE, ALCIDAS, SGANARELLE.

*Alcidas.* Father, here's the gentleman, who's quite reasonable. He's willing to do things with a good grace, so you may give my sister to him.

*Alcantor.* There, sir, is her hand, and you need only give her yours. Heaven be thanked, I have now got rid of her; and it remains with you to undertake the oversight of her conduct. Now let us go and make merry, and celebrate this happy marriage.

# THE DOCTOR BY COMPULSION

## (*LE MÉDECIN MALGRÉ LUI*).

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SGANARELLE, *husband of Martine.*
MARTINE, *wife of Sganarelle.*
MONS. ROBERT, *neighbour of Sganarelle.*
VALÈRE, *servant of Géronte.*
LUCAS, *husband of Jacqueline.*
GÉRONTE, *father of Lucinde.*
JACQUELINE, *nurse at Géronte's, and wife of Lucas.*
LUCINDE, *daughter of Géronte.*
LÉANDRE, *Lucinde's lover.*
THIBAUT, *father of Perrin.*
PERRIN, *son of Thibaut, a countryman.*

### ACT I. SCENE I.

SGANARELLE *and* MARTINE *enter quarrelling.*

*Sganarelle.* No, I tell you I will do nothing of the kind; and that it is *my* place to speak and be master.

*Martine.* And I tell you, for my part, that you shall live as *I* please. I did not marry you to put up with your pranks.

*Sga.* Oh, the monstrous plague of having a wife! Aristotle was certainly right when he said that a woman was worse than a demon!

*Mar.* Now just look at this clever man, with his blockhead of an Aristotle!

*Sga.* Yes, clever man. Find me a faggot-binder who knows how to reason about things as I do, who has served a famous doctor for six years, and who in his younger days had his Accidence by heart.

*Mar.* Plague on you, for a downright ass!

*Sga.* Plague on you, slut!

*Mar.* It was an evil day and hour when I took it into my head to say *Yes*.

*Sga.* Deuce take that notary who made me sign my own ruin.

*Mar.* It well becomes you to complain of that affair. Ought not you to thank Heaven every minute of your life that you have me for a wife? Did you deserve to marry such a person as I am?

*Sga.* Oh, yes, it's true that you did me too much honour. I could say a good deal about your conduct ever since our wedding day. I know what I know, and you were very lucky in lighting on me.

*Mar.* Lucky, do you call me, in lighting on you! A man bringing me to the workhouse, a libertine, a traitor, who eats up all I have.

*Sga.* You lie; I drink some of it.

*Mar.* Who sells, piece by piece, everything that's in the house.

*Sga.* That's living upon one's means.

*Mar.* Who has taken my very bed from under me.

*Sga.* Then you'll get up all the earlier.

*Mar.* In short, who has not left a single piece of furniture in the house.

*Sga.* We can move all the easier.

*Mar.* And who, from morning to night, does nothing but gamble and drink.

*Sga.* That's to keep myself from feeling dull.

*Mar.* And what would you have me do the while with my family?

*Sga.* Whatever you please.

*Mar.* I have four poor little infants in arms.

*Sga.* Lay them on the ground.

*Mar.* Who are crying to me every moment for bread.

*Sga.* Give them the rod. When I have eaten and drunk well, I'll have every one in my house satisfied.

*Mar.* And do you intend, you sot, that things shall always go on so?

*Sga.* Now, my good wife, gently, if you please.

*Mar.* Am I always to put up with your abuse and debauchery?

*Sga.* Don't let us get into a passion, wife.

*Mar.* Shall I never be able to find out a way of bringing you to do your duty?

*Sga.* You know, wife, that I've not got the best of tempers, and my arm is pretty strong.

*Mar.* Oh! I'm not afraid of your threats.

*Sga.* My better half, I see that you want to get something out of me.

*Mar.* Do you think I fear your words?

*Sga.* Sweet object of my marriage vows, I'll pull your ears.

*Mar.* Oh, you drunken fellow!

*Sga.* I'll give you a good banging.

*Mar.* Oh, you toss-pot!
*Sga.* I'll thrash you.
*Mar.* You scoundrel!
*Sga.* I'll comb your hair for you.
*Mar.* Rascal, knave, coward, villain, hang-dog, rogue, varlet, thief——
*Sga.* (*taking up a stick and beating her*). Ah, well, if you *will* have it, here goes.
*Mar.* Oh, oh, oh, oh!
*Sga.* It's the only way to keep you quiet.

## SCENE II.

MONS. ROBERT, SGANARELLE, MARTINE.

*M. Robert.* Hullo, hullo! What's the matter here? What a shame! He must be a scoundrel who beats his wife in this fashion.
*Martine* (*setting her arms a-kimbo, flies at Robert, drives him round the stage, and at last gives him a box on the ear*). I choose that he should beat me.
*M. Rob.* Oh, then I agree to it with all my heart.
*Mar.* What do you come meddling here for?
*M. Rob.* I was wrong.
*Mar.* Is it any business of yours?
*M. Rob.* You are quite right.
*Mar.* What an impertinent fellow, to try and hinder a husband from beating his wife!
*M. Rob.* I retract.
*Mar.* What have you to say in this affair?
*M. Rob.* Nothing at all.
*Mar.* Is it your business to thrust your nose into it?
*M. Rob.* No.
*Mar.* You mind your own business.
*M. Rob.* I won't say another word.
*Mar.* I've a mind to be beaten.
*M. Rob.* Agreed.
*Mar.* You haven't got to pay for it.
*M. Rob.* That's true.
*Mar.* And you must be a fool to come thrusting yourself in where you're not wanted.
(*M. Rob* [illegible] *goes to the husband, who flies at him in like manner, beats him with the stick he has been using, and drives him away.*)

*M. Rob.* Neighbour, I beg your pardon with all my heart. Go on, thrash your wife, and beat her as much as you like; I'll help you if you desire it.

*Sga.* I don't desire it.

*M. Rob.* Oh, that's another matter then.

*Sga.* If I choose to beat her, I will; and if I don't, I won't.

*M. Rob.* Quite right.

*Sga.* She's my wife, and not yours.

*M. Rob.* Undoubtedly.

*Sga.* You've no right to give me orders.

*M. Rob.* Agreed.

*Sga.* I can do without your help.

*M. Rob.* With all my heart.

*Sga.* And you are an impertinent fellow to meddle with other people's concerns. Hear what Cicero says, "That between the tree and the finger, you must not thrust the bark." (*Exit M. Robert. Then Sganarelle goes to his wife, and squeezes her hand.*) Come now, let's make it up. Shake hands.

*Mar.* Yes, after you have beaten me as you have done!

*Sga.* Oh! that's nothing. Shake hands.

*Mar.* I won't.

*Sga.* Eh?

*Mar.* No.

*Sga.* Come, my dear little wife.

*Mar.* No.

*Sga.* Come along, do.

*Mar.* I won't.

*Sga.* Come, come, come.

*Mar.* No, I choose to be angry.

*Sga.* It's only a trifle; come, come.

*Mar.* Let me alone.

*Sga.* Come, I say, shake hands.

*Mar.* No; you have used me too badly.

*Sga.* Well, well. I ask your pardon. Give me your hand.

*Mar.* I forgive you. (*Aside*) But you shall pay for it!

*Sga.* You must be foolish to trouble about that. These are trifles which from time to time are necessary in friendship, and five or six blows from a cudgel, between people who love one another, only serve to increase affection. Go. I'm off to the wood, and I promise you more than a hundred fa[illegible]'s to-day.

[illegible]our e.

## SCENE III.

MARTINE (*alone*).

*Martine.* Get you gone! Whatever face I may put on it, I shall not forget my resentment, and I am burning to find out means to punish you for the blows you have given me. I know very well that a wife has always the means of being revenged on her husband; but that is too light a punishment for my hang-dog. I want a revenge that he will feel a little deeper, for this is not sufficient for the injury I have received.

## SCENE IV.

VALÈRE, LUCAS, MARTINE.

*Lucas* (*to Valère, without seeing Martine*). In good sooth, we have taken on us the deuce of a commission, and for my part I don't know what we think to get by it.

*Valère* (*to Lucas, without seeing Martine*). What would you have us do, good foster-father? We must obey our master; besides, we have both of us an interest in the health of our mistress, his daughter—for her marriage, which is delayed by her illness, should bring us in something. Horace, who is a generous man, has the best chance of securing her hand, and though she has shown some liking for one Leandre, you know well enough that her father would never consent to receive him as his son-in-law.

*Martine* (*musing aside, believing herself to be alone*). Can I not find out some method of revenging myself?

*Lu.* (*to Valère*). But what a whim is this that he has got into his head, since the doctors are all at their wits' end.

*Val.* (*to Lucas*). One sometimes finds by dint of searching what could not be found at first, and often in humble places.

*Mar.* (*still thinking she is alone*). Yes, I must be revenged at any cost. Those blows of the stick seem to rise within me, and I cannot digest them. (*She speaks this musing to herself, and not observing the two men, runs against them as she turns.*) Oh, gentlemen, I beg your pardon; I did not see you, for I was puzzling my brains with something that perplexes me.

*Val.* Every one has his cares in this world; and we, too, are looking for what we should be very glad to find.

*Mar.* Might it be anything I could help you in?

*Val.* Possibly. We want to find some clever man, some special doctor, who might give some relief to our master's daughter, who is afflicted by a disease which has entirely deprived

her of the use of her tongue. Several doctors have already done all they could for her; but sometimes there are men with wonderful secrets or private remedies which frequently accomplish what others have failed to do. That's the sort of man we are looking for.

*Mar.* (*to herself*). Heaven has inspired me with an admirable idea by which I can be revenged on my rascal of a husband. (*To them.*) You could not have met with any one better able to supply what you want, for we have a man who is the most wonderful man in the world for desperate maladies.

*Val.* Ah! but pray, where can we find him?

*Mar.* You will find him just now in that little place over there. He's amusing himself by cutting wood.

*Lu.* A doctor cutting wood?

*Val.* I suppose you mean to say he's gathering simples?

*Mar.* No. He's an extraordinary man, who amuses himself in that way; he is a fantastical, fanciful, whimsical mortal—one whom you'd never take for what he is; he goes about dressed in an absurd fashion, affects sometimes to appear ignorant, keeps his knowledge to himself, and avoids nothing so much as exercising the marvellous talents that heaven has given him for medicine.

*Val.* It is a wonderful thing that all your great men have some caprice, some grain of folly mixed with their learning.

*Mar.* The folly of this man is incredible, for it sometimes goes so far that he will submit to be beaten before he will own his capacity; and I give you warning that you will never gain your end, that he'll never own he's a doctor, if the whim is on him, unless you take a stick and bring him by force of blows to confess at last, what at first he'll conceal from you. This is the way we treat him when we've occasion for him.

*Val.* What strange folly.

*Mar.* It's true. But after that you'll see that he will do wonders.

*Val.* What is his name?

*Mar.* His name is Sganarelle, but he can easily be recognised. He has a large black beard, wears a ruff, and a yellow and green coat.

*Lu.* A yellow and green coat! Then he must be the doctor of parroquets.

*Val.* But is it quite true that he is as clever as you say?

*Mar.* Why, he's a man that does wonders. Six months ago there was a woman given over by all the other doctors. They

thought her dead for six hours, and were going to bury her, when they brought this man whom we are speaking about. Having seen her, he put a little drop of something into her mouth, and that very instant she rose from her bed, and began walking about the room as if nothing had happened.

*Lu.* Dear me!

*Val.* That must have been some drop of liquid gold.

*Mar.* It might have been. Then about three weeks ago a young lad of twelve years old fell from the top of a tower, and broke his head, arms, and legs on the pavement. They had no sooner brought our man to him than he rubbed his body all over with a certain ointment which he knows how to make, and the boy raised himself on his feet and ran off to play chuck-farthing.

*Lu.* Is it possible?

*Val.* This man must have a universal medicine.

*Mar.* Who doubts it?

*Lu.* That sounds just the man we want; let us go at once and find him.

*Val.* We thank you for the favour you have done us.

*Mar.* But don't forget the caution I gave you.

*Lu.* We'll see to that—if it's only beating he wants, the prize is ours.

*Val.* (*to Lucas*). We were very fortunate in meeting with this woman; and for my part I conceive the greatest hopes in the world from it.

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## SCENE V.

SGANARELLE, VALÈRE, LUCAS.

*Sganarelle* (*singing behind the stage*). Tol de rol lol, lol, lol!

*Valère.* I hear some one singing, and cutting wood.

*Sga.* (*coming on the stage with a bottle in his hand, and not seeing Valère and Lucas*). Tol de rol lol! By my faith, I've worked enough to drink a drop. Let's take a little breath. (*He drinks, and then says*) It's devilish thirsty work cutting this wood. (*Sings.*)

*What pleasure's so great as the bottle can give,*
*What music so sweet as thy little* Gull, gull?[1]
*My fate might be envied by all men that live,*
*Were my dear, jolly bottle but constantly full.*
*Say why, my sweet bottle, I prithee, say why,*
*Since when full so delightful, you ever run dry.*

come, we musn't breed melancholy.

[1] In imitation of swallowing.

*Val.* (*aside to Lucas*). There's the very man.

*Lu.* (*aside to Valère*). I think you're right, and we've just dropped upon him.

*Val.* Let's look close.

*Sga.* (*hugging his bottle; then, perceiving them watching him, he lowers his voice.*) Ah! my little rascal, my little corky, how I do love thee! (*and sings*)

*My fate—might—be envied—by all men that live.*

(*Then, seeing them examining him more closely*) What the deuce do these fellows want?

*Val.* It's he, most certainly.

*Lu.* That's exactly like him that was defigured to us.

(*Sganarelle sets down the bottle on the ground; Valère bows, to salute him, and he, thinking it is with a design to take it away, puts it on the other side. Lucas also bowing, Sganarelle takes it up again, and holds it close to his body, with various gestures which make an amusing pantomime.*)

*Sga.* (*aside*). They are consulting together, and looking earnestly at me. What can they mean?

*Val.* Sir, are not you called Sganarelle?

*Sga.* Eh! what?

*Val.* I ask you whether your name is not Sganarelle?

*Sga.* (*turning towards Valère, and then towards Lucas*). Yes, and no, according to what you want with him.

*Val.* We only want to show him all the civility we can.

*Sga.* In that, it is I whose name is Sganarelle.

*Val.* Sir, we are delighted to see you. We have been recommended to you for what we are searching after, and we have come to beg your aid, which we need.

*Sga.* If it is anything, gentlemen, that belongs to my little business, I am quite ready to be of service to you.

*Val.* Sir, you show us too much favour; but pray be covered, sir, the sun may inconvenience you.

*Lu.* Sir, cover your head.

*Sga.* (*aside*). These people are very ceremonious.

*Val.* Sir, you must not think it strange that we come to you. People of talent are always sought after, and we are informed of your ability.

*Sga.* It is true, sir, that I am the first man in the world at making faggots.

*Val.* Ah! sir——

*Sga.* I spare no pains in making them, and I make them so that people can't find fault with them.

*Val.* Sir, that's not the question.

*Sga.* But then, I sell them at four-and-six a hundred.

*Val.* Don't let us talk of that, please.

*Sga.* I assure you I can't let them go for less.

*Val.* Sir, we know all about these things.

*Sga.* Then, if you know all about it, you know that I sell them so.

*Val.* Sir, this is jesting, but——

*Sga.* I am not jesting. I cannot lower the price.

*Val.* Let us talk in another manner, I beg of you.

*Sga.* You may get them at another place for less. There are faggots and faggots, but for those that I make——

*Val.* Pray, sir, let us quit this subject.

*Sga.* I swear that you shall not have them for a farthing less.

*Val.* Oh, fie!

*Sga.* No, on my conscience, you shall pay that. I speak sincerely, and am not a man that would ask too much.

*Val.* Ought a man like you, sir, to amuse himself with such coarse pretences, and to lower himself by talking in this manner? Should a learned man, and a famous physician like yourself, hide himself from the eyes of the world, and bury the fine talents he possesses?

*Sga.* (*aside*). The man's mad.

*Val.* Pray, sir, do not dissemble with us.

*Sga.* What?

*Lu.* All this gammoning means nought. I do know what I do know.

*Sga.* Well, then, what would you say? Whom do you take me for?

*Val.* For what you are—a great doctor.

*Sga.* Doctor yourself. I am not one, and never was one.

*Val.* (*aside*). This is the folly that possesses him! (*To him.*) Sir, do not deny things any longer, and let us not come, if you please, to disagreeable conclusions.

*Sga.* To what?

*Val.* To certain things that we should be sorry for.

*Sga.* Come to what you please; I am not a doctor, and I don't understand what you mean.

*Val.* (*aside*). I see plainly that we must make use of the remedy. (*To him.*) Sir, once more I desire you to own what you are.

*Lu.* And don't shilly-shally about it any longer, but own frankly that you be a doctor.

*Sga.* I'm furious——

*Val.* What's the good of denying what we know?

*Lu.* What are all these whimsies for? What good will they do you?

*Sga.* Gentlemen, one word's as good as two thousand. I tell you I am not a doctor.

*Val.* You are not a doctor?

*Sga.* No.

*Lu.* You bean't no doctor?

*Sga.* No, I tell you.

*Val.* Since you will have it, we must come to it.

(*Each takes a lig stick and they thrash him.*)

*Sga.* Hold, gentlemen, hold! I'm what you please.

*Val.* Sir, why did you oblige us to use this violence?

*Lu.* Why did you give us the trouble to beat you?

*Val.* I assure you I did it with all the regret in the world.

*Lu.* By my faith, and frankly, I did it with sorrow.

*Sga.* What the deuce do you mean, sirs? Pray, is it for a joke, or are you both mad, that you will have me to be a doctor?

*Val.* What, won't you give in yet? Do you still deny that you are a physician?

*Sga.* May the devil take me if I am.

*Lu.* Bain't it true, that y' understand physic?

*Sga.* No, plague take me if I do. (*They begin to beat him again.*) Hold, hold! Well, then, gentlemen, if you will have it so, I am a doctor—yes, a doctor; ay, and an apothecary too, if you think good. I'd rather agree to everything than be knocked on the head.

*Val.* Ah! now that's all right, sir. I am delighted to see you will listen to reason.

*Lu.* You do give me a joyful mind, I tell 'ee, when ye do talk like that.

*Val.* I ask your pardon, from the bottom of my soul.

*Lu.* Do 'ee forgive my freedom?

*Sga.* (*aside*). What, have I actually deceived myself, then, and have I become a doctor without knowing it?

*Lu.* Sure, and that's just what you've done.

*Sga.* What, really?

*Val.* Undoubtedly.

*Sga.* Deuce take me if I knew it!

*Val.* What do you mean? Why, you are the cleverest doctor in the world!

*Sga.* Indeed!

*Lu.* A doctor that has cured a lot of sick folk.

*Sga.* Really?

*Val.* A woman was thought to be dead for six hours; they were just going to bury her, when, with one drop of a certain essence, you brought her to life again, and made her walk immediately about the room.

*Sga.* The plague I did!

*Lu.* A little lad, of a dozen year old, let himself toomble from the top of a steeple, and a-had his head, legs, and arms broken, and you, wi' some nointment, made 'en soon scramble up on his feet, and go off and play at chuck farthing.

*Sga.* The deuce I did!

*Val.* In short, sir, you will be content with us; and you may gain as much as you please, if you will only let us conduct you where we want you.

*Sga.* I can gain what I will?

*Val.* Yes.

*Sga.* Oh! I'm a doctor without dispute; I had forgotten it, but I remember it now. What's the matter? Where must I go to?

*Val.* We will take you there. It is to see a young lady who has lost her speech.

*Sga.* Faith! I have not found it.

*Val.* (*aside to Lucas.*) He likes his joke. (*To Sganarelle.*) Come along, sir.

*Sga.* Without a doctor's gown?

*Val.* We will get one for you.

*Sga.* (*offering his bottle to Valère*). You hold that. That's where I put my julep.

*Lu.* Here's a sort of doctor as I likes. I do fancy, somehow, as he'll do; he's a merry kind of fellow.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

(*A room in* GÉRONTE'S *house.*)

GÉRONTE, VALÈRE, LUCAS.

*Valère.* Yes, sir, I believe you will be satisfied; for we have brought you the first physician in the world.

*Lucas.* Adzooks! chuck away the ladder after that; all the others bean't worthy to black his shoes for'n.

*Val.* He is a man who has done wonderful cures.

*Lu.* He's been and heal'd folk as was dead.

*Val.* He has some strange ideas, as I told you, and there are times when his senses seem to leave him, and he does not appear to be what he is.

*Lu.* Yes, he be mortal fond of playing the fool, and one would say sometimes as how he's a bit cracked.

*Val.* But, at the bottom, he's all science; and he often says things extremely lofty.

*Lu.* When he'll give his moind to it, bless you, he'll talk as if it came out of a book.

*Val.* His reputation has spread far and wide. Everybody comes to him.

*Géronte.* I'm longing to see him; bring him to me at once.

*Val.* I'll go and look for him.

## SCENE II.

GÉRONTE, JACQUELINE, LUCAS.

*Jacqueline.* By my troth, sir, this one will do just what the others ha' done. I'se believe that he'll be so good, so bad; and the best doctor you can gie your daughter, according to my notion, is a good handsome husband for whom she has a liking.

*Géronte.* Good lack, my dear nurse, you meddle with a good many things!

*Lucas.* Hold your tongue, housewife Jacqueline; don't poke your nose in here.

*Jac.* I tell you, and both of ye, that all these 'ere doctors won't do her no more good than a glass o' clear water; your daughter wants something else than rhubarb and senna. A husband is a plaster that will cure all girls' ailments.

*Gér.* How can she marry in her present condition? And when I wanted her to marry, did not she oppose all my wishes?

*Jac.* Just so; but you wanted her to have a man she didn't care a button for. Why didn't you let her have that 'ere Mister Liandre as she's set her heart on? I'll be bound to say she'd a been mighty obedient then; ay, and what's more, she'd take him now if she only had the chance.

*Gér.* This Léandre is not a match for her; he's not so rich as the other one.

*Jac.* But he's got an uncle who's mortal rich, and they do say as how this one's to be his heir.

*Gér.* All these riches that are coming seem to me so many

idle tales. There's nothing like what people are in possession of, and we run a great risk of being taken in when we reckon upon riches that others are keeping for us. Death does not always open its ears to the wishes and prayers of the heirs, and they have plenty of time to get hungry who wait for some one to die before they can eat.

*Jac.* Ah! I've often heard tell that in marriage, as in other things, contentment's a deal better than money. Fathers and mothers have such a cursed way of asking how much have he got, and how much have she got. Old father Piarre went and married his daughter Simonette to fat Thomas, just because he'd a bit of a vineyard more than young Robin as she'd took a liking to; and the poor gal's gone as yallow as the jaundice, and not a penny piece the better for it. There, master, what d'ye think of that? Folks ought to have a bit of pleasure some time, and I'd rather give my girl a husband as she'd fancied that give her all the gold in the bank.

*Gér.* That'll do, Mrs. Nurse. Give your tongue a holiday, or you'll talk yourself into a fever.

*Lu.* (*striking Jacqueline on the shoulder at every sentence*). Come, be silent; you make too free, you do. The master an't no need of all your preachments. He knows what to be after with his daughter. You go and nurse the babby, and just let him do as he likes. The master is his girl's father, and is kind and wise enough to do what's right by her. (*Pushes her away.*)

*Gér.* Gently, gently.

*Lu.* (*again striking Jacqueline on the shoulder*). Oh, I want to give her a bit of a lesson, sir, and teach her how to behave herself respectfully to you.

*Gér.* Yes, but you need not go quite so far.

## SCENE III.

VALÈRE, SGANARELLE, GÉRONTE, LUCAS, JACQUELINE.

*Valère.* Sir, prepare yourself; here comes our doctor.

*Géronte* (*to Sganarelle*). Sir, I'm delighted to see you at my house, for indeed we are in great need of you.

*Sganarelle* (*in a Physician's gown, with a high-crowned hat*). Hippocrates says, "Let us both be covered."

*Gér.* Does Hippocrates say so?

*Sga.* Yes.

*Gér.* In what chapter, if you please?

*Sga.* In his chapter—upon hats.

Since Hippocrates says so, it must be done.

*Sga.* Mr. Doctor, having heard of the wonderful things—

*Gér.* Whom are you speaking to, if you please?

*Sga.* To you.

*Gér.* But I am not a doctor.

*Sga.* What! you are not a doctor?

*Gér.* No, indeed.

*Sga.* (*taking a stick and beating Géronte, as he had been beaten himself*). Do you mean it?

*Gér.* I do mean it—Oh, oh, oh!

*Sga.* Now you are a doctor. That's all the license I've had.

*Gér.* What demon of a man have you brought me?

*Val.* I told you he was a droll sort of doctor.

*Gér.* Yes, I shall send him about his business with his drollery.

*Luc.* Oh don't mind, master; 'twere only a bit of a joke.

*Gér.* This kind of joking does not please me.

*Sga.* Sir, I ask pardon for the liberty I have taken.

*Gér.* Sir, I am your most obedient servant.

*Sga.* I am sorry——

*Gér.* Oh, it's nothing at all.
For the blows——
There's no harm done.

*Sga.* Which I have had the honour to give you.

*Gér.* There is no need to talk any more about that. I have a daughter, sir, who is suffering from a strange disease.

*Sga.* I am delighted, sir, to think that your daughter has occasion for me; I wish with all my heart that you, and all your family, had the same occasion for me, that I might show the desire I have to serve you.

*Gér.* I am obliged to you for your good wishes.

*Sga.* I assure you that I speak from the bottom of my heart.

*Gér.* You do me too much honour.

*Sga.* What is your daughter's name?

*Gér.* Lucinde.

*Sga.* Lucinde! Oh, what a charming name for a patient!

*Gér.* I will go and see what she is doing.

*Sga.* Who is that tall woman there?

*Gér.* She is nurse to a young child of mine. [*Exit.*

*Luc.* Ay, and she be my wife.

*Sga.* I congratulate her on having such a husband, and I congratulate you on having such a discreet and handsome wife as she is.

*Lu.* Oh, Mr. Doctor, I don't care for no more of them there compliments.

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## SCENE IV.

LUCINDE, VALÈRE, GÉRONTE, LUCAS, SGANARELLE, JACQUELINE.

*Sganarelle.* Is this the patient?

*Géronte.* Yes; I've no other daughter, and I should be in despair if she were to die.

*Sga.* She had better not; she cannot die, you know, without a doctor's prescription.

*Gér.* A chair, here.

*Sga.* (*seated between Géronte and Lucinde*). Here is a patient who is not altogether disagreeable, and I think that a man who was well and strong would be very well pleased with her.

*Gér.* You have made her laugh, sir.

*Sga.* So much the better. When a doctor can make his patient laugh, it is the best symptom in the world. Now, what is the case? What's the matter with you? What pain have you got?

*Lucinde* (*answering by signs, putting her hand to her mouth, head, and under her chin*). Haw, hi, how, haw.

*Sga.* Eh! What do you say?

*Luc.* (*continuing the same*). Haw, hi, how, haw, haw, hi, haw.

*Sga.* What!

*Luc.* Haw, hi, how.

*Sga.* How, hi, how, haw, ha! I don't understand you. What the deuce of a language is this?

*Gér.* Sir, that is her malady; she has become dumb without our being able to find out the cause of it, and in consequence of this misfortune her marriage has had to be put off.

*Sga.* Why so?

*Gér.* The gentleman she was about to marry wished to have her cured before he could settle things.

*Sga.* Who is this stupid fellow who would not have a dumb wife? Would to heaven my wife had the same malady; I would take good care not to cure her!

*Gér.* In short, sir, we must beg of you to do your best to lessen her illness.

*Sga.* Oh! don't put yourself out about it. But tell me a little: does this illness oppress her much?

*Gér.* Yes, sir.

*Sga.* So much the better. Does she feel much pain?

*Gér.* Very much.

*Sga.* (*turning to the patient*). Give me your arm. Here's a pulse which shows that your daughter is dumb.

*Gér.* Why truly, sir, that's her disease; you have found it all at the first touch!

*Sga.* Ay, ay.

*Jac.* Only for to see how he's been and found it all out!

*Sga.* We great doctors know everything at once. An ignorant fellow would have been puzzled, and would have told you it's this, and that; but for my part I hit the nail on the head at once, and tell you that your daughter is dumb.

*Gér.* Yes, but I should be glad if you could tell me how it came about.

*Sga.* Nothing more easy. It came about because she lost her speech.

*Gér.* Very good; but the reason, if you please, why she lost her speech?

*Sga.* All our best authors will inform you that it comes from an impediment in the action of the tongue.

*Gér.* Yes, but I want your views as to this impediment in the action of the tongue.

*Sga.* Aristotle says about it—some very fine things.

*Gér.* I quite believe it.

*Sga.* Ah, he was a very great man!

*Gér.* No doubt.

*Sga.* (*holding out his arm from the elbow*). A very great man: a man taller than me by so much. But to return to our reasoning. I hold that this impediment in the action of the tongue is caused by certain humours, which amongst us scholars are called peccant humours; peccant, that's to say—peccant humours; so that the vapours caused by the exhalations of influences which rise in the region of diseases, coming—as we may say—to—Do you understand Latin?

*Gér.* Not in the least.

*Sga.* (*getting up in surprise*). You don't understand Latin!

*Gér.* No.

*Sga.* (*assuming divers diverting postures*). Cabricias arci thuram, catalamus, singulariter, nominativo, hæc Musa, the Muse, Bonus, bona, bonum, Deus sanctus est. Ne oratio Latinas? etiam. Quare? quia substantivo et adjectivum concordat in generi, numerum et casus.

*Gér.* Ah, why did I not study!

*Jac.* Sure, and this is a learned man!

*Lu.* Ah, he be so clever, I can't make neither head nor tail of it.

*Sga.* For these vapours that I speak to you of, passing from the left side, where the liver is, to the right side where the heart is, find that the lungs, which we call in Latin *Armyan*, having communication with the brain, which in Greek we name *Nasmus*, by means of the hollow vein, which in Hebrew we call *Cubile*, meets in its way the said vapours, which fill the ventricles of the omoplate, and because the said vapours—comprehend this reasoning well, I pray you—and because the said vapours have a certain malignity—attend well to this, I beseech you.

*Gér.* Yes.

*Sga.* Have a certain malignity which is caused—be attentive, if you please.

*Gér.* I am so.

*Sga.* Which is caused by the acrimony of the humours engendered in the concavity of the *Diaphragm*, it comes to pass that these vapours—*Ossabundus, nequeis, nequer, potarium, quipsa nilus.* That is exactly what has caused your daughter to be dumb.

*Jac.* Ah, my good man, that's real fine, and no mistake.

*Lu.* Why couldn't I roll the patter off as glib as that!

*Gér.* Undoubtedly, no one could reason better; but there's one thing I could not get over, and that's the place of the liver and the heart. It seems to me that you placed them otherwise than they really are; that the heart is on the left side, and the liver on the right side.

*Sga.* Yes, it was formerly so; but we have changed all that, and we now practice medicine after quite a different fashion.

*Gér.* That is what I did not know, and I ask your pardon for my ignorance.

*Sga.* There is no harm done. You are not obliged to be as learned as we are.

*Gér.* True, sir; but what do you think must be done with this disease?

*Sga.* What do I think must be done?

*Gér.* Yes.

*Sga.* My opinion is that she be put to bed; and that she shall take for a remedy a quantity of bread soaked in wine.

*Gér.* Wherefore that, sir?

*Sga.* Because that in bread and wine mixed together there is a certain sympathetic virtue which induces talking. Don't you know that is what they give to parrots, and it makes them learn to talk?

*Gér.* That is true. Oh, what a clever man! Make haste and bring in a quantity of bread and wine.

*Sga.* I will return in the evening to see how she is getting on.

*Gér.* Stay a little, if you please.

*Sga.* What for?

*Gér.* Well, sir, I should like to offer you a fee——

*Sga.* I won't take it, sir (*putting his hands behind him under his gown, while Géronte opens his purse*).

*Gér.* Sir!

*Sga.* No.

*Gér.* Stay a moment.

*Sga.* Certainly not.

*Gér.* Now I beg of you.

*Sga.* You make a mistake.

*Gér.* That's all right.

*Sga.* I don't choose it.

*Gér.* Why not?

*Sga.* I don't care to practise for money.

*Gér.* I quite believe that.

*Sga.* (*after having taken the money*). Is this good weight?

*Gér.* Yes, sir.

*Sga.* I am not a mercenary physician.

*Gér.* I know it well.

*Sga.* Interest does not govern me.

*Gér.* I have not thought so.

## SCENE V.

SGANARELLE, LÉANDRE.

*Sganarelle* (*looking at his money*). In truth, this matter is not going on badly, and provided that——

*Léandre.* Sir, I have been waiting for you for a long time, and am come to ask your help.

*Sga.* (*taking him by the wrist*). A very bad pulse this.

*Lé.* I am not sick, sir; nor is it for that that I am come to you.

*Sga.* If you are not ill, why the deuce didn't you say so?

*Lé.* Well, to tell you the matter in two words. My name is Léandre, and I am in love with Lucinde, whom you have come to visit; but as her father's ill-will prevents me from seeing her, I take the chance of asking you to try and serve me by advancing my cause, and to give me an opportunity of carrying out a plan I have decided on, by which I may be able to speak two words to her, as my life and happiness depend on it.

*Sga.* (*seeming to be in a passion*). Whom do you take me for? What? You dare to apply to me to help you in your love-making, and to debase the dignity of a physician by employments of this kind?

*Lé.* Pray do not make a noise, sir.

*Sga.* (*making him retreat*). I will do as I like. You are an impertinent fellow.

*Lé.* Oh, sir, gently.

*Sga.* An ill-advised fool.

*Lé.* I beg of you, sir.

*Sga.* I'll teach you that I'm not such a man as that, and it is an extreme piece of insolence.

*Lé.* (*taking out a purse, and giving it to him*). Sir!

*Sga.* To think of employing me——(*taking the purse*) I don't speak of you, for you are a worthy man, and I shall have great pleasure in doing you a service; but there are certain impertinent people in the world who take persons for what they are not, and this, I must own, puts me in a rage.

*Lé.* I ask your pardon, sir, for the liberty that——

*Sga.* You are jesting. But what is the business?

*Lé.* You must know, sir, that this malady that you would cure is not a real disease. The doctors have reasoned upon it, as they were bound to, and have not failed to say that it proceeds—one from the brain, one from the stomach, one from the spleen, one from the liver; but it is certain that love is the real cause of it, and that Lucinde pretended to have this disease only to escape from a marriage which they wished to force upon her. But for fear they should see us together, let us retire from here, and as we go I'll tell you what I wish you to do.

*Sga.* Come, sir, you have given me a wonderful interest in your love affair, and I'll stake all my medicine on it that the patient shall either die, or be yours.

## ACT III. SCENE I.

SGANARELLE, LÉANDRE.

*Léandre.* I think that I'm not amiss now for an apothecary; and as the father has scarcely ever seen me, this change of dress and wig is sufficient, I think, to disguise me.

*Sganarelle.* Undoubtedly.

*Lé.* All I wish now is to know five or six important medical phrases, to season my discourse and give me the air of a learned man.

*Sga.* Come, come, that is unnecessary. The robe is sufficient; I know no more of medicine than you do.

*Lé.* What!

*Sga.* Deuce take me if I know anything of physic. You are a gentlemen, and I will confide in you, as you have done me.

*Lé.* What! are you not actually——

*Sga.* No; I tell you they made me a doctor in spite of myself. I never attempted to be so learned as that; with all my studies I never got beyond the first form. I do not know how this notion came to them, but when I found that they would make me a doctor by force, I resolved to be one at the expense of those I might have to do with. Still, you would not believe how the mistake has been spread about, and how every one is possessed with the idea that I am a clever man. They come to consult me from all parts, and if things go on always the same, I intend to keep to physic all my life. I find that it is the best trade of all, for whether we succeed or fail, we are paid all the same. The bad work never comes back on our hands, and we cut out the stuff we work on just as we please. A shoemaker can't spoil a piece of leather in making a pair of shoes but he has to bear the loss of it, whereas we can spoil a man without it costing us anything. The blunders are not ours; the fault is always the dead man's for dying. In short, the advantage of our profession is, that there is always the greatest honour and discretion among the dead; you never hear them complain of the doctor that killed them.

*Lé.* It is true that the dead are very honourable in this respect.

*Sga.* (*seeing some men coming to him*). Here are some persons who look as if they were going to consult me. Go and wait for me near your young lady's house.

## SCENE II.

THIBAUT, PERRIN, SGANARELLE.

*Thibaut.* Maister, son Perrin and I we been a looking for ye.

*Sganarelle.* What's the matter?

*Thi.* His pore mother, which her name be Parette, have took to her bed more nor six months agone.

*Sga.* (*holding out his hand as if to receive some money*). What do you want me to do for her?

*Thi.* Well, Maister, surely ye could gi' us a bit o' druggery ware for the pore old body.

*Sga.* I must see what's the matter with her.

*Thi.* Matter! Why, she be laid up with an hypocrisy.

*Sga.* Of an hypocrisy?

*Thi.* Ay, that's what they do call it in our parts. She be swelled up all over; and they *do* say as how she's a deal of seriosities in her inside, and that her liver or her spleen make blood instead o' water. One day out o' two she be taken wi' quotigian fever, and pains all about her legs. And ye can hear the rattles in her throat like to choke her. Sometimes when she be so mortal bad with sincops and conversions, we do think she's gone off. In our parish we've gotten a potticary, and we have given her historics, and 't'ave cost me crawns and crawns for clysters and suchlike. But law, there, 'tworn't no good, and we bin afeard as how the pore thing 'll go to her forefathers.

*Sga.* (*holding out his hand all the while and shaking it as a sign that he wanted money*). Let's come to the point, friend; let's come to the point.

*Thi.* Weel, maister, the point be we wants you to coam and help us.

*Sga.* I don't understand you at all.

*Perrin.* Mother she be zick, zir, and here be two crawns if so be as ye'll cure 'er.

*Sga.* Ah, now I understand you. There's a lad that speaks clearly, and explains himself as he should do. You say that your mother is sick of a dropsy, that she's swelled all over her body, that she has a fever, with pains in her legs, and that she is taken by turns with syncope and convulsions—that is to say fainting fits.

*Per.* Ay, ay, zir; that be just it.

*Sga.* I comprehended at once what you said. You have a father who does not know what he says. Now, then, you want a remedy from me?

*Per.* Ay, zir.

*Sga.* A remedy to cure her.

*Per.* That's what I du mean.

*Sga.* Here, then, is a piece of cheese which you must make her take.

*Per.* Cheese, zir!

*Sga.* Yes; 'tis prepared cheese, in which there is mixed gold, coral, pearls, and abundance of costly things.

*Per.* Zir, we be mortal obligated to you, an' we'll go an' make her take it directly minute.

*Sga.* Go. If she dies, don't fail to have her buried as handsomely as you can.

## SCENE III.

SGANARELLE, LÉANDRE, GÉRONTE.

*Géronte.* Oh, sir, I have been asking where you were.

*Sganarelle.* I was only amusing myself in your court. How does the patient do?

*Gér.* Rather worse since your remedy.

*Sga.* So much the better. It is a sign that it operates.

*Gér.* Yes; but I am afraid lest it choke her.

*Sga.* Don't vex yourself about that. I have remedies against all diseases, and I wait to the very last.

*Gér.* Who is this man that you are bringing here?

*Sga.* (*making signs with his hand that it is an apothecary*). It is——

*Gér.* What?

*Sga.* He——

*Gér.* Eh?

*Sga.* Who——

*Gér.* I understand you.

*Sga.* Your daughter will have occasion for him.

## SCENE IV.

JACQUELINE, LUCINDE, GÉRONTE, LÉANDRE, SGANARELLE.

*Jacqueline.* Here be your daughter, sure; she's taken a fancy to walk about a bit.

*Sganarelle.* That will do her good. Go to her, Mr. Apothecary, feel her pulse a little, that I may consult with you by and by about her complaint. (*Here he takes Géronte to the end of the stage, and putting one arm over his shoulder, puts his hand under his chin, by which he turns his face towards him whenever he wants to take notice of what his daughter and the apothecary are doing together, in the meanwhile holding the following discourse with him to amuse him.*) Sir, it is a grave and subtle question among the doctors, whether women are more easy to cure than men. I beg you to listen to this, if you please. Some say No, some say Yes; and for my part I say both No and Yes. Forasmuch as the incongruity of the opaque humours which meet in the natural temperament of women cause the animal part always to gain the mastery of the sensitive, we see that the inequality of their opinions depends on the oblique motion of the circle of the moon; and as the sun, which darts its rays on the concavity of the earth, finds——

*Lucinde.* No, I am not capable of changing my sentiments in the least.

*Gér.* My daughter speaks. Oh! the great power of medicine! Oh! wonderful physician! How deeply am I obliged to you, sir, for this wonderful cure; and what can I do for you after such a service?

*Sga.* (*walking about the stage, and fanning his forehead with his hat*). This illness has caused me great trouble!

*Luc.* Yes, father, I have recovered my speech, but I have recovered it to tell you that I will never have any other husband than Léandre, and that it is useless for you to try and give me Horace.

*Gér.* But——

*Luc.* Nothing can shake the resolution I have taken.

*Gér.* What?

*Luc.* It is useless opposing me with your fine arguments.

*Gér.* If——

*Luc.* All your talk will signify nothing.

*Gér.* I——

*Luc.* It's a thing I've made up my mind about.

*Gér.* But——

*Luc.* No paternal power shall make me marry against my will.

*Gér.* I have——

*Luc.* It's no use trying, do what you will.

*Gér.* It——

*Luc.* My heart cannot submit to this tyranny.

*Gér.* There——

*Luc.* I'll sooner go into a convent than marry a man I don't love.

*Gér.* But——

*Luc.* (*speaking in a very loud tone*). No; by no means. Not at all. You lose your time. I will not do it. I've made up my mind.

*Gér.* Oh! what a torrent of words. There's no stopping her. Sir, I beg that you will make her dumb again.

*Sga.* That is a thing impossible for me to do. All that I can do to serve you is to make you deaf, if you wish it.

*Gér.* I thank you. (*To Lucinde.*) Do you think, then——

*Luc.* No; all your reasons will not have the slightest effect on me.

*Gér.* You shall marry Horace this very night.

*Luc.* I'd sooner marry death.

*Sga.* (*to Géronte*). Now, wait a bit, and let me prescribe in

this case. It is a disease which she is suffering from, and I know the remedy for it.

*Gér.* Is it possible, sir, that you can cure this disease of the mind?

*Sga.* Yes, let me alone; I have remedies for everything, and our apothecary will help us in this cure. (*He calls the Apothecary and speaks to him.*) One word. You see that the affection which she has for this Léandre is quite contrary to her father's will, that there is no time to lose, and that the humours are very acrimonious, and that it is necessary to find some remedy for this disease, which may get worse by delay. For my part I can only see one, which is a dose of runaway purgative, mixed, as it should be, with two drachms of matrimonial pills. Perhaps she'll make some difficulty in taking this medicine, but as you are a clever man in your business, you will bring her to it, and make her swallow the thing as well as you can. Go and make her take a turn in the garden, in order to settle the humours, while I keep her father here in discourse; but, above all, lose no time. To the remedy, as quickly as you can, to the specific remedy.

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SCENE V.

GÉRONTE, SGANARELLE.

*Géronte.* What drugs, sir, are those you were speaking of? I don't think I ever heard them named before.

*Sga.* They are drugs which are used on urgent occasions.

*Gér.* Did you ever know insolence like hers?

*Sga.* Well, girls are sometimes a little headstrong.

*Gér.* You can't conceive how she dotes on this Léandre.

*Sga.* The heat of the blood causes this in young minds.

*Gér.* For my part, ever since I discovered the violence of this love-affair, I have always kept my daughter indoors.

*Sga.* You have acted wisely.

*Gér.* And I have taken very good care to prevent their having any communication together.

*Sga.* Quite right.

*Gér.* Some folly would have come of it, if I had allowed them to see one another.

*Sga.* No doubt.

*Gér.* I believe the girl would have run away with him.

*Sga.* Your reasoning is quite correct.

*Gér.* I've been told that she does all in her power to get to speak with him.

*Sga.* Absurd.

*Gér.* But he'll throw away his time.

*Sga.* Ay, ay!

*Gér.* For I'll take very good care he doesn't see her.

*Sga.* He has not got to do with a fool; you know tricks that he is not up to. He that knows more than you do is no blockhead.

## SCENE VI.

LUCAS, GÉRONTE, SGANARELLE.

*Lucas.* Odds boddikins, sir! here's a pretty go. Your daughter's gone off with her Leandar. 'Twas he that were the Potticary, and 'tis Mister Doctor's at the bottom o' this little game.

*Géronte.* What! is he going to murder me in this fashion? Go and get a commissary of police, to stop him from getting away. Oh, you rascal! the law shall lay hold of you.

*Lu.* Ah, my good Doctor, you'll be hanged sure enough, only here you stay.

## SCENE VII.

SGANARELLE, MARTINE, LUCAS.

*Martine* (*to Lucas*). Oh, good gracious! What a trouble I've had to find out this house. Tell me a bit o' news about the doctor I sent you to.

*Lucas.* There he be: just a gwine to be hanged.

*Mar.* What! my husband hanged? And what has he done to deserve that?

*Lu.* He's been and got our master's daughter carried off.

*Mar.* Alas! my dear husband, and is it really true that they're going to hang you?

*Sganarelle.* You can see how it is, alas!

*Mar.* And must you die in the presence of such a crowd of people?

*Sga.* What can I do?

*Mar.* Still, if you'd finished cutting the wood, that would have been some little comfort.

*Sga.* Pray go away. You break my heart.

*Mar.* No; I'll stay to keep up your courage till you die. I'll not leave you till I've seen you hanged.

*Sga.* Alas!

(*Enter* GÉRONTE).

*Géronte.* The commissary will be here directly, and then you'll be put into a place where you'll be well looked after.

*Sganarelle* (*taking off his hat*). Alas! cannot this be changed into a few blows?

*Gér.* No, no; justice must settle it. But what do I see?

## SCENE VIII.

LÉANDRE, LUCINDE, JACQUELINE, LUCAS, GÉRONTE, SGANARELLE, MARTINE.

*Léandre.* Sir, I am come to make Léandre appear before you, and to restore Lucinde to you. We both intended to go off and get married, but this idea has given way to a more honourable proceeding. I don't design to rob you of your daughter, and it is from your hand alone that I will receive her. What I would say to you, sir, is that I have just received letters, by which I learn that my uncle is dead, and that I am his sole heir.

*Géronte.* Sir, your worth is sufficient, and I give you my daughter with the greatest pleasure.

*Sganarelle.* The doctor has got well out of that scrape!

*Martine.* Since you will not be hanged, thank me for being a doctor, for 'twas I that procured you that honour——

*Sga.* Yes, you got me I know not how many blows with a stick.

*Lé.* The result is too good for you to bear any malice.

*Sga.* Well, let it be so; I will forgive you the blows in consideration of the dignity you have raised me to; but from this time you must show great respect to a man of my position, and remember that the wrath of a physician is terrible.

# SCAPIN'S ROGUERIES

## (*LES FOURBERIES DE SCAPIN*).

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ARGANTE, *father of Octave and Zerbinette.*
, *father of Léandre and Hyacinthe.*
OCTAVE, *son of Argante, in love with Hyacinthe.*
LÉANDRE, *son of Géronte, and in love with Zerbinette.*
HYACINTHE, *Géronte's daughter.*
ZERBINETTE, *supposed to be a Gipsy.*
SCAPIN, *Léandre's valet.*
SILVESTRE, *Octave's valet.*
NÉRINE, *Hyacinthe's nurse.*
CARLE, *an impostor, friend of Scapin.*
TWO PORTERS.

SCENE—NAPLES.

### ACT I. SCENE I.

OCTAVE, SILVESTRE.

*Octave.* Ah! sad news to an enamoured heart! What cruel extremities am I reduced to! You have just heard, Silvestre, in the port that my father is coming back?

*Silvestre.* Yes.

*Oct.* That he is coming this very morning?

*Sil.* Yes.

*Oct.* And that he has made up his mind to marry me?

*Sil.* Yes.

*Oct.* To a daughter of Seigneur Géronte?

*Sil.* Of Seigneur Géronte.

*Oct.* And that this young lady has been sent for from Tarentum for that purpose?

*Sil.* Yes.

*Oct.* And you have this news from my uncle?

*Sil.* Yes, from your uncle.

*Oct.* Whom my father made acquainted with this by letter?

*Sil.* By letter.

*Oct.* And this uncle, you say, knows all our affairs?

*Sil.* All our affairs.

*Oct.* Oh, come, speak if you will, but don't go on like this, so that I have to snatch the words out of your mouth.

*Sil.* What can I say more? You do not forget a single circumstance, and you relate everything just as it is.

*Oct.* At any rate, advise me, and tell me what to do in this painful state of things.

*Sil.* In truth, I find myself in as great a difficulty as you, and I wish I could find some one to advise me.

*Oct.* I am tormented to death by this wretched return.

*Sil.* And I am no less so.

*Oct.* When my father learns what has taken place, I shall have a sudden storm of impetuous reproaches poured upon me.

*Sil.* Reproaches are nothing; I only wish I could get off as easily. But for my part, I am likely to pay much more dearly for your follies, as I see in the distance a storm of cudgel blows which will burst on my shoulders.

*Oct.* Good heavens! how shall I get clear of the difficulty in which I find myself?

*Sil.* You should have thought of that before you brought yourself into it.

*Oct.* Oh! you worry me to death with your unseasonable lectures.

*Sil.* And you kill me much more by your thoughtless actions.

*Oct.* What must I do? What am I to resolve on? What remedy can I adopt?

## SCENE II.

OCTAVE, SCAPIN, SILVESTRE.

*Scapin.* How now, Seigneur Octave! What is the matter with you? What ails you? You seem greatly disturbed.

*Octave.* Ah! my dear Scapin, I am undone, I am in despair. I am the most unfortunate of men.

*Sca.* How so?

*Oct.* Have you heard nothing that concerns me?

*Sca.* No.

*Oct.* My father is just coming with Seigneur Géronte, and they are determined to make a match for me.

*Sca.* Well, what is there so terrible in that?

*Oct.* Ah, you don't know, then, the cause of my distress?

*Sca.* No, but it's your own fault if I don't know it very soon; and I'm a true consoler, one who is interested in young people's affairs.

*Oct.* Oh! Scapin, if you can find out any plan, devise any plot, to deliver me from the misery I am in, I should think myself indebted to you for more than my life.

*Sca.* To tell you the truth, there are few things impossible to me when I choose to undertake them. Heaven has doubtless bestowed on me a fine genius for all those witty contrivances and those ingenious tricks to which the ignorant vulgar give the name of rogueries; and without vanity I can say that scarcely any one has ever been more clever at expedients and intrigues, or has acquired more glory in that noble profession than myself. But, indeed, merit is ill-rewarded nowadays, and I have given up all these things since a certain vexation happened to me in an affair.

*Oct.* How, what affair, Scapin?

*Sca.* Well, an affair in which I fell out with the Law.

*Oct.* With the Law?

*Sca.* Yes, we had a slight quarrel.

*Oct.* What, you and the Law?

*Sca.* Yes; I was badly used, and I was so vexed at the ingratitude of the age, that I resolved to do no more. But no matter; tell me your story.

*Oct.* You know, Scapin, that, two months ago, Seigneur Géronte and my father embarked together on a voyage which had to do with an undertaking in which both their interests were concerned.

*Sca.* I know that.

*Oct.* And that Léandre and I were left by our fathers—I under the care of Silvestre, and Léandre under yours.

*Sca.* Yes, and I have faithfully discharged my duty.

*Oct.* Some time afterwards Léandre met with a young gipsy girl, and fell in love with her.

*Sca.* I know that too.

*Oct.* As we are great friends, he let me into the secret of his love affair, and took me to see this girl, whom, indeed, I thought handsome, but not so much as he would have desired. He talked to me about her every day, and all day long he would extol her beauty and grace, praise her wit, and speak to me with transport of the charms of her conversation, which he reported to me in full, even to the least word, and tried to make me think it the most delightful in the world. He sometimes quarrelled with me for not sufficiently appreciating what he told me, and constantly blamed me for the indifference I showed to the passion of love.

*Sca.* I don't yet see what this is leading to.

*Oct.* One day as I was going with him to the people with whom the object of his affections is living, we heard from a little house in a by-street lamentations mixed with much sobbing. We asked what it was. A woman told us, sighing, that if we went in we should see some foreigners in a very pitiful state, and if we had any feeling we should certainly be touched by what we saw.

*Sca.* What will this bring us to?

*Oct.* Curiosity made me press Léandre to go and see what it was. We entered into a hall, where we found an old woman on the point of death, waited upon by a maidservant, who was uttering cries, and a young girl dissolved in tears, the most touching and most beautiful creature you ever saw in your life.

*Sca.* So, so!

*Oct.* Any one else would have appeared hideous in the state she was in: she had nothing on but a shabby little petticoat, with a night-jacket of plain dimity; and her head-dress was a yellow night-cap, turned back on her head, which let her hair fall in disorder on her shoulders; and yet in this state she shone with a thousand charms, and there was nothing that was not delightful in her whole person.

*Sca.* I guess what is coming.

*Oct.* If you had seen her, Scapin, in the condition I am describing to you; you would have thought her admirable.

*Sca.* Oh! I don't doubt it, and without having seen her, I am sure she was absolutely charming.

*Oct.* Her tears were not of that unpleasant kind which disfigure a face. She had a most winning gracefulness in weeping, and her grief was the most beautiful in the world.

*Sca.* I can see it all.

*Oct.* She melted every one into tears, by throwing herself most tenderly on the body of the dying woman, whom she called her dear mother; there was no one there who was not cut to the heart to see so good a disposition.

*Sca.* Really this is very affecting, and I see plainly that this good disposition made you fall in love with her.

*Oct.* Ah, Scapin, a savage would have loved her!

*Sca.* Certainly. How could one help it?

*Oct.* After some words, with which I endeavoured to soften the grief of this charmer in distress, we left her; and asking Léandre what he thought of her, he answered me coldly that she was rather pretty. I was vexed at the indifference with which he spoke of her, and would not let him know the effect her beauty had produced on my heart.

*Silvestre* (*to Octave*). If you don't shorten this, we shall have to stop till to-morrow morning. Let me finish it in two words. (*To Scapin.*) His heart takes fire from that moment; he can't live if he doesn't go to comfort his dear afflicted one. His frequent visits are refused by the maidservant, who has become housekeeper by the death of the mother. See my gentleman in despair. He presses, supplicates, conjures, but all to no purpose. They tell him that the girl, though without fortune or means of support, is of good family, and that unless he marries her they cannot receive his attentions. But his love is only increased by difficulties. He racks his brains, debates, reasons, ponders, takes his resolution; and lo! he has been married to her these three days.

*Sca.* I understand.

*Sil.* Now, in addition to this, comes the return of the father, who was not expected for two months; the discovery that the uncle has made of the secret of our marriage; and the other marriage which they wish to make between him and the daughter Seigneur Géronte had with a second wife, whom they say he has married at Tarentum.

*Oct.* And more than this, add also the poverty under which this charming creature labours, and the incapacity I am in to relieve her.

*Sca.* Is that all? You are both greatly upset by a mere trifle. It's a fine thing to be so much alarmed at! Aren't you ashamed to be at a loss for so small a matter? What the deuce! you are now as big as father and mother, and can't find in your head or devise in your wits some polite artifice, some clever little stratagem to settle your enemies? Fie! Plague take the idiot! I should have been very glad formerly if I had had these old people to get the better of. I should have tripped them up in a trice. I was no higher than this when I gained a reputation by a hundred clever tricks.

*Sil.* I own that heaven has not given me your talents, and I have not the wit like you to get into the clutches of the law.

*Oct.* Here comes my charming Hyacinthe.

## Scene III.

Hyacinthe, Octave, Scapin, Silvestre.

*Hyacinthe.* Oh, Octave, is it true what Silvestre has just told Nérine, that your father has come back, and means to marry you?

*Octave.* Yes, my dear Hyacinthe; and the news has been a cruel blow to me. But what do I see? You are in tears? Tell

me, do you suspect me of any unfaithfulness, and are you not assured of my love for you?

*Hy.* Yes, Octave, I am sure you love me, but I am not so sure you will love me always.

*Oct.* What! can one love you, and not love you all one's life?

*Hy.* I have heard say, Octave, that your sex does not love so long as ours does, and that the ardours men discover are flames which are as easily extinguished as kindled.

*Oct.* Ah, my dear Hyacinthe, my heart, then, is not made like that of other men, for I feel that for my part I shall love you till I die.

*Hy.* I am willing to believe you think what you say, and I have no doubt your words are sincere, but I fear a power which will oppose in your heart the tender feelings which you may have for me. You are dependent on a father, who wishes to marry you to another, and I am sure that I shall die if this misfortune should happen.

*Oct.* No, my lovely Hyacinthe; no father shall force me to break my faith with you. I am resolved to quit my country and even life itself, if necessary, sooner than give you up. Already, without having seen her, I have conceived the strongest dislike to her whom they have chosen for me, and, without being cruel, I could wish that the sea would carry her off for ever. So, my lovely Hyacinthe, I beg you not to weep, for your tears kill me, and I cannot see them without feeling pierced to the heart.

*Hy.* Since you will have it so, I will wipe away my tears, and wait calmly for what it shall please heaven to decide about me.

*Oct.* Heaven will be favourable to us.

*Hy.* It cannot be against me, if you are faithful.

*Oct.* That I certainly shall be.

*Hy.* Then I shall be happy.

*Sca.* (*aside*). She's not altogether a fool, and I find her very tolerable.

*Oct.* (*pointing to Scapin*). Here's a man who could give us wonderful help in our trouble, if he were only so disposed.

*Sca.* I have vowed again and again to have no more to do with the world, but if you both of you beg me earnestly, perhaps——

*Oct.* Nay, if it is only a question of begging hard enough for your help, I implore you with all my heart to undertake the steering of our bark!

*Sca.* (*to Hyacinthe*). And have you nothing to say to me?

*Hy.* I implore you as he did, by all that is most dear to you, to help us in our love!

*Sca.* I must suffer myself to be overcome, and be humane. Go, I will set to work in your behalf.

*Oct.* Be assured that——

*Sca.* (*to Octave*). Hush! (*To Hyacinthe.*) You can go, and make yourself easy. [*Exit Hyacinthe.*] (*To Octave.*) You must prepare to endure meeting your father firmly.

*Oct.* I must confess to you that the thought of this meeting makes me tremble beforehand; I have a natural timidity that I cannot overcome.

*Sca.* You must, however, appear firm at the first onset, lest he should take advantage of your weakness, and deal with you as a child. Now try and drill yourself into a little boldness, and think how to answer resolutely whatever he may choose to say to you.

*Oct.* I will do the best I can.

*Sca.* Come, let me try and accustom you to it a little. We will go over your part, and see if we can keep it up properly. Come, a resolute bearing, your head well up, and a bold look.

*Oct.* What! like this?

*Sca.* A little more.

*Oct.* So?

*Sca.* Well, yes. Suppose that I am your father just come, and answer me firmly as if I were he. . . . What's the meaning of this, you scoundrel, worthless, impudent fellow? A son utterly unworthy of such a father as I am! Do you dare to appear before me, after your fine behaviour, and after the base trick you have played me during my absence? Is this the fruit of all my care? Is this the respect that is due to me? the respect you retain for me? (Come on, now.) Have you the insolence, you rascal, to contract a secret marriage without the consent of your father? Answer me, rogue, answer me! Let me hear your grand reasons. . . . . Why positively you've nothing to say!

*Oct.* That is because I am imagining it is my father who is speaking.

*Sca.* Just so; it is for that reason that you must not look like an idiot.

*Oct.* I shall summon up more resolution, and answer firmly.

*Sca.* Really?

*Oct.* Yes, certainly.

*Sca.* Here is your father coming.

*Oct.* Good heavens! I am undone. [*Exit.*

*Sca.* Ho, Octave, stay. There, he's run away. What a poor sort of fellow he is! Don't let us fail to wait for the old gentleman.

*Sil.* What shall I say to him?
*Sca.* Let me speak, and only follow me.

## Scene IV.

Argante; Scapin *and* Silvestre *at the back of the stage.*

*Argante* (*thinking himself alone*). Did ever any one hear of such an action?

*Scapin* (*to Silvestre*). He has learnt the affair already, and has got it so thoroughly into his head, that he talks about it aloud now that he's alone.

*Arg.* (*thinking himself alone*). This is great hardihood.

*Sca.* (*to Silvestre*). Let us listen to him a little while.

*Arg.* I should like to know what they can say to me about this fine marriage.

*Sca.* (*aside*). We have thought of that.

*Arg.* Will they endeavour to deny the thing?

*Sca.* (*aside*). No, we don't think of that.

*Arg.* Or will they undertake to excuse it?

*Sca.* (*aside*). That may possibly be.

*Arg.* Will they pretend to put me off with idle tales?

*Sca.* (*aside*). Perhaps so.

*Arg.* All their speeches will be useless.

*Sca.* (*aside*). We shall see.

*Arg.* They shall not take me in.

*Sca.* (*aside*). Don't swear to anything.

*Arg.* I shall take care to secure my rascal of a son in a safe place.

*Sca.* (*aside*). We shall see to that.

*Arg.* And as for that rogue, Silvestre, I'll break his bones.

*Silvestre* (*to Scapin*). I should have been very much surprised if he had forgotten me.

*Arg.* (*seeing Silvestre*). Ah, ah! You are here then, are you, you wise family manager, and fine director of young persons!

*Sca.* Sir, I am delighted to see you returned.

*Arg.* Good-day, Scapin. (*To Silvestre.*) Truly you have followed my orders after a fine fashion, and my son has behaved very wisely during my absence.

*Sca.* You seem very well, so far as I can see.

*Arg.* Pretty well. (*To Silvestre.*) Can't you say a word, you rascal, can't you say a word?

*Sca.* Have you had a good voyage?

*Arg.* Yes, yes. A very good one. Leave me to scold in peace.

*Sca.* You want to scold?

*Arg.* Yes, I want to scold.

*Sca.* Whom, sir?

*Arg.* (*pointing to Silvestre*). That rascal there.

*Sca.* What for?

*Arg.* Have you not heard what has happened in my absence?

*Sca.* Well, I heard, indeed, of some trifling matter.

*Arg.* What! Some trifling matter! An action of this kind!

*Sca.* Well, you're partly right.

*Arg.* Such a daring act!

*Sca.* That's true.

*Arg.* A son marrying without the consent of his father!

*Sca.* Yes, there's something to be said to that. But I am of opinion you should not make any noise about it.

*Arg.* Well, that's not my opinion, and I'll make as much noise as I please. What! don't you think I've every reason to be in a rage?

*Sca.* Yes, I do. So was I in a rage when I heard of it; and I took your part, so far as to scold your son. Ask him how I pitched into him, and how I lectured him on the slight respect he showed his father, whose footsteps he ought to kiss. No one could have talked better to him, not even your own self. But what of that? I submitted to reason, and considered that at bottom he might not be so much in the wrong as one might think.

*Arg.* What do you tell me? Is there no great wrong in his marrying a perfect stranger straight away?

*Sca.* What would you have? He was driven to it by his destiny.

*Arg.* Indeed! The best reason in the world! A man has but to commit the greatest crimes imaginable, to cheat, steal, murder, and say in excuse he was urged to it by his destiny.

*Sca.* Really, sir, you take my words in too philosophical a sense. I mean that he was irretrievably committed to the engagement.

*Arg.* But why did he so commit himself?

*Sca.* Would you have him as wise as yourself? Young folks are young, and have not always the prudence they should have to do nothing but what is reasonable. Look at our Léandre, who, in spite of all my lessons, and all my remonstrances, has gone and done worse than your son has done. I should like to know if you were not yourself once young, and played as many pranks in your time as other people. I've been told that formerly you were an excellent companion among the ladies, and you played

the gay young man with the best of them, and that you never paid your addresses without gaining your point.

*Arg.* I grant you that's true, but I always confined myself to gallantry, and never went so far as he has done.

*Sca.* What would you have had him do? He sees a young person who likes him (for he takes after you in having all the women in love with him); he thinks her charming, he pays her visits, says sweet things to her, sighs in a gallant fashion, and acts the passionate lover. She yields to his addresses; he follows up his success—when, lo, her relations interfere, and force him to marry her.

*Sil.* (*aside*). What a clever knave he is!

*Sca.* Would you have had him killed? It is much better to be married than dead.

*Arg.* They did not tell me the affair took place in that way.

*Sca.* (*pointing to Silvestre*). Ask him, then. He will not say the contrary.

*Arg.* (*to Silvestre*). Was it by force that he was married?

*Sil.* Yes, sir.

*Sca.* Would I tell you a lie?

*Arg.* He should have gone at once to a notary and protested against the violence.

*Sca.* That is just what he would not do.

*Arg.* But that would have made it easier for me to dissolve the marriage.

*Sca.* What! dissolve the marriage?

*Arg.* Yes.

*Sca.* You will not destroy it.

*Arg.* Won't I?

*Sca.* No.

*Arg.* What! shall not I have the rights of a father, and demand satisfaction for the violence they have done my son?

*Sca.* It is what he will never agree to.

*Arg.* Not agree to it?

*Sca.* No.

*Arg.* Are you speaking of my son?

*Sca.* Yes; of your son. Would you have him confess that he was capable of fear, and that they made him do things by force? He will take care not to own that. That would only injure him, and prove him unworthy of such a father as you are.

*Arg.* That's nothing to me.

*Sca.* For his own honour and yours, he must tell the world that he married her voluntarily.

*Arg.* And for my honour and his own I'll have him say the contrary.
*Sca.* No, I'm sure he will not do it.
*Arg.* I shall make him.
*Sca.* I tell you, he won't do it.
*Arg.* He shall do it, or I'll disinherit him.
*Sca.* You?
*Arg.* Yes, I.
*Sca.* Good!
*Arg.* What do you mean by good?
*Sca.* You sha'n't disinherit him.
*Arg.* Sha'n't I?
*Sca.* No.
*Arg.* No?
*Sca.* No.
*Arg.* Aha! That's a good joke. Sha'n't I disinherit my son?
*Sca.* No, I tell you.
*Arg.* Who will hinder me?
*Sca.* Your own self.
*Arg.* What, I myself?
*Sca.* Yes, you won't have the heart to do it.
*Arg.* I shall.
*Sca.* You're only joking.
*Arg.* No, I'm not.
*Sca.* Fatherly tenderness will prevail.
*Arg.* It will do nothing at all.
*Sca.* Yes, yes.
*Arg.* I tell you this shall be done.
*Sca.* Oh, mere trifles!
*Arg.* You mustn't call it a trifle.
*Sca.* Oh! I know you; you are naturally kind-hearted.
*Arg.* I'm nothing of the kind. I am very spiteful when I choose. Stop this talk, it irritates me. (*To Silvestre.*) Get you gone, you wretch; go and find my rascal, while I seek Seigneur Géronte, and tell him my misfortune.
*Sca.* Sir, if I can serve you in anything, you have only to command me.
*Arg.* I thank you. (*Aside.*) Oh, why was he an only son! Why have I not now the daughter of whom heaven deprived me, so that I might make her my heiress? [*Exit.*
*Sil.* I own you're a great man, and the matter promises well; but, on the other hand, we are sorely pressed for money to live on, and we have people on all sides barking at us.

*Sca.* Let me alone; the scheme is formed. I am only racking my brain to find a trusty man to act a part that I have occasion for. Stop. Hold a little. Pull your hat over your eyes like a bully. Settle yourself firmly on one foot. Lean your hand on your side. Put a fierce look into your eyes. Strut about like a theatrical king. Very well. Now follow me. I know some secrets for disguising your face and voice.

*Sil.* I implore you, however, not to get me into any trouble with the law.

*Sca.* That'll do, that'll do. We will share our dangers like brothers; and three years in the galleys, more or less, will not curb a noble spirit.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

GÉRONTE, ARGANTE.

*Géronte.* Yes, no doubt, with such weather, we shall have our people here to-day. A sailor who comes from Tarentum assured me he had seen my man, who was on the point of embarking. But my daughters will arrive and find things badly arranged for what we were proposing; and what you have told me about your son strangely upsets the plans we had formed.

*Argante.* Give yourself no trouble about that; I will answer for the removal of that obstacle, and will set to work about it at once.

*Gér.* Indeed, Seigneur Argante, allow me to tell you that the education of children requires the greatest attention.

*Arg.* No doubt. But what then?

*Gér.* Why, that the bad behaviour of young people mostly proceeds from the bad education their fathers have given them.

*Arg.* That happens sometimes; but what do you mean by that?

*Gér.* What do I mean by that?

*Arg.* Yes.

*Gér.* That if you, like a good father, had properly trained your son, he would not have played you the trick he has done.

*Arg.* Very well. So, then, you have educated your son well?

*Gér.* Certainly, and I should be very sorry if he were to do anything of this kind.

*Arg.* And supposing this son of yours whom you have brought up so well should have done worse than mine. What then?

*Gér.* What?

*Arg.* Yes, what?

*Gér.* What is the meaning of this?

*Arg.* It means, Seigneur Géronte, that we should not be so ready to condemn the conduct of others, and that they who will criticise should take care there's nothing amiss at home.

*Gér.* I don't understand this riddle.

*Arg.* You'll have it explained.

*Gér.* What, have you heard anything about my son?

*Arg.* That is possible.

*Gér.* And what then?

*Arg.* When I was angry, your Scapin gave me a general idea of the matter, and you can learn the details from him or some one else. For my part I am going to consult a lawyer, and learn what course I had better take. Good-bye.

## SCENE II.

GÉRONTE (*alone*): *afterwards* LÉANDRE.

*Géronte.* What can this affair be? Worse than his own? For my part I don't see what can be worse, for I think that to marry without a father's consent is one of the worst actions possible. (*Enter* LÉANDRE.) Ah, so you're there?

*Léandre* (*running to embrace him*). Oh, father! how glad I am to see you returned.

*Gér.* (*refusing to embrace him*). Gently. Let us talk a little business.

*Léan.* Allow me to embrace you, and——

*Gér.* (*still repulsing him*). Gently, I tell you.

*Léan.* What, father, do you refuse to allow me to show my delight by embracing you?

*Gér.* Yes. There is a certain matter that must be cleared up between us.

*Léan.* And what is that?

*Gér.* Stand still, that I may have a good look at you.

*Léan.* What for?

*Gér.* Look at me, straight in the face.

*Léan.* Well?

*Gér.* What has happened here?

*Léan.* What has happened?

*Gér.* Yes; what have you been doing while I have been away?

*Léan.* What do you mean, father? What would you have had me do?

*Gér.* It is not I who would have you do anything, but who ask you, What is it you have done?

*Léan.* I? I have done nothing that you have any reason to complain of.

*Ger.* What, nothing?

*Léan.* No.

*Ger.* You are very determined.

*Léan.* That is because I am sure of my innocence.

*Gér.* For all that, Scapin has given me some news of you.

*Léan.* What, Scapin?

*Gér.* Aha! I see, his name makes you blush.

*Léan.* He has told you something about me?

*Gér.* This is not the place to go into this affair; we will examine it elsewhere. Go home, and I will be there presently. Ah, traitor, if I find that you disgrace me, I renounce you for my son, and you may well make up your mind to fly from my presence for ever. [*Exit.*

*Léan.* (*alone*). To betray me in this manner! A rascal who, for a hundred reasons, ought to be the first to conceal the things I trust to him, is the first to discover them to my father. I vow to heaven this treachery shall not remain unpunished.

## SCENE III.

OCTAVE, LÉANDRE, SCAPIN.

*Octave.* My dear Scapin, what do I not owe to your efforts? What an excellent fellow you are, and how good heaven is to me in sending you to my aid!

*Léan.* Aha! So you are there? I'm glad I've found you, you rascal.

*Sca.* Your servant, sir. You do me too much honour.

*Léan.* (*drawing his sword*). You're playing the wag, are you? I'll teach you!

*Sca.* (*falling on his knees*). Oh, sir!

*Octave* (*stepping between them to hinder Léandre from striking him*). Nay, Léandre.

*Léan.* No, Octave; pray don't hold me!

*Sca.* (*to Léandre*). Oh, sir!"

*Oct.* (*holding Léandre*). I beg of you!

*Léan.* (*wanting to strike Scapin*). Let me satisfy my just anger.

*Oct.* In the name of friendship, Léandre, don't ill-use him.

*Sca.* Sir, what have I done to you?

*Léan.* (*going to strike him*). What have you done to me, you rascal!

*Oct.* (*still holding Léandre*). Now, gently!

*Léan.* No, Octave; I will have him instantly confess to me the treachery he has been guilty of. You rascal, I know the trick you've played me; they have just told me of it, and you did not think perhaps they would have let out the secret to me; but I will have the confession from your own mouth, or I'll run my sword through your body.

*Sca.* Oh, sir, could you possibly have the heart?

*Léan.* Speak, then.

*Sca.* Have I done anything to you, sir?

*Léan.* Yes, rascal; and your conscience tells you only too truly what it is.

*Sca.* I assure you I am not aware of it.

*Léan.* (*advancing to strike him*). You are not aware of it?

*Oct.* (*holding him*). Léandre!

*Sca.* Well, sir, since you will have it, I confess that I drank, with my friends, that small cask of Spanish wine that was presented to you a few days ago, and it was I who made a hole in the cask and poured water round the tap, to make you think the wine had run out.

*Léan.* Was it you, villain, who drank my Spanish wine and caused me to scold the maid, thinking it was she who had played the trick?

*Sca.* Yes, sir, and I beg your pardon for it.

*Léan.* I am glad to know this, but that's not the question just now.

*Sca.* Isn't it that, sir?

*Léan.* No, it's something else which concerns me much more, and I will have you tell it me.

*Sca.* I don't remember to have done anything else, sir.

*Léan.* (*going to strike him*). Won't you speak?

*Sca.* Oh!

*Oct.* (*holding him*). Gently.

*Sca.* Yes, sir, it's true that about three weeks ago you sent me in the evening to carry a watch to the young gipsy girl you are in love with. I came back home with my clothes all covered with dirt, and my face bloody, and told you I had met with thieves who had beat me cruelly, and robbed me of the watch. It was I, sir, who kept it.

*Léan.* So you kept my watch?

*Sca.* Yes, sir, to see what o'clock it is.

*Léan.* So, so! these are fine things I learn here. I have indeed a most faithful servant. But this is not what I want.

*Sca.* Isn't that it?

*Léan.* No, scoundrel, there's something else that I must have you confess.

*Sca.* (*aside*). Plague on it!

*Léan.* Out with it quick; I'm in haste.

*Sca.* Sir, that's all that I have done.

*Léan.* (*going to strike him*).

*Oct.* (*getting before Léandre*). Nay!

*Sca.* Well, yes, sir. You remember the hobgoblin some six months ago, that gave you such a thrashing one night, and made you almost break your neck in a cellar you fell into as you were running away?

*Léan.* Well?

*Sca.* It was I, sir, who acted the hobgoblin.

*Léan.* Was it you, you wretch, who acted the hobgoblin?

*Sca.* Yes, sir, but only to frighten you, and to cure you of the fancy you had of making us go about every night as you used to do.

*Léan.* I shall remember all I've learnt, at the proper time and place. But I must come to the point; and I will have you confess what you told my father.

*Sca.* Your father?

*Léan.* Yes, you knave, my father.

*Sca.* I've not even seen him since his return.

*Léan.* Haven't you see him?

*Sca.* No, sir.

*Léan.* Really?

*Sca.* Really. It is what he himself will tell you.

*Léan.* I have it from his own mouth, however——

*Sca.* With your leave, he did not speak the truth.

*Enter* CARLE.

*Carle* (*to Léandre*). Sir, I bring you bad news about your love affair.

*Léan.* What is that?

*Car.* Your gipsies are on the point of carrying off Zerbinette, and she herself, with tears in her eyes, charged me to come and tell you in all haste that if you can't take them the money they asked for her, in two hours, she will be lost to you for ever.

*Léan.* In two hours?

*Car.* Yes, in two hours. [*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.

LÉANDRE, OCTAVE, SCAPIN.

*Léandre.* Oh! my dear good Scapin, I want your help.

*Scapin* (*rising and walking before Léandre, with a disdainful air*). Oh! my dear good Scapin! I'm "my dear good Scapin" now I am wanted.

*Léan.* There, I'll forgive you all you've told me, and worse even, if you have done it.

*Sca.* No, no, don't forgive anything. Run your sword through my body. I should be glad if you killed me.

*Léan.* No, I implore you to give me life by helping me in my love affair!

*Sca.* No, no, you had much better kill me.

*Léan.* You are too valuable to me. I beg you to employ in my behalf that wonderful genius of yours which succeeds in everything.

*Sca.* No, kill me, I tell you.

*Léan.* For heaven's sake, think no more of it, and try and give me the help I ask for!

*Octave.* Scapin, you must do something for him.

*Sca.* But how, after an insult of this kind?

*Léan.* I beg of you to forget my passion, and bring your cleverness to assist me.

*Oct.* I add my petition to his.

*Sca.* But I take that insult to heart.

*Oct.* You must give up your resentment.

*Léan.* Would you abandon me, Scapin, in the cruel extremity that I am in?

*Sca.* To come upon me, unawares, with such an affront!

*Léan.* I'm in the wrong, I own it.

*Sca.* To treat me as a rogue, a knave, a rascal, a scoundrel!

*Léan.* I regret it extremely.

*Sca.* And to think of running me through the body!

*Léan.* I beg your pardon with all my heart, and if it be only a question of going on my knees before you, Scapin, here I am, imploring you not to abandon me.

*Oct.* Now, Scapin, you must really yield to this.

*Sca.* Get up, and don't be so hasty another time.

*Léan.* Will you promise to work for me?

*Sca.* We will think of it.

*Léan.* But you know how time presses.

*Sca.* Give yourself no trouble. How much do you want?

*Léan.* Five hundred crowns.

*Sca.* And you?

*Oct.* Two hundred pistoles.

*Sca.* I will get the money from your fathers. (*To Octave.*) As for your father's business, that is already arranged, (*to Léandre*) and as for yours, though miserly to a degree, there will be need for less trouble still; for you know that as for wit, he has no great amount of it; and I look upon him as a sort of mortal whom one can at any time make believe what one pleases. You must not be offended, for there's no resemblance between you and him; and you know very well the world thinks he's only your father in name.

*Léan.* Gently, Scapin.

*Sca.* Right you are; I know people are very particular about that. What are you laughing at? But I see Octave's father coming. Let us begin with him as he offers himself, (*to Octave*) and do you tell your Silvestre to come quickly and play his part.

## SCENE V.

ARGANTE, SCAPIN.

*Scapin* (*aside*). There he is, meditating.

*Argante* (*thinking himself alone*). To have so little conduct and consideration; to run headlong into an engagement like this! Oh dear! the wildness of youth.

*Sca.* Your servant, sir.

*Arg.* Good day, Scapin.

*Sca.* You are thinking of your son's affair.

*Arg.* I own it makes me very angry.

*Sca.* Life, sir, is full of disappointments, and it is good to be always prepared for them; and I heard, a long time ago, a saying of an old man which I have always remembered.

*Arg.* What was it?

*Sca.* That however short a time the master of a family may be away from home, he should always turn over in his mind all the vexatious accidents that may meet him on his return: he should picture to himself his house burnt, his money stolen, his son crippled, his daughter seduced; and whatever he finds has not happened, he should put it down to good fortune. For my part I have always practised this philosophy in a small way; and I never return home but I hold myself in readiness for the anger of my masters, for scoldings, insults, kicks, bastinadoes and strappings, and if nothing of this kind happens I thank my good luck for it.

*Arg.* That's all very well; but this foolish marriage, which interferes with the one we wish to make, is a thing I can't suffer, and I have been consulting lawyers about dissolving it.

*Sca.* Indeed, sir, if you will believe me, you should try some other way of settling the matter. You know what lawsuits are in this country, and you are going to plunge yourself into strange difficulties.

*Arg.* I see that you're right; but what other way is there?

*Sca.* I think I have found one. The compassion which I felt for you in your vexation forced me to try and find some means to free you from your trouble, for I can't bear to see excellent fathers grieved by their children. It moves me; and I always had a strong liking for you.

*Arg.* I am very much obliged to you.

*Sca.* So I have found the brother of the girl whom he has married. He is one of those bullies by profession, who always have their hands on their swords, who talk of nothing but cutting and slashing, and make no more conscience of killing a man than of swallowing a glass of wine. I got him to talk about this marriage; I showed him how easy it would be to dissolve it, on account of the violence done, your position as a father, and the support your legal right, your money, and your friends would give you in a court of justice. In short, I so worked the matter on all sides, that he listened to the proposal I made of settling the affair for a certain sum, and he gave his consent to break off the marriage provided you would give him money.

*Arg.* And what did he demand?

*Sca.* Oh, at first an outrageous amount.

*Arg.* But what?

*Sca.* Extravagant things.

*Arg.* Well, but say what.

*Sca.* He talked of no less than five or six hundred pistoles.

*Arg.* Five or six hundred agues seize him! Is he laughing at us?

*Sca.* That's what I said to him. I utterly rejected all such proposals; and I gave him to understand that you were no dupe to be asked for five or six hundred pistoles. At last, after a great deal of talk, the result of our conversation came to this. "The time is getting near," he said, "that I must start for the army; I am about equipping myself, and the need I have for money makes me consent, in spite of myself, to what is proposed. I must have a regimental horse, and I can't have one at all tolerable under sixty pistoles."

*Arg.* Well, as to the sixty pistoles, I will give them.

*Sca.* There must be accoutrements and pistols, that will amount to twenty pistoles more.

*Arg.* Twenty pistoles and sixty, that makes eighty.

*Sca.* Just so.

*Arg.* That's a great deal; but be it so. I agree to that.

*Sca.* "I must have a horse, too, for my servant, which will cost quite thirty pistoles."

*Arg.* What the deuce! Let him walk. He shall have nothing of the kind.

*Sca.* Sir!

*Asg.* No; he's an impertinent fellow.

*Sca.* Would you have his servant walk on foot?

*Arg.* Let him walk as he pleases, and the master too.

*Sca.* Really, sir, you must not stand upon such small matters. Pray don't go to law; give everything to keep out of the hands of justice.

*Arg.* Well, be it so. I'll make up my mind to give these thirty pistoles.

*Sca.* Further, he says, "I must have a mule to carry——"

*Arg.* Oh, let him and his mule both go to the devil! It is too much. We will take the matter into court.

*Sca.* Pray, sir——

*Arg.* No, I'll do nothing.

*Sca.* Sir, a small mule.

*Arg.* I won't give him so much as an ass.

*Sca.* Consider——

*Arg.* No; I'd sooner go to law.

*Sca.* Oh, sir, what are you talking of; what are you resolving on? Consider the windings of justice. See how many appeals, and degrees of jurisdiction, how many perplexing proceedings, the many rapacious animals through whose talons you have to pass—serjeants, attorneys, counsel at law, registrars, substitutes, reporters, judges and their clerks There's not one of all the lot who is not capable of spoiling the best cause in the world for a trifle. A serjeant will deliver false writs on which you will lose your case without knowing it. Your attorney will have an understanding with the other side, and sell you for good ready money. Your counsel, also bought, will not be found when he should plead your cause, and he will bring forward arguments that are not to the point. The registrar will issue sentences and arrests against you in your absence. The reporter's clerk will purloin some of your papers, or the reporter

himself will not say what he has seen. And when, by taking every precaution, you have parried all this, you will be astonished to find that your judges have been won over against you, either by some pious people or by the women they love. Ah, sir, keep out of such a hell upon earth! It is like being damned in this world to go to law, and the mere thought of it would send me off to India.

*Arg.* How much would the mule come to?

*Sca.* Well, sir, for the mule, for his horse and that of his man, for accoutrements and pistols, and to discharge some trifling debt he owes his landlady, he asks, in all, two hundred pistoles.

*Arg.* Two hundred pistoles?

*Sca.* Yes.

*Arg.* (*walking about in a rage*). Come, come; I'll have the case tried.

*Sca.* Reflect——

*Arg.* I'll go to law.

*Sca.* Don't go and throw yourself——

*Arg.* I tell you, I'll have it tried.

*Sca.* But to go to law you must have money; money for the summons, money for the registration, money for the letter of attorney, money for putting in an appearance, for counsel, witnesses, and solicitor's time. Then you must pay for consultations and pleadings of counsel, for the right of getting your papers back, for an engrossed copy of the documents. You must have money for the reports of the substitutes, for judges' fees at the end, for the enrolment by the registrar, the form of the decree, sentences, arrests, controls, signatures, and duplicate copies. To say nothing of all the presents you must make. Give this man the money, and get rid of the affair.

*Arg.* What, two hundred pistoles?

*Sca.* Yes; you will gain by it. I have made a small calculation myself of all the law charges, and I find that by giving this fellow two hundred pistoles, you will save about one hundred and fifty, without reckoning the anxiety, the weary journeys and vexations that you will escape. Were there nothing else but being exposed to the things those impudent lawyers will lay before all the world, I would rather give three hundred pistoles than go to law.

*Arg.* I despise all that, and defy the lawyers to say anything of me.

*Sca.* You can do as you please, but if I were you I should avoid a lawsuit.

*Arg.* I won't give two hundred pistoles.
*Sca.* Here comes the man we are talking of.

## SCENE VI.

ARGANTE, SCAPIN, SILVESTRE (*disguised as a bully*).

*Silvestre.* Scapin, I beg you to show me this Argante, who is Octave's father.

*Sca.* What for, sir?

*Sil.* I have just heard that he intends to commence an action against me, and get my sister's marriage dissolved.

*Sca.* I don't know whether that is his intention, but he won't consent to the two hundred pistoles you want, as he says it is too much.

*Sil.* Death and destruction! Head and brains! If I find him I'll cut him to pieces, even if I were broken on the wheel for it.

(*Argante, in order not to be seen, stands trembling behind Scapin.*)

*Sca.* Sir, Octave's father has some courage, and probably won't fear you.

*Sil.* What! He! He! Blood and thunder! If he were here I'd run my sword through his body in a moment. (*Seeing Argante.*) Who's that man?

*Sca.* It's not he, sir; it's not he.

*Sil.* Isn't he one of his friends?

*Sca.* No, sir; on the contrary, he is his mortal enemy.

*Sil.* His mortal enemy?

*Sca.* Yes.

*Sil.* Ah! I'm delighted. (*To Argante.*) Are you an enemy, sir, to that scoundrel Argante? Eh?

*Sca.* Yes, yes; I'll answer for it.

*Sil.* (*seizing Argante's hand roughly*). Shake hands, my boy, shake hands. I give you my word, and swear to you by my honour, by the sword I wear, by all the oaths I can take, that before the day's over I'll rid you of that arrant scoundrel Argante.

*Sca.* Violence is not allowed, sir, in this country.

*Sil.* I don't care. I've nothing to lose.

*Sca.* He certainly will be upon his guard; and he has relations, friends, and servants, who will protect him against your anger.

*Sil.* That's exactly what I want; that's what I want! (*Drawing*). Death and fury! Why haven't I got him here now

with all his protectors? Why does he not come forward with thirty persons? Why don't they fall on me, sword in hand? (*standing on his guard*). What! villains, have you the insolence to attack me? Come on; kill, slay, no quarter (*thrusting on every side, as if he had several persons to attack*). Lay on! Firm; drive home! A sure foot; a quick eye. Ah! rascals, ah! ragamuffins, if that's your game, I'll give you a bellyful of it. Now then, scoundrels, stand to it. Come on! Have at you here; have at you there! (*turning against Argante and Scapin*). What! do you flinch? Stand your ground, stand your ground!

*Sca.* Nay, nay, sir; we're none of them.

*Sil.* This will teach you to dare to play with me. [*Exit.*

*Sca.* Well, you see how many people are killed for two hundred pistoles. Now come away; I wish you good luck.

*Arg.* (*trembling all over*). Scapin.

*Sca.* What's your will?

*Arg.* I've made up my mind to give the two hundred pistoles.

*Sca.* I'm very glad of it, for your sake.

*Arg.* Let's go and find him. I have them about me.

*Sca.* You need only give them to me. It would not suit your honour that you should be seen in the business, after having passed here for some one else; and besides, I should be afraid lest, on your discovering yourself, he should take it into his head to demand more.

*Arg.* Yes, but I should have been very glad to have seen how my money went.

*Sca.* What, do you mistrust me?

*Arg.* No, no; but——

*Sca.* Well, sir, either I am a rogue, or I am an honest man; I must be one of the two. Should I deceive you, and have I any other interest in all this but yours and my master's, with whom you wish to be allied? If you suspect me, I sha'n't interfere in anything; and from this time forward you must find some one else who will settle your affairs.

*Arg.* Take it, then.

*Sca.* No, sir. Don't trust your money with me. I shall be very glad if you will employ some one else.

*Arg.* Nonsense. Take it.

*Sca.* No, I tell you; don't trust me. Who knows whether I sha'n't do you out of your money?

*Arg.* Take it, I say, and don't make any more words about it. But take care to have good security from him.

*Sca.* Let me alone. He has not a fool to deal with.

*Arg.* I will go and wait for you at home.

*Sca.* I shall not fail to be there. (*Alone.*) One caught. Now I've only to look for the other. There he is. It seems as if heaven had brought them both, one after the other, into my net.

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## SCENE VII.

GÉRONTE, SCAPIN.

*Scapin* (*seeming not to see Géronte*). Oh, heavens! oh, unlooked-for misfortune! Oh, unhappy father! Poor Géronte, what will you do?

*Géronte* (*aside*). What is he saying about me, with that pitiful face?

*Sca.* Can no one tell me where Seigneur Géronte is?

*Gér.* What's the matter, Scapin?

*Sca.* (*running about the stage, not appearing to see or hear Géronte*). Oh, that I could meet him to tell him of this sad misfortune!

*Gér.* (*running after Scapin*). What is it then?

*Sca.* In vain do I run about everywhere to find him.

*Gér.* Here I am.

*Sca.* He must be hid in some corner, no one can guess where.

*Gér.* (*stopping Scapin*). Hullo! are you blind that you don't see me?

*Sca.* Oh! sir, there's no possibility of meeting with you.

*Ger.* Why I've been here for an hour just under your nose. Now what's the matter?

*Sca.* Sir——

*Gér.* Well, what?

*Sca.* Sir, your son——

*Gér.* Well, my son——

*Sca.* Has fallen into the strangest misfortune in the world.

*Gér.* What is it?

*Sca.* I found him a little while ago very melancholy about something you had been saying to him, in which you very inopportunely mixed me up; and, trying to divert him from this melancholy, we went for a turn on the quay. There, among many other things, a Turkish galley, very well equipped, arrested our attention. A young Turk of very good appearance offered us his hand, and invited us on board. We accepted his invitation; he showed us a thousand civilities, gave us a cold collation, where we ate the most excellent fruit that ever was seen, and drank wine

*Gér.* Well, what is there so grievous in all that?

*Sca.* Wait a moment, sir. There we were. While we were eating he ordered the galley to put out to sea; and when he had got some distance from the harbour, he put me into the skiff and sent me to tell you that if you don't send him at once, by me, five hundred crowns, he will carry your son off to Algiers.

*Gér.* What the deuce, five hundred crowns!

*Sca.* Yes, sir; and, more than that, he has only given me two hours to get it in.

*Gér.* Oh, that villain of a Turk, to do me to death in this way!

*Sca.* It is for you, sir, to consider at once how you can save from slavery a son whom you so dearly love.

*Gér.* But what the deuce was he going to do on board that galley?

*Sca.* He never dreamt of what has happened.

*Gér.* Go, Scapin, be off, quick, and tell the Turk that I'll have him arrested.

*Sca.* Arrested in the open sea! Do you want to joke with people?

*Gér.* But what the deuce had he to do on board that galley?

*Sca.* Sometimes an evil destiny leads people on.

*Gér.* Now, Scapin, you must, you really must act as a faithful servant.

*Sca.* What, sir?

*Gér.* Go and bid this Turk send me back my son, and put yourself in his place till I have raised the sum he demands.

*Sca.* What, sir, do you consider what you're saying? Do you suppose this Turk has so little sense as to receive such a poor wretch as I am in place of your son?

*Gér.* But what the deuce did he want on board that galley?

*Sca.* He never dreamt of this misfortune. Consider, sir, he gave me only two hours.

*Gér.* You say that he asks——

*Sca.* Five hundred crowns.

*Gér.* Five hundred crowns! Has he no conscience?

*Sca.* Yes, indeed, sir, the conscience of a Turk!

*Gér.* Does he know how much five hundred crowns are?

*Sca.* Yes, sir, he knows they are fifteen hundred livres.

*Gér.* Does the villain think that fifteen hundred livres are to be picked up anywhere?

*Sca.* They are people who have no idea of reason.

*Gér.* But what the deuce was he going to do on board that galley?

*Sca.* That's true, but what then? One could not foresee things. For goodness sake, sir, make haste!

*Gér.* Good. Here's the key of my closet.

*Sca.* Well.

*Gér.* You'll open it.

*Sca.* All right.

*Gér.* You'll find a large key on the left hand, which is that of my lumber-room.

*Sca.* Yes.

*Gér.* Then go and take all the clothes that are in that great hamper, and sell them to the old clothes' dealer to redeem my son.

*Sca.* (*giving him back the key*). Why, sir, you must be dreaming. I should not get a hundred livres for all you speak of; and besides, you know how little time is allowed me.

*Gér.* But what the deuce was he going to do on board that galley?

*Sca.* What waste of talking! Never mind the galley, but consider how we are pressed for time, and that you run the risk of losing your son. Alas! my poor master, perhaps I may never set eyes on you while I live, and the moment I am speaking they may be carrying you off as a slave to Algiers. But heaven is my witness, I have done all I could for you, and if you are not ransomed there is nothing to be blamed but the too slight affection of your father.

*Gér.* Stay, Scapin, I'll go and fetch this sum.

*Sca.* Then pray make haste, sir; I'm trembling lest the clock should strike.

*Gér.* Didn't you say four hundred crowns?

*Sca.* No, five hundred.

*Gér.* Five hundred crowns!

*Sca.* Yes.

*Gér.* What the deuce had he to do on that galley?

*Sca.* You're right, but make haste.

*Gér.* Had he no other place to go to?

*Sca.* That is true, but act quickly.

*Gér.* Oh, that cursed galley!

*Sca.* (*aside*). This galley sticks in his gizzard.

*Gér.* Stay, Scapin, I did not remember I had just now received that sum in gold, and I didn't think that it would be so soon taken from me. (*Taking his purse from his pocket and giving it to Scapin.*) Here, go your way and redeem my son.

*Gér.* (*holding the purse fast while he seems to be giving it to Scapin*). But tell this Turk he's a villain.

*Sca.* (*holding out his hand again*). Yes.

*Gér.* A scoundrel.

*Sca.* (*keeping his hand held out*). Yes.

*Gér.* A man of no faith. A robber.

*Sca.* I'll see to that.

*Gér.* That he is extorting five hundred crowns from me against all right and reason.

*Sca.* Yes.

*Gér.* That I don't give them to him of my free will either for life or death.

*Sca.* Very well.

*Gér.* And that if ever I catch him, I'll have my revenge on him.

*Sca.* Yes.

*Gér.* (*putting his purse back into his pocket and going off*). Go—go quick, and fetch back my son.

*Sca.* (*running after Géronte*). Hulloa, sir!

*Gér.* What is it?

*Sca.* Where is the money?

*Gér.* Didn't I give it you?

*Sca.* No, indeed; you put it into your pocket again.

*Gér.* Alas! grief disturbs my senses.

*Sca.* So I see.

*Gér.* What the deuce did he want in that galley? Oh, cursed galley! The devil take this traitor of a Turk!

*Sca.* (*alone*). He can't digest the loss of these five hundred crowns I've dragged out of him. But we're not quits yet; I'll make him pay in another sort of coin for his slander of me to his son.

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## SCENE VIII.

OCTAVE, LÉANDRE, SCAPIN.

*Octave.* Well, Scapin, have you succeeded in your enterprise for me?

*Léandre.* Have you done anything to get my love affair out of the trouble it is in?

*Scapin* (*to Octave*). There are the two hundred pistoles I got out of your father.

*Oct.* Ah, what joy you give me!

*Sca.* (*to Léandre*). As for you, I could do nothing.

*Léan* (*preparing to go*). Then I must go and die. I have nothing to live for, if Zerbinette is taken from me.

*Sca.* Stop! stop! Gently! What an awful hurry you are in!

*Léan.* (*returning*). What do you want me to do?

*Sca.* I have what you want here.

*Léan.* Ah! you restore me to life.

*Sca.* But on condition that you allow me a little revenge on your father for the trick he has played me.

*Léan.* Anything you please.

*Sca.* You promise me before a witness?

*Léan.* Yes.

*Sca.* Here, then, are five hundred crowns.

*Léan.* Let us go at once and purchase the dear creature I adore.

## ACT III. SCENE I.

ZERBINETTE, HYACINTHE, SCAPIN, SILVESTRE.

*Silvestre* (*to Hyacinthe and Zerbinette*). Yes, your lovers have agreed among themselves that you should be together, and we have carried out the order they gave us.

*Hyacinthe* (*to Zerbinette*). Such an order is altogether agreeable to me. I receive with joy such a companion, and it shall not be my fault if the friendship which exists between our lovers does not spread to us two.

*Zerbinette.* I accept the proposal, and am not one to draw back when I am attacked by friendship.

*Scapin.* And how when you are attacked by love?

*Zer.* As to love, that's another matter—one runs rather more risk there; and I am not so bold in that.

*Sca.* At present I think you are so against my master; but what he has just done for you ought to give you courage to answer his love in a proper manner.

*Zer.* I trust him as yet only on his good behaviour; and what he has now done is not enough to convince me entirely. I am of a lively disposition, and am always laughing, but for all my laughing I can be serious on certain subjects; and your master makes a mistake if he thinks that his having bought me is sufficient to make me absolutely his own. It will cost him something else besides money; and to respond to his love in the way he wishes he must plight me his troth, accompanied by certain ceremonies deemed necessary on such occasions.

*Sca.* That's what he intends to do. He has no thought

towards you but in good faith and honour; had it been otherwise, I would never have meddled in the matter.

*Zer.* That is what I desire to believe, since you tell me so; but on the father's side I see some hindrances.

*Sca.* We will find means to arrange that.

*Hy.* (*to Zerbinette*). The resemblance of our fortunes ought also to contribute to the growth of our friendship; we have both the same fears, and are exposed to the same misfortunes.

*Zer.* You have at least the advantage of knowing who gave you birth; and the help of your relations, whom you can make known, is able to settle everything, ensure your happiness, and gain approval for a marriage already concluded. But for my part I meet with no relief from what I may possibly be, and am actually found in a condition that cannot mollify the temper of a father who thinks of nothing but money.

*Hy.* But you have this advantage at least—that they don't tempt your lover with another match.

*Zer.* A change of feeling in a lover is not the worst thing to be dreaded. One may naturally enough believe one's merit enough to maintain one's conquest; but what I look upon as most formidable in these matters is the paternal power, with which merit counts for nothing.

*Hy.* Alas! Why must our proper inclinations be crossed? How delightful to love, when there is no obstacle to those pleasant chains which join two hearts together!

*Sca.* You're mistaken; tranquillity in love is an unpleasant calm. A happiness entirely uniform grows tedious to us. There must be "ups" and "downs" in life, and the difficulties which mingle with our affairs revive our ardour and increase our pleasure.

*Zer.* Pray, Scapin, give us a short account, which they say is so amusing, of the scheme you invented for getting money out of the old miser. You know it is not trouble thrown away to tell me the tale, and I pay well for it by the pleasure it gives me.

*Sca.* Here is Silvestre, who will do that as well as I can. I have a certain small revenge in my head which I am going to enjoy.

*Sil.* But why will you mix yourself up in discreditable affairs out of pure wantonness?

*Sca.* I like to take in hand hazardous enterprises.

*Sil.* I've told you already that if you'd be guided by me you'd give up the design you have in hand.

*Sca.* Yes, but I'll be guided by myself.

*Sil.* What the deuce are you going to amuse yourself about?

*Sca.* What the deuce are you troubling yourself about?

*Sil.* Why this, that I see you're going to run the risk of getting a good thrashing without any necessity.

*Sca.* Well, that's at the expense of my back, not yours.

*Sil.* It's true you're master of your own shoulders, and can dispose of them as you like.

*Sca.* Dangers of this sort never stop me, and I hate your cowardly spirits that dare not attempt anything because they see the consequences too plainly.

*Zer.* (*to Scapin*). We shall want your help.

*Sca.* Go; I shall be with you again presently. It shall never be said of me that they led me to betray myself, and discover secrets which it had been well for no one to have known, without paying dearly for it.

## SCENE II.

GÉRONTE, SCAPIN.

*Géronte.* Well, Scapin, how is my son's affair going on?

*Scapin.* Your son is in a place of safety, sir; but you yourself at this very time are running the greatest danger, and I would give a good deal that you were safe at home.

*Gér.* Why, how so?

*Sca.* At this very moment they are looking for you everywhere to murder you.

*Gér.* Me?

*Sca.* Yes.

*Gér.* But who?

*Sca.* The brother of the girl Octave has married. He thinks your plan of putting your daughter into the place of his sister is the strongest reason for dissolving the marriage, and with this idea he has resolutely determined to vent his despair on you, and take away your life to revenge his honour. All his friends, who, like himself, are gentlemen of the sword, are looking for you everywhere, and asking for news of you. I saw myself, here and there, some soldiers of his company questioning every one they met, and they have placed pickets in all the approaches to your house; so that you can't go home, you can't take a step right or left, without falling into their hands.

*Gér.* My dear Scapin, what shall I do?

*Sca.* I don't know, sir; it is a very strange affair. I tremble for you from head to foot, and——Stay (*pretends to go to the end of the stage to see whether any one is there*).

*Gér.* (*trembling*). Eh?

*Sca.* No, no, no; it's nothing.

*Gér.* Can't you find any way to get me out of my trouble?

*Sca.* I have an idea of something; but I run the risk of being knocked on the head myself.

*Gér.* Ah, Scapin, show yourself a faithful servant. Don't abandon me, I beg of you.

*Sca.* I am willing to help you. I have such an affection for you, that I can't leave you without help.

*Gér.* You shall be rewarded for it, I assure you. I promise you this coat, when I have worn it out a little.

*Sca.* Stop! Here's something I have thought of—just the thing to save you. You must get into this sack, and——

*Gér.* (*fancying he sees some one*). Ah!

*Sca.* No, no, no; it's nobody. I say you must get in here, and take care not to stir in the least. I will take you on my back like a bundle of something, and so I will carry you right through your enemies quite to your own house; when we are once there we can barricade ourselves, and send for help against their violence.

*Gér.* The plan is a good one.

*Sca.* The best in the world. You shall see. (*Aside.*) You shall pay for your slander.

*Gér.* Eh?

*Sca.* I say, your enemies will be finely tricked. Get you in quite to the bottom, and take care above all things not to show yourself and not to stir, whatever may happen.

*Gér.* Let me alone, I will be still.

*Sca.* Hide yourself! Here's a bully in search of you. (*In a feigned voice.*) *What, shall I not have the pleasure to kill this Géronte, and will no one in charity tell me where he is?* (*To Géronte, in his usual voice.*) Pray don't stir! *Begar, I'll find him, if he hide in the middle of the earth!* (*To Géronte, in his natural tone.*) Don't show yourself. *'Ere, you man with the sack! Sir, I'll give you a louis if you tell me where Géronte is.* You seek Seigneur Géronte? *Yes, I want him.* And what for? *What for?* Yes. *Begar, I'll thrash him to death with my cudgel!* Oh, sir, cudgelling is not for such gentlemen as he; he is not a man to be treated in that manner. *What! that ninny Géronte, that rascal, that scoundrel!* Seigneur Géronte, sir, is neither ninny, nor rascal, nor scoundrel; and you must, if you please, speak of him after another fashion. *How! you treat me with that insolence?* I defend, as I ought to do, a man of honour

who is abused. *What! you're a friend of Géronte?* Yes, sir, I am. *Ah! begad, you are one of his friends? I am glad of it.* (*Striking the sack several times.*) *There, I give that for him.* (*Scapin, crying out as if he had received the blows of the cudgel*) Oh! oh! oh! Oh, sir! gently! Oh! oh! oh! *Begone! carry that to him from me.* Deuce take the Gascon! Oh!

*Gér.* (*thrusting his head out of the sack*). Oh! Scapin, I can endure it no longer!

*Sca.* Oh! sir, I'm beat to a mummy; my shoulders pain me horribly.

*Gér.* How so? 'Twas on my shoulders the blows were laid.

*Sca.* No, indeed, sir, they were laid on my back.

*Gér.* What do you mean? I felt the strokes plainly enough, and I feel them still.

*Sca.* No, 'twas only the end of the stick, I tell you, that reached your shoulders.

*Gér.* You should have retired, then, a little farther off, so as to spare me——

*Sca.* (*making Géronte go into the sack again*). Take care, here's another of them, who looks like a foreigner. *Begar, I run about like a March hare, and can't find this devilish Géronte all the day.* Keep yourself hid. *You, sir, tell me, if you please, if you haven't seen this Géronte I am seeking?* No, sir, I don't know where Géronte is. *Tell me, I beg. I have no great matter with him. I only want to give him a dozen blows on the back with a cudgel, and three or four thrusts with the sword.* I assure you, sir, I don't know where he is. *I fancy I see something moving in the sack.* Pardon me, sir. *You have some funny thing there.* Oh, no, sir, nothing. *I have a great desire to pass my sword through that sack. You show me what that is.* Gently, sir. *How, gently?* You have nothing to do with what I carry. *I will see; I will.* You sha'n't see. *Ah! what is this nonsense?* They are clothes that belong to me. *Show me them.* No, I won't. *You won't?* No. *Then I'll cudgel you on your shoulders.* I don't care. *Ah, you are a funny fellow!* (*beating the sack and crying out as if he had received the blows*). Oh, oh, oh, sir! oh oh, oh! *Farewell! this is a little lesson to teach you not to speak insolently.* Plague take the jabbering rascal. Oh!

*Gér.* (*putting his head out of the sack*). Oh, I am mauled to death!

*Sca.* Oh, I am killed!

*Gér.* Why the deuce must they beat me so on the back?

*Sca.* (*thrusting his head into the sack again*). Take care, here

are half a dozen soldiers, all together. (*Counterfeiting the voices of several persons.*) *Come, let us try to find out this Géronte. Let us search everywhere. Let us not spare our steps. Let us run over the whole town. Forget no place. Look. Search in every quarter. Where shall we go? Let us turn this way. No, here. To the left. To the right. No, no. Yes.* Hide yourself well. *Soho, comrades, here's his valet. Come, you rascal, tell us where your master is.* Nay, gentlemen, don't ill-treat me. *Well, tell us where he is. Speak! Make haste! Immediately.* (*Géronte puts his head quickly out of the sack, and discorers Scapin's trick.*) *If you don't find your master at once, you shall have a rain of blows on you.* I choose to suffer everything rather than show you where my master is. *Then we'll beat out your brains.* Do as you please. *Do you want a thrashing? You'd like a taste of it? There.* Oh! (*Just as he is going to strike, Géronte gets out of the sack, and Scapin runs off.*)

*Gér.* (*alone*). Oh, you scoundrel, you traitor, you villain! To murder me after this fashion!

## SCENE III.

ZERBINETTE, GÉRONTE.

*Zerbinette* (*laughing, not seeing Géronte*). Aha, aha! I must take a little air.

*Géronte* (*aside, not seeing Zerbinette*). I swear you shall pay for this.

*Zer.* (*not seeing Géronte*). Ha, ha, ha, ha! A droll story, but what a dupe of an old fellow!

*Gér.* There's no joke in the matter, and you've no business to laugh at it.

*Zer.* How? What do you mean, sir?

*Gér.* I mean that you ought not to make a joke of me.

*Zer.* Of you?

*Gér.* Yes.

*Zer.* Why, who wants to make a joke of you?

*Gér.* Then why do you come and laugh at me to my face?

*Zer.* This has nothing to do with you. I was laughing to myself at a story that has just been told me, one of the most amusing I ever heard. I do not know whether it is because I am interested in the thing, but I never knew anything so droll as a trick that has lately been played by a son on his father to cheat him of his money.

*Gér.* By a son upon his father, to cheat him of his money?

*Zer.* Yes. Should you press me ever so little you'll find me ready enough to tell you of the affair, for I've always a natural longing to communicate stories I know.

*Gér.* Pray tell me this one then.

*Zer.* Willingly. I shall run no great risk in telling it to you, for it is an adventure that cannot long be kept secret. It was fated that I should fall into the hands of a band of those people called gipsies, who roam from country to country, and employ themselves in telling fortunes, and sometimes in many other things. Arriving in this town, a young man saw me and fell in love with me. From that moment he was always running after me, and was presently just like other young fellows who think they have but to speak, and at the least word the business is done. But he met with a pride which made him correct his first thoughts. He discovered his passion to the people in whose hands I was, and found them willing to give me up to him for a certain sum. But the worst of the matter was that my lover was in the state of most sons of good families—that is to say, he was short of money. He has a father, who, though he is rich, is an arrant miser, a most sordid animal. Stay, I can't remember his name. No. Help me a little. Can't you name some one who is noted for being avaricious to the last degree?

*Gér.* No.

*Zer.* There is a "*ron*" in his name—"*ronte.*" "*Or*"—"*Oronte.*" No, "*Ge*"—Géronte; yes, "*Géronte*"; the same. This is my mean fellow; I've found him out; he's the stingy wretch I've been speaking of! But now, to come to our story. Our people had settled to leave the town to-day, and my lover was going to lose me for want of money, if he had not been helped out of his scrape by the cleverness of a servant who got it out of his father. As to the name of the servant, I know that perfectly. His name is Scapin. He has not his equal, and deserves all the praise one can give him.

*Gér.* (*aside*). Oh, you rascal!

*Zer.* This, then, is the stratagem he made use of to catch his dupe. Ha, ha ha! I can't think of it without laughing heartily. Ha, ha, ha! He goes and finds this covetous cur—ha, ha, ha!—and tells him that as he was walking on the quay with his son—ha, ha!—they saw a Turkish galley, and were invited to go on board. That a young Turk had given them a collation there—ha, ha!—and that while they were eating, the galley put to sea; and that the Turk had sent him ashore alone in a skiff, with orders to tell his master's father that he would carry his son to Algiers if he

did not at once send him five hundred crowns. Ha, ha, ha! Behold my miser, my sordid miser, in a dreadful state of mind; for the affection that he had for his son made a strange fight with his avarice. The five hundred crowns they demanded from him were like five hundred stabs with a dagger. Ha, ha, ha! He could not make up his mind to tear this sum from his heart; and the pain he has suffered makes him find a hundred ridiculous ways of getting his son again. Ha, ha, ha! He wanted to send a warrant after the Turkish galley when it was out at sea. Ha, ha, ha! He begs his valet to go and put himself in the place of his son, till such time as he has raised the money which he has no mind to give. Ha, ha, ha! To make up the five hundred crowns he will sacrifice five or six old suits of clothes not worth thirty. Ha, ha, ha! At every turn the valet shows him the absurdity of his proposals, but he keeps up a doleful chorus of, "*But what the deuce did he want in the galley? Oh, cursed galley! Traitor of a Turk!*" In short, after many windings and turnings, after having sighed and groaned for a long time——But it seems my tale does not amuse you. What do you say to it?

*Gér.* I say the young man is a rascal, an insolent wretch, who shall be punished by his father for the trick he has played him; that the gipsy is an ill-advised, impertinent hussy, to abuse a man of honour, who will teach her to come and mislead gentlemen's sons; and that the valet is a wretch who shall be sent to the gallows by Géronte before to-morrow morning.

## SCENE IV.

ZERBINETTE, SILVESTRE.

*Silvestre.* Where in the world are you going to? Do you know that you have just been talking to your lover's father?

*Zerbinette.* I begin to think so: and I had inconsiderately begun to tell him his own story.

*Sil.* What, his own story?

*Zer.* Yes, I was quite full of it, and was burning to tell it again. But what does it matter? So much the worse for him. I don't see that it can make much difference to us either way.

*Sil.* You were very ready to chatter. People who can't be silent about their own affairs have too much tongue.

*Zer.* Wouldn't he have been told by some one else?

## SCENE V.

ARGANTE, ZERBINETTE, SILVESTRE.

*Argante.* Hullo, Silvestre!

*Silvestre* (*to Zerbinette*). Go indoors again. My master is calling me.

*Arg.* So, you have agreed together, you rascal, you have agreed together—Scapin, you, and my son—to cheat me, and you think I shall put up with it?

*Sil.* Indeed, sir, if Scapin cheats you, I wash my hands of it; and I assure you I have nothing to do with it in any way.

*Arg.* We shall see to this, you rascal, we shall see to this! I sha'n't allow myself to be duped.

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## SCENE VI.

GÉRONTE, ARGANTE, SILVESTRE.

*Géronte.* Ah, Seigneur Argante, you see me overwhelmed with misfortune.

*Argante.* You see me, too, under a terrible oppression.

*Gér.* That villain of a Scapin, by a piece of roguery, has got five hundred crowns out of me.

*Arg.* That same villain of a Scapin, by a piece of roguery, also has got two hundred pistoles out of me.

*Gér.* He did not content himself with cheating me of the five hundred crowns; he has treated me in a manner I am ashamed to mention. But he shall pay for it.

*Arg.* I'll have satisfaction of him for the trick he has played me.

*Gér.* I intend to take exemplary vengeance on him.

*Sil.* (*aside*). I pray heaven I may have no part in all this!

*Gér.* But this is not all, Seigneur Argante, one misfortune is always the forerunner of another. I was happy to-day in the thought of having my daughter, in whom I placed all my happiness; and I have just been informed that she left Tarentum a long time ago, and they believe there she perished in the vessel on which she embarked.

*Arg.* But, pray, why did you keep her at Tarentum, and not give yourself the pleasure of having her with you?

*Gér.* I had my reasons for that. Family interests obliged me to keep this second marriage a great secret.—But whom do I see?

## SCENE VII.

ARGANTE, GÉRONTE, NÉRINE, SILVESTRE.

*Géronte.* What, are you there, Nérine?

*Nérine* (*falling on her knees*). Oh! Seigneur Pandolph, that——

*Gér.* Call me Géronte, and use the other name no more. The reasons no longer exist which obliged me to take it among you at Tarentum.

*Nér.* Alas, what troubles and anxieties have been caused by this change of name, during the toilsome endeavour to find you here.

*Gér.* Where is my daughter and her mother?

*Nér.* Your daughter, sir, is not far off. But before I let you see her, I must ask your pardon for having allowed her to marry, seeing that we were in such a helpless position for want of meeting with you.

*Gér.* What? My daughter married?

*Nér.* Yes, sir.

*Gér.* And to whom?

*Nér.* To a young gentleman named Octave, son of one Seigneur Argante.

*Gér.* Oh, heavens!

*Argante.* What a strange meeting.

*Gér.* Show us—show us quickly where she is!

*Nér.* You need only go into that house.

*Gér.* Go first. Follow me, follow me, Seigneur Argante.

*Silvestre* (*alone*). What a surprising affair is this!

## SCENE VIII.

SCAPIN, SILVESTRE.

*Scapin.* Well, Silvestre, what are our people doing?

*Silvestre.* I have two pieces of news to give you. First, the affair of Octave is settled. Our Hyacinthe is discovered to be the daughter of Seigneur Géronte; and chance has carried out what the fathers' prudence had arranged. Secondly, I have to tell you that the two old gentlemen threaten you in the most fearful way, and specially Géronte.

*Sca.* Oh, that's nothing. Threatenings have never done me any harm; they are clouds that pass very high above our heads.

*Sil.* Take care of yourself. The sons will probably be reconciled to their fathers, and you'll be left in the lurch.

*Sca.* Let me alone. I'll find a way to appease their anger, and——

*Sil.* Away! for they're coming out.

## SCENE IX.

GÉRONTE, ARGANTE, HYACINTHE, ZERBINETTE, NÉRINE, SILVESTRE.

*Géronte.* Come, daughter, come home with me. My happiness would have been complete if only I could have seen your mother with you.

*Argante.* Here comes Octave, just at the very nick of time.

*Enter* OCTAVE.

*Arg.* Come, my son, and rejoice with us at the happy outcome of your marriage. Heaven——

*Octave.* No, father, all your proposals of marriage will go for nothing. I must throw off all disguise with you. You have been told of my engagement.

*Arg.* Yes; but you don't know——

*Oct.* I know all I want to know.

*Arg.* I want to tell you that Géronte's daughter——

*Oct.* Géronte's daughter shall never be anything to me.

*Arg.* It is she——

*Oct.* (*to Géronte*). No, sir, I ask your pardon. My resolution is fixed.

*Silvestre* (*to Octave*). Listen——

*Oct.* No; hold your tongue. I'll listen to nothing.

*Arg.* (*to Octave*). Your wife——

*Oct.* No, father; I tell you I'd die sooner than give up my lovely Hyacinthe. Yes, all you can do is of no use. (*Crossing the stage to Hyacinthe.*) This is she to whom my faith is engaged; I will love her for all my life, and won't have any other wife.

*Arg.* Good gracious! Why, it's she we are giving you. What a pig-headed fellow; he will stick to his point.

*Hyacinthe* (*pointing to Géronte*). Yes, Octave, this is my father whom I have found, and now we are out of all our trouble.

*Gér.* Let us go to my house; we can talk matters better over there than here.

*Hy.* (*pointing to Zerbinette*). Oh, father, I must ask you as a favour not to let me be parted from that amiable person you see there. She has so much merit, that you will have a great liking for her when you come to know her.

*Gér.* Would you have me keep any one in my house whom your brother is in love with, and who told me just now to my face a thousand foolish things of myself?

*Zerbinette.* Sir, I beg you will excuse me. I should not hav

spoken in that manner if I had known it was you; and, besides, I knew you only by report.

*Gér.* What do you mean—only by report?

*Hy.* Father, I will answer for my brother's love for her being most pure and honourable.

*Gér.* That's all very well. Don't they want me to marry my son to her, a girl whom nobody knows, and who goes about as a stroller?

*Enter* LÉANDRE.

*Léandre.* Don't complain, father, that I love a person who is unknown, without birth or dowry. The people from whom I purchased her have just told me that she belongs to this city, and to an honourable family; that they stole her at the age of four years; and here is a bracelet they gave me which may help to find her relations.

*Arg.* Good heavens! If I may trust this bracelet, it must be my daughter, whom I lost at the age you speak of.

*Gér.* Your daughter?

*Arg.* Yes; and I see in her all the features that can make me perfectly sure of it. My dear child——

*Hy.* Good heavens! What wonderful events!

*Enter* CARLE.

*Carle.* Ah, gentlemen, a strange accident has happened.

*Gér.* What?

*Car.* Poor Scapin——

*Gér.* He's a villain I should like to hang.

*Car.* Alas, sir, you need not trouble about that. Passing by a house that was being built, a stone-cutter's hammer fell on his head and broke his skull. He's dying, but desired to be brought here, that he might speak with you before he dies.

*Arg.* Where is he?

*Car.* Here he is.

## SCENE X.

ARGANTE, GÉRONTE, LÉANDRE, OCTAVE, HYACINTHE,

*Scapin* (*carried by two men, and his head bandaged up as if he had been wounded*).

*Sca.* Oh, gentlemen, you see me—oh, you see me in a strange condition! Oh, I was not willing to die without having asked pardon of all persons whom I may have offended. Oh,

yes, gentlemen, before I give up my last breath, I implore you from my heart to pardon me what I have done to you, and specially Seigneur Argante and Seigneur Géronte. Oh!

*Argante.* For my part I pardon you; go and die in peace.

*Sca.* (*to Géronte*). It is you, sir, whom I have most offended by the cudgel blows that——

*Géronte.* Speak no more of it. I pardon you too.

*Sca.* It was a frightful boldness on my part; those blows——

*Gér.* We'll drop that now.

*Sca.* Now that I am dying, I feel an unspeakable grief at those blows——

*Gér.* Good heavens! Hold your tongue.

*Sca.* Those unfortunate blows——

*Gér.* Hold your tongue, I say; I forget it all.

*Sca.* Oh, what goodness! But it is from the heart, sir, that you forgive those blows?

*Gér.* Yes, yes. I pardon you, that's enough. Let us say no more about it.

*Sca.* Oh, sir, how I am relieved by these words.

*Gér.* Yes, but I pardon you on condition that you die.

*Sca.* What, sir?

*Gér.* I revoke my word if you recover.

*Sca.* Oh, oh! My weakness is coming on again!

*Arg.* Seigneur Géronte, in consideration of our happiness, you must indeed pardon him unconditionally.

*Gér.* Well, be it so.

*Arg.* Come, let us sup together, that we may relish our pleasure the more.

*Sca.* And as for me, carry me to the lower end of the table before I die.

# THE BLUNDERER

## (*L'ÉTOURDI, OU LES CONTRETEMPS*).

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LÉLIE, *son of Pandolphe.*
CÉLIE, *slave of Trufaldin.*
MASCARILLE, *servant of Lélie.*
HYPOLYTE, *daughter of Anselme.*
ANSELME, *father of Hypolyte.*
TRUFALDIN, *an old man.*
PANDOLPHE, *father of Lélie.*
LÉANDRE, *a young gentleman of good family.*
ANDRÉS, *a supposed gipsy.*
ERGASTE, *a servant.*
A MESSENGER.
TWO COMPANIES OF MASQUERADERS.

SCENE—MESSINA.

### ACT I. SCENE I.

LÉLIE.

*Lélie.* Very well, Léandre, very well; it must come to a contest then. We shall see which of us two can carry off the prize; and, in our mutual regard for this young miracle of beauty, which can offer the strongest opposition to his rival's addresses. Muster your forces, friend, and stand on your guard, assuring yourself that on my part no pains shall be spared.

### SCENE II.

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

*Lélie.* Ah, Mascarille!

*Mascarille.* Well, what's the matter?

*Lél.* Matter enough. In my love affairs everything goes wrong. Léandre is smitten with Célie, and, by a strange fatality, though I have changed my sweetheart he is still my rival.

*Mas.* Léandre in love with Célie?

*Lél.* He adores her, I tell you.

*Mas.* So much the worse.

*Lél.* Yes, that is just what plagues me. However, I should be wrong to despair; having your help, I ought to take courage;

I know that your talent for intrigue has never found anything difficult. You ought to be called the Prince of Valets, and in the whole world——

*Mas.* There, a truce to these smooth words. When we poor wretches are wanted for anything, then we are the dearest and most incomparables creatures on earth; but at another time if anything goes wrong, then we are scoundrels that ought to be thrashed within an inch of our lives.

*Lél.* Indeed you wrong me by that reproach. But come, let us talk of the charming captive. Tell me, is there a heart so hard or so insensible as to be proof against such charms? For my part, in her conversation as well in her face I see the strongest proof of her being nobly born. I am persuaded that heaven, for some purpose, conceals her true rank under this mean appearance, and will not yet disclose it.

*Mas.* You are extremely romantic, sir, in your dreams. But what part will Pandolphe take in all this? He is your father—at least he calls himself so, and you know how easily his anger is moved, and how finely he can swear at you when your behaviour does not please him. He has given his word to Anselme that you shall marry Hypolyte, fancying, I suppose, that marriage will be the only way of making you sensible. Now, if he should learn that, rejecting his choice, you are under the influence of an unknown person, and that the fatal power of this absurd love has taken from you all regard to your duty, heaven only knows what a storm will burst over your head, and what fine lectures you will be treated to.

*Lél.* Oh, come, a truce, if you please, to your rhetoric.

*Mas.* Rather a truce to your policy, which is not wise, and you ought to try——

*Lél.* Don't you know that nobody ever gets any good by putting me out of temper? That I give very poor wages for good advice, and that a lecturing valet is not likely to get much for his pains?

*Mas.* (*aside*). So he's vexed! (*Aloud.*) All I said was merely by way of joke, and to try your temper. Have I the look of a censor of pleasure, and is Mascarille an enemy to what's natural? You know the contrary, and it's very certain I am only too kind-hearted. So laugh at the lectures of your old greybeard of a father; spur on, I tell you, and let them alone. On my conscience, I'm of opinion that these crabbed dotards try to amuse us with their waggish tales, and being themselves virtuous of necessity, they enviously hope to deprive young people of all the

pleasures of life. You know my powers; I place them at your service.

*Lél.* Ah, by this kind of talk you are sure to delight me. But as to my love, when I first let it appear, it was not badly received by those fair eyes which gave it birth. But Léandre has just declared to me that he is preparing to carry off my Célie. So let us make haste, and ransack your brain for the speediest way of getting the better of him. Find out any scheme, dodge, trick or device, by which I may frustrate my rival's pretensions.

*Mas.* Give me a little time to think the matter over. (*Aside.*) What can I contrive in this emergency?

*Lél.* Well, the plan?

*Mas.* What a hurry you are in. My brain must always go steadily—I've done your business. You must—no; I'm at fault—but if you would go——

*Lél.* Where?

*Mas.* That's only a shallow device—I was thinking of a——

*Lél.* Well, what?

*Mas.* No, that wouldn't answer. But could you not——?

*Lél.* Could I not what?

*Mas.* No, you couldn't do it at all. Talk with Anselme——

*Lél.* But what could I say to him?

*Mas.* That's very true. It would only be out of the frying-pan into the fire. Still, something must be done. Go to Trufaldin.

*Lél.* What to do?

*Mas.* I don't know.

*Lél.* Come, we've had too much of this. I'm out of patience with these senseless tales.

*Mas.* If, sir, you had only plenty of ready money, there would be no need for us to stand here dreaming which way we should take; and we might, by purchasing this slave at once, prevent your rival from forestalling or insulting you. Trufaldin, who has charge of her, is under some apprehension from the gipsies who placed her with him, and if he could only get his money (which they have tired his patience in waiting for), I know very well that he would only be too glad to dispose of her. For he has always lived like a regular skinflint. He would submit to be whipped for half a crown—gold is the god he adores; but the mischief of it is——

*Lél.* What is it?

*Mas.* Why, that your father is just such another wretch, who will not allow you to dispose of his ducats as you wish. So

that at present we have no means of opening the most slender purse to help you. But let us try and talk with Célie, to know what she thinks about the matter. This is her window.

*Lél.* But Trufaldin keeps guard over her night and day; we must be cautious.

*Mas.* Keep quiet in that corner. What good fortune!—she is coming just at the right moment.

## SCENE III.

LÉLIE, CÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

*Lélie.* Ah, how heaven blesses me in allowing me to gaze on those celestial charms you are blest with! And however sharp the pain your eyes have caused me, what pleasure have I in beholding them here!

*Célie.* My heart, which may well be surprised at your language, knows not how my eyes have injured any one. And if in any way they have wronged you, I can assure you that it was without my leave.

*Lél.* Ah, their glances are too charming to do me any harm. I count it my only glory to cherish the wounds they give me. And——

*Mas.* You're mounting a note too high. This style is not what we want now. Let us make better use of our time, and let us learn from her at once what——

Trufaldin (*within*). Célie!

*Mas.* Well.

*Lél.* O cruel meeting! What does this wretched old man want to trouble us for?

*Mas.* Do you go away. I shall know how to talk to him.

## SCENE IV.

TRUFALDIN, CÉLIE, MASCARILLE, *and* LÉLIE *in the background.*

*Trufaldin.* What are you doing out here, and what attention drags you out when I have positively forbidden you to speak to any one?

*Célie.* This is a respectable young man whom I knew formerly; you need not be at all suspicious of him.

*Mas.* Is this Seigneur Trufaldin?

have the honour of paying my humble compliments to a gentleman whom every one speaks of.

*Tru.* Your humble servant.

*Mas.* I hope I do not inconvenience you; but I have seen this young person elsewhere, and having learnt the great talent she has in fortune-telling, I wished to consult her a little about a certain matter.

*Tru.* What, have you been meddling with the black art?

*Cél.* No, sir, all that I know is in white magic.

*Mas.* This is the affair. My master languishes for a fair one who has captivated him. He would gladly disclose the flame which devours him to the beauty he adores; but a watchful dragon, who guards the treasure, has hitherto prevented him, in spite of all his attempts; and what troubles him still more, and makes him miserable, is that he has just discovered a formidable rival: so that I come to consult you to know whether this anxious love of his may have any hope of success—well assured that from your mouth I can learn the truth about the secret which so nearly concerns us.

*Cél.* Under what star was your master born?

*Mas.* Under the star of unchangeable love.

*Cél.* Without your naming the object that he sighs for, the knowledge I possess gives me sufficient information. This young lady has courage, and knows how to maintain a noble pride even in her poverty. Her disposition does not lead her to readily make known the secret emotions of her soul. But I know them as well as she does, and with more calmness of mind can in a few words discover all.

*Mas.* Oh, the wonderful power of magical virtue!

*Cél.* If your master is perfectly constant, and if virtue alone is the life of his passion, let him no longer fear that he will sigh in vain. There is room for hope, and the fort that he wishes to take is not deaf to a parley, and is ready to surrender.

*Mas.* That is a great deal. But this fort depends on a governor who is not easily won over.

*Cél.* That, indeed, is the whole misfortune.

*Mas.* (*aside*). Deuce take this troublesome fellow, who keeps his eye always on us!

*Cél.* Now I must teach you what you have to do.

*Lél.* (*joining them*). Pray, Seigneur Trufaldin, give yourself no further uneasiness; it has been solely by my order that he has come to visit you, for I sent him, as my trusty servant, to make you an offer and to speak to you about this damsel, whose liberty I

should like to purchase, provided we two can agree upon a price.

*Mas.* (*aside*). Plague take the ass!

*Tru.* Ho, ho! Which of the two am I to believe? This tale does not at all agree with the first.

*Mas.* This good gentleman's head is not quite right. Weren't you aware of it?

*Tru.* I know what I know. I fear there's some underhand work here. (*To Célie.*) Go in, and never be so free again.—As for you two—who are a couple of arrant rogues, unless I am much mistaken—next time you play on me, see that your instruments are in better tune together.

*Mas.* (*to Lélie*). Well done. I wish that, without any compliment, he had thrashed us both together. What business had you to show yourself, and, like a blunderer, come and give the lie to all I had been saying?

*Lél.* I thought I was acting for the best.

*Mas.* Oh, it was wisely judged? But indeed this action ought not to surprise me. You are so fruitful in counterplots of this nature, that your wrong-headed freaks no longer astonish any one.

*Lél.* Good heavens! Am I to be found fault with for a trifle? Is the mischief so great that it cannot be repaired? In short, if you cannot give me Célie, do your best at any rate to upset Léandre's plans, that he may not be beforehand with me in purchasing the fair one. But lest my presence should do further harm, I will leave you.

*Mas.* You cannot do better. To tell the truth, now, money would be a sure and powerful agent in this affair; but if this spring fails us, we must look out for another.

## Scene V.

Anselme, Mascarille.

*Anselme.* Body o' me! 'Tis a strange age we live in; I am quite upset by it. Never was there so much love for wealth, and never so much difficulty to come by one's own, whatever care one takes. Debts nowadays are like children, begotten with pleasure and brought forth with pain. Money enters the purse sweetly, but it comes out again very hardly when it has to be paid back. However, it is something to have received at last two thousand francs due any time these two years. Indeed, it is a piece of good fortune.

*Mascarille.* Oh, what glorious game to shoot on the wing! I must see if I cannot wheedle him a little; I know the lullaby that will send him to rest. (*Joining him.*) Anselme, I've just seen——

*Ans.* Whom, pray?

*Mas.* Your Nérine.

*Ans.* And what does the killing sweet creature say about me?

*Mas.* She's all on fire for you.

*Ans.* She is?

*Mas.* And loves you so, it moves one's very heart.

*Ans.* How happy you make me!

*Mas.* The poor girl is almost dying of love. "Anselme, my darling," she cries out constantly, "when shall Hymen unite our hearts? When will you deign to quench these flames?"

*Ans.* But why has she concealed them from me all this time? These girls indeed are strange dissemblers! Now, Mascarille, tell me the truth. Though I am elderly, yet I have sufficient good looks to please the eye.

*Mas.* Yes, truly, your face is still very passable; and if not particularly handsome, it is very agreeable.

*Ans.* So that——

*Mas.* (*trying to take his purse*). So that she dotes on you, and regards you no longer——

*Ans.* What?

*Mas.* But as a husband, and wishes——

*Ans.* Yes, and wishes——?

*Mas.* And wishes, whatever happens, to take your purse.

*Ans.* So?

*Mas.* (*taking the purse, and letting it fall on the ground behind him*). And kiss mouth to mouth.

*Ans.* Oh, now I understand. Come here: now the next time you see her, be sure and praise me as much as you can.

*Mas.* Let me alone for that.

*Ans.* Farewell.

*Mas.* May heaven guide you!

*Ans.* In truth, I had almost been guilty of a strange neglect, and you might justly have accused me of having slighted you. I engage you to carry on my love affair. I receive from you a most agreeable piece of news, without the least present to reward your diligence. Here (*holding out his purse*), be sure you remember.

*Mas.* Oh no, sir, if you please.

*Ans.* Allow me.

*Mas.* No, really; I am acting without any regard to interest.

*Ans.* I know that; but still——

*Mas.* I tell you, Anselme, I will not. I am a man of honour, and this offends me.

*Ans.* Farewell, then, Mascarille.

*Mas.* (*aside*). What a long rigmarole.

*Ans.* (*returning*). I should like to make a present to the dear creature through you. I'll give you something to buy her a ring with, or any other trifle she would fancy.

*Mas.* No; keep your money, and do not trouble yourself about that. I will see to the present. I'm having rather a pretty ring made, and if it suits her, you can pay for it afterwards.

*Ans.* Very well, then, give it her for me; but above all, do your best to make her cherish the ardent wish to have me for her own.

## SCENE VI.

LÉLIE, ANSELME, MASCARILLE.

*Lélie* (*taking up the purse which Mascarille had dropped*). Whose purse is this?

*Anselme.* Bless me! I must have dropped it, and I should have thought afterwards that some one had stolen it from me. I am greatly obliged to you for your kind care, which has saved me a great vexation, and restored me my money. I will go home at once, and put it in a place of safety. [*Exit.*

*Mascarille.* May I die if that was not being officious, and very much so!

*Lél.* Indeed, but for me he would have lost the money.

*Mas.* Certainly; you are doing wonders, and have given proof to-day of most unusual judgment and extreme good fortune. We shall get on famously if you will continue as you have begun.

*Lél.* What is the matter, then? What have I done?

*Mas.* In plain English, you've acted like a fool, since I may and indeed I ought to say it. He knows very well how close his father keeps him; that a formidable rival is pressing closely upon him; and yet, for all this, when I make a bold stroke to oblige him, and run all the risk and shame myself——

*Lél.* What! Was this money——

*Mas.* Yes, you blockhead! it was to release the captive that I collared this money, which your care has now deprived us of.

*Lél.* If that's the case, I am to blame. But who could have guessed it?

*Mas.* It required, indeed, an unusual amount of imagination.

*Lél.* You should have given me a hint of what was going on.

*Mas.* Yes, indeed, I ought to have my eyes at the back of my head. But in the name of Jupiter, be quiet, and don't make any more of those silly speeches. Any one else, after this, would have no more to do with you; but I have just now thought of a master-stroke, which I shall put into execution at once, but only on condition——

*Lél.* Oh, I promise you that neither by word or deed will I meddle with what you are doing.

*Mas.* Go, then, for the very sight of you vexes me.

*Lél.* But, above all, make haste, for fear that your plan——

*Mas.* Now go. I am about to make another effort. (*Alone.*) If I can only bring this scheme to bear, it will be an exquisite piece of roguery; and I fancy it will succeed. Good; here's the very man I want.

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## SCENE VII.

PANDOLPHE, MASCARILLE.

*Pandolphe.* Mascarille!

*Mascarille.* Sir?

*Pan.* To speak plainly, I am very much dissatisfied with my son.

*Mas.* What, with my master? You are not the only one who complains of him. His insupportable conduct in everything drives me every moment to the very verge of my patience.

*Pan.* For all that, I thought that you had a very good understanding together.

*Mas.* I? Pray, sir, don't believe it any longer. I am always trying to bring him to a sense of his duty; and so we are constantly at daggers drawn. Just this moment we had a quarrel about his marriage with Hypolyte, which he rebels against. 'Tis true he is violating the respect due to a father by a most criminal refusal.

*Pan.* What! you have quarrelled?

*Mas.* Yes, and desperately too.

*Pan.* I was greatly mistaken then; for I thought that he had your help in everything.

*Mas.* Me? See what the world is come to, and how innocence is always trampled on. If you only knew my integrity, you would take me to be tutor to your children, instead of leaving me in the position of a servant. Yes, you could not yourself say more than I do to keep him in the right road. "In the name of goodness, sir," I often say to him, "do not be blown about by the

first wind that comes. Keep within bounds. Think what a worthy father heaven has blest you with, and what his position is in the world. Cease to wound his affections, and live, as he does, like a man of honour."

*Pan.* That is talking to the point. And how could he answer you?

*Mas.* Answer me? Oh, with any nonsense to stop my mouth. Not that at the bottom of his heart he does not retain the principles of honour which he has derived from you. But at present his reason is not his master. If I might be allowed to advise you freely, I could soon bring him back to you with little or no trouble.

*Pan.* Speak freely.

*Mas.* It is a secret, which would do me a great deal of harm if it should be discovered; but I trust to your prudence in all confidence.

*Pan.* You say well.

*Mas.* You must know, then, that all your plans are being upset by the impression which a slave has made on your son's heart.

*Pan.* I had heard of it before, but it moves me greatly when I hear it from your mouth.

*Mas.* You see that I am in his secrets.

*Pan.* Truly I am delighted at it!

*Mas.* In the meantime, if you really wish to recall him to his duty without any scandal, you must——I am still afraid of some one surprising us, for if he comes to know of this conversation, I should be ruined. As I was saying, if you would settle this affair once for all, go quietly and buy this slave whom he worships so wildly, and send her out of the way. Anselme is a great friend of Trufaldin's; let him go and buy her at once. Afterwards, if you like to put her into my hands, I know some traders, and can promise to repay the money she may cost you, and so can send her away in spite of your son. For, in short, if we find him set upon marriage, we must transfer this growing passion to another; and further, even if he yielded to the yoke you design for him, yet this other girl, having it in her power to revive his fancy, might spoil all.

*Pan.* Very well argued. Your advice is quite to my mind. Here comes Anselme. You go, and let me do what I can. I'll do my best to get possession of this troublesome slave, and then put her into your hands to settle the rest. [*Exit Pandolphe.*

*Mas.* Good; now I must go and inform my master of all this. Long live knavery, and knaves too!

## SCENE VIII.

HYPOLYTE, MASCARILLE.

*Hypolyte.* Oh, you traitor! So this is the way you serve me! I overheard it all, and saw your trickery. This is your trade, and you have sold me a nice bargain. You promised me, and I had every reason to believe it, that you would favour my passion for Léandre; that your cleverness and diligence would find means to disengage me from Lélie, whom they would force me to marry, and save me from my father's plan; and yet all the time you are working the contrary way. But you will find yourself greatly mistaken. I know a sure method of breaking off the purchase you are seeking so eagerly; I am off at once.

*Mascarille.* Ha, ha! what a hurry you are in. You seem off your head, and without waiting to see whether you are right or wrong, you act like a little fury with me. I'm in the wrong, and ought to make your words come true, since you abuse me so outrageously.

*Hyp.* With what illusion would you dazzle my eyes, you traitor? Can you deny what I have just now heard?

*Mas.* No. But you must understand that this contrivance is arranged to do you a direct service, and that this sly piece of advice which seems so guileless will trap both the old birds in the snare: that the pains I have taken to get Célie, through them, was only that I might hand her over to Lélie, so that by this means Anselme being baulked of his intended son-in-law, would turn round in his rage and make choice of Léandre.

*Hyp.* What! and has this grand scheme, which make me so angry, all been arranged for me, Mascarille?

*Mas.* Yes, for you. But since my good offices are so badly received, and I must put up with your caprices, and by way of reward you come here with your haughty air and treat me as a mean-spirited fellow, a wretch, and an impostor, I'll soon repair the mistake I have committed, and break off the arrangement at once.

*Hyp.* (*holding him*). Oh! do not be so severe upon me, but pardon this outbreak of sudden anger.

*Mas.* No, no, let me go; it is still in my power to avert the blow which has offended you so much. You shall never complain again of my interference. Yes; I promise you that you shall have my master.

*Hyp.* For heaven's sake, my good fellow, do not be so angry! I judged you too hardly. I was wrong, I own it (*pulling out her*

*purse*), but I wish to repair my fault with this. Can you make up your mind to leave me thus?

*Mas.* No, I cannot, do what I will. But your hasty temper does not become you. You must know that nothing wounds a generous spirit so much as an imputation on its honour.

*Hyp.* That is true. I spoke very roughly to you, but I hope you will accept these two louis to make all straight.

*Mas.* No, that is nothing; but I am very sensitive on these matters. Still, my anger is beginning to abate. We must put up with something from our friends.

*Hyp.* Now, tell me, do you think you can carry out what I wish? Do you believe that your bold schemes will bring my passion to the successful end you promise?

*Mas.* Don't vex yourself on that account. I have several irons in the fire, and if one stratagem does not succeed, another shall.

*Hyp.* Well, depend upon it, Hypolyte, at any rate, will not be ungrateful.

*Mas.* It is not the love of gain that will influence me.

*Hyp.* Your master is beckoning to you, and wishes to speak with you, so I will leave you. But, remember, you must do all you can for me.

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## SCENE IX.

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

*Lélie.* What on earth are you doing here? You promise wonders, but your slackness in performance is unrivalled. If my good genius had not come to the rescue, all my happiness would have been destroyed. Then farewell good-fortune, farewell joy; I should have been the prey of eternal regret: in short, if I had not chanced to be on the spot, Anselme would have got the captive girl, and I should have been done for. He was just carrying her off, but I foiled the attempt, warded off the blow, and so far worked on the fears of Trufaldin that he has kept the girl at home.

*Mas.* Good heavens! Three times already! When we get to ten, we'll begin to score. Why, you everlasting dunderhead, it was by my clever arrangement that Anselme made this excellent bargain. She was to have been left entirely in my hands, when your cursed officiousness comes between us. And do you think that I care for you enough to start another plan? No; I would a hundred times rather be a donkey, a doll, a cabbage, a lantern, a

were-wolf, and that the devil himself should come and wring your neck! [*Exit.*

*Lél.* (*alone*). I must take him to some tavern, and let him vent his rage on the glasses.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

MASCARILLE, LÉLIE.

*Mascarille.* I was forced to yield to your wishes at last. In spite of all my protestations, I could hold out no longer, and now I have entered upon fresh difficulties in your interests, though I had quite made up mind to give them up. So soft-hearted am I, and if dame Nature had only made a girl of Mascarille, I leave you to guess the result. However, pray do not on this assurance go and upset the project I have in hand; do not make another blunder and spoil my plans. As to Anselme, I will make your excuses in such a manner as to gain all we want; but if you give way again to your indiscretion, I tell you you must bid farewell to my endeavours to gain you your object.

*Lél.* No, I shall grow wiser, I tell you. Don't be afraid; you shall see——

*Mas.* Well, I hope you will keep to it. I have formed a very bold scheme in your behalf. Your father is so backward in crowning your wishes by his death, that I have just killed him (of course I mean in words only), and I am spreading the report that the good man, being taken with an apoplectic fit, has departed this life. But first, the better to carry out the deception, I sent him off to his barn. Then they brought him news (this, too, was my doing) that the labourers at work on his new building had accidentally discovered a hoard of money. He went off at once, and, as all his people, except us two, accompanied him, I can kill him to-day in everyone's imagination, and bury some image in his place. In short, this is the plan I have made for you: play your part well, and as to the character I have to sustain, if you catch me failing in one single word, I give you leave to call me a fool. [*Exit Mascarille.*

*Lél.* (*alone*). To tell the truth, his wit has found a strange way of bringing my wishes to pass; but when one is in love with a beautiful girl, what won't one do to become happy? If love is sufficient excuse for crime, it may well serve to excuse the little deception it has forced me to approve of to-day, by the soothing hope of the advantage that may come from it. Good gracious!

How quick they are! I see they have already begun to talk about it. I must not be behindhand with my part.

## SCENE II.

MASCARILLE, ANSELME.

*Mascarille.* No doubt this news is a great surprise to you?

*Anselme.* To die in such a manner!

*Mas.* He certainly was much to blame. I owe him a grudge for such an affront.

*Ans.* Not to have time just for a short illness!

*Mas.* A man surely was never in such a hurry to depart!

*Ans.* And how does Lélie take it?

*Mas.* Oh, he raves, and has lost all control of himself. He has beaten himself black and blue, and declares that he will follow his father into the grave. In short, to put an end to it, the excess of his grief made me put the old man in his shroud as quickly as possible, for fear that the sight of the object which feeds his melancholy should lead him to some fatal action.

*Ans.* Nevertheless, you ought to have waited till the evening. Besides, I have a strong wish to see him once more. Whoever puts a man in his shroud quickly, often murders him; and a man is frequently thought to be dead, who only appears to be so.

*Mas.* Oh, I'll warrant you he's dead as dead can be. But now to go back to what we were speaking about. Lélie has resolved (and the resolution will do him a great deal of good) to honour his father with a splendid funeral, and to comfort the deceased a little for his hard fate by the pleasure of seeing the honour done to his memory. Lélie is left very well off, but of course he does not yet know much about his affairs; and as the greater part of his estate lies elsewhere, and what he has here in hand consists mostly of bills, he begs you to excuse him if he was too violent just now, and to lend him, at least, enough for this duty.

*Ans.* You have made it quite clear, and I will go and see him.

*Mas.* (*alone*). So far, at least, everything goes as well as possible. Now we must take care that the rest accords with what has been done; and for fear that we should strike on a rock just as we are entering harbour, let us steer the vessel carefully, and keep a sharp look-out.

## SCENE III.

LÉLIE, ANSELME, MASCARILLE (*coming out of Pandolphe's house*).

*Anselme.* Let us go out. It is with the greatest grief that I see him wrapped up in so strange a manner. Poor fellow! So soon gone. He was alive and well this morning.

*Mascarille.* One may sometimes get over a good deal of ground in a short time.

*Lélie.* Alas, alas!

*Ans.* Come, dear Lélie, remember he was but a man. Even the Pope can give no dispensation from death.

*Lél.* Alas, alas!

*Ans.* Without any warning it dashes down all men, and has always had evil designs against them.

*Lél.* Alas, alas!

*Ans.* This merciless devourer would not lose one stroke of his murderous teeth for all the prayers of mankind; all the world must feel them.

*Lél.* Alas, alas!

*Mas.* It is of no use your preaching; this sorrow is rooted too deeply to be plucked up.

*Ans.* If, notwithstanding these arguments, you still persist in your sorrow, my dear Lélie, at least moderate it.

*Lél.* Alas, alas!

*Mas.* He won't do it. I know his temper.

*Ans.* However, according to your servant's message, I bring you the money you will require for the funeral of your father.

*Lél.* Alas, alas!

*Mas.* See how that word has increased his grief. It is death to him to think of this misfortune.

*Ans.* I know that you will find by the good man's papers that I am indebted to him for a larger sum than this, but even if I owed you nothing, my purse would have been equally at your service. Please to take it. You can command me in everything, as you shall see.

*Lél.* (*walking away*). Alas, alas!

*Mas.* What terrible grief my master feels!

*Ans.* Mascarille, I think it would be as well if he gave me a receipt, if it were only in two words.

*Mas.* Alas, alas!

*Ans.* There is always a great uncertainty in affairs.

*Mas.* Alas, alas!

*Ans.* Get him to give me the signature I ask for.

Good lack! How can he comply with your wish in his present state? Give him time to lessen his grief, and when his trouble is somewhat lighter I will take care that you have your security. Farewell; I feel my heart so overwhelmed with grief, that I must go and take my fill of weeping with him. Alack-a-day! [*Exit Mascarille.*

*Ans.* (*alone*). The world is full of troubles; every man feels them daily, and never here below——

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SCENE IV.

PANDOLPHE, ANSELME.

*Anselme.* Oh, good heavens, how I tremble! It is Pandolphe walking the earth again! Can he have been really dead? How pinched his face looks since his death! Oh, I beg of you not to come near to me! I could not bear to elbow a ghost.

*Pandolphe.* What is the meaning of this strange fright?

*Ans.* Tell me from a distance what business brings you here. If you are taking so much trouble to bid me farewell, it is too ceremonious, and I could have dispensed with the compliment. If your soul is suffering and you need our prayers, I promise that you shall have them, but do not frighten me like this! On the faith of a terrified man, you shall at once have as many prayers as you can wish for.

*Then vanish away,*
*And to heaven I pray*
*That the joy be increas'd*
*Of your lordship deceas'd.*

*Pan.* (*laughing*). In spite of my anger, I can't resist sharing in this.

*Ans.* You are wondrously merry for a dead man!

*Pan.* Is this a joke, or is it madness, that treats a living man as if he were dead?

*Ans.* Alas! you must be dead, for I have just seen you.

*Pan.* What? Could I die without knowing anything about it?

*Ans.* As soon as Mascarille had told me the news, it went to my very heart.

*Pan.* But tell me, are you asleep or awake? Don't you know me?

*Ans.* You are clothed with an aerial body which is the counterfeit of your true one, but which may in a moment change into something quite different. I am afraid of seeing you grow as big as a giant, and all your features hideously distorted. For

goodness' sake, don't put on any horrible look!—I've been scared enough for this once.

*Pan.* At another time, Anselme, the simplicity of your credulity would have afforded me great amusement, and I would have carried on the joke still farther; but this tale of my death, together with the story of a supposed treasure, which I learnt on the road had no foundation, raises in my mind a just suspicion that Mascarille is a rogue—ay, a rogue of rogues, who is influenced neither by fear nor remorse, and who employs strange methods to carry out his projects.

*Ans.* What? Have I been played upon and made a fool of? Ah, indeed my reason should be good! Let me touch him to make sure. Yes, it is the man himself. What an ass I've made of myself to-day! But, I beg of you, don't let this story get about, for they will make a farce of it to shame me. But, Pandolphe, pray help me to get my money back which I lent them for your funeral.

*Pan.* Oh! money, say you? There's the pinch. There lies the key of the whole secret of your loss. Without much ado I shall lay an information against Mascarille, and if I can have him caught, cost what it will, I'll make him swing for it.

[*Exit Pandolphe.*

*Ans.* (*alone*). And for giving credit to a scoundrel, poor dupe that I am, I must lose in one day both sense and money. In sooth, it mightily becomes me, with my grey hairs, to be so apt at playing the fool, to examine so little the first report.—But I see———

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## SCENE V.

LÉLIE, ANSELME.

*Lélie.* Now, with this passport I can readily go to Trufaldin.

*Anselme.* So far as I can judge, your grief has left you.

*Lél.* What say you? No, it will never leave a heart that will always tenderly cherish it.

*Ans.* I came back at once to tell you frankly that I had made a mistake, for among the louis-d'ors, though they look good, I had, without paying attention, put in some which I think were counterfeit, and I have now brought money enough with me to replace them. The intolerable insolence of our coiners has grown to such a height in this country that one can't take any money that is above suspicion. It would indeed be a good thing if they were all hanged.

*Lél.* You oblige me very much by being willing to take them again; but I saw none among them that were bad, as I thought.

*Ans.* I shall know them at first sight. Let me see them, let me see them. (*Taking the purse.*) Are they all here?

*Lél.* Yes.

*Ans.* So much the better. At last, my dear coins, I have hold of you again: return to your place in my pocket. And as for you, my brave sharper, you shall never finger one of them again. So you kill people when they are in perfect health! I wonder what you would have done to me, a poor weak father-in-law. In good truth, I was about to add to my family a most discreet son-in-law. Go! go and hang yourself for very shame and remorse. [*Exit.*

*Lél.* (*alone*). I must own that I am hard hit. But what a surprise! How came he to discover our stratagem so soon?

## SCENE VI.

MASCARILLE, LÉLIE.

*Mascarille.* What! were you gone out? I have been looking for you everywhere. Well, we have gained our end at last. I will give six points to the cleverest trickster of them all and beat him. Now give me the money, that I may go and purchase our captive. I think your rival will be pretty well astonished when it's done.

*Lélie.* Ah! my dear fellow, luck has gone against us. You cannot guess what a scurvy trick fortune has played me.

*Mas.* Why, how can that be?

*Lél.* Anselme, having found out our trick, got back all that he had lent us under pretence of changing some gold that he thought was not good.

*Mas.* I suppose you are joking.

*Lél.* It is only too true.

*Mas.* What, in good earnest?

*Lél.* Yes, in good earnest. I am inconsolable about it. I knew you would be wild with me, beyond all bounds.

*Mas.* I, sir? A fool might. Anger is hurtful, and I wan to take care of myself, come what will, whether, after all, Célie i captive or free. Let Léandre purchase her, or let her sta where she is; for my part I don't care that for it.

*Lél.* Pray do not be so indifferent to my interest, but mak some allowance for this last slight imprudence. But for this la misfortune, will you not admit that I did wonders, and that as t

the pretended death, I imposed on all with so natural a grief that the most sharp-sighted would have thought it real?

*Mas.* You may well commend yourself.

*Lél.* Oh, I know I'm to blame, and I'm willing to own it; but if ever you had any regard for me, repair my misfortune, and assist me.

*Mas.* I kiss your hand; but I have no time to spare.

*Lél.* Mascarille, my dear fellow!

*Mas.* No.

*Lél.* Do me this favour.

*Mas.* No, I can have nothing to do with it.

*Lél.* If you continue so hard-hearted, I must kill myself.

*Mas.* Do so; you can't do better.

*Lél.* Can I not influence you in any way?

*Mas.* No.

*Lél.* Do you see my sword drawn?

*Mas.* Yes.

*Lél.* I am about to drive it home.

*Mas.* Do as you please.

*Lél.* Should not you be sorry to be the means of taking away my life?

*Mas.* No.

*Lél.* Good-bye, Mascarille.

*Mas.* Good-bye, Monsieur Lélie.

*Lél.* What——?

*Mas.* Put yourself out of the way at once, then. What a long business you are making of it.

*Lél.* I believe that you would like me to play the fool and kill myself, that you might come in for my clothes.

*Mas.* As if I did not know that this is all tomfoolery; and whatever young fellows nowadays say they will do, they're not very ready to kill themselves!

## SCENE VII.

LÉANDRE, TRUFALDIN, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

(*Trufaldin whispering to Léandre.*)

*Lélie.* What do I see? My rival and Trufaldin together. He's purchasing Célie. Oh! I tremble with fear!

*Mascarille.* There's no doubt he'll do all he can; and if he has money he may do all he will. For my part I'm delighted. This is the result of your stupid mistakes and impatience.

*Lél.* What must I do? Pray advise me.

*Mas.* I don't know.

*Lél.* Stay, I'll go and pick a quarrel with him.

*Mas.* What would be the good of that?

*Lél.* Well, what would you have me do to ward off this blow?

*Mas.* Go, go. I forgive you, and once more cast an eye of pity on you. Leave me to look after them. I am about, as I think, to find out their secret by fair means. [*Exit Lélie.*

*Trufaldin* (*to Léandre*). When they come by and by, the bargain will be concluded.

*Mas.* (*aside, going out*). I must get over him, and learn his plans, that I may the better frustrate them.

*Léandre* (*alone*). Thanks to my good luck, my happiness is now beyond the reach of chance. I have found the way to insure it, and have no more to fear. Whatever any rival may undertake hereafter, it will be no more in his power to harm me.

*Mas.* (*returning*). Oh, oh, oh! Help! Murder! My brains are being beaten out! Help! Murder! Oh, oh, oh! Traitor, cut-throat!

*Léan.* Where do those cries come from? What's the matter? What have they been doing to you?

*Mas.* He has just given me two hundred blows with the stick.

*Léan.* Who?

*Mas.* Lélie.

*Léan.* What for?

*Mas.* For a mere trifle he has turned me away, and beaten me in a most cruel manner.

*Léan.* Oh, he is very much to blame.

*Mas.* Ah, well, if it's in any way possible, I swear I will be revenged. Yes, I'll let you know, you confounded bully, that people's bones are not to be broken for nothing. Though I am but a valet, I'm a man of honour, and after having employed me for four years as a servant, I don't care to be paid with blows of a sapling, nor be injured in so tender a part as my shoulders. I tell you again, I'll find out a way of revenging myself. A certain slave-girl has taken your fancy, and you wish me to get her for you? Deuce take me, if I don't arrange for some one else to carry her off!

*Léan.* Listen to me, Mascarille, and do not give way to your passion. I have always liked you, and wished to have about me a trusty young fellow like you, with plenty of spirit, who would take a fancy for my service. In short, if you think it good enough for you, and choose to serve me, I will engage you at once.

*Mas.* Certainly, sir, and all the more because a friendly fortune offers me the means of revenge while I am serving you; and in the very pains I take to give you satisfaction I shall find a punishment for the brute I have left. In a word, by my extreme cleverness, Célie and yourself——

*Léan.* My love has already done that office for itself. Fired with love for that faultless girl, I have just bought her for less than her value.

*Mas.* What, then, is Célie yours?

*Léan.* You should see her appear if I were only entire master of my own actions—but alas! my father is so; and as he is resolved, according to a letter just received, to conclude my marriage with Hypolyte, I am anxious that the account of all this affair should not reach him and put him in a rage. Therefore, in my bargain with Trufaldin (for I am just come from his house), I chose to act altogether in the name of another. The purchase concluded, my ring is the arranged token, and to its bearer he will give up Célie. I am trying now to find means to conceal from the eyes of others her who charms my own so much, and to find as soon as possible some convenient place where I may secretly lodge my charming captive.

*Mas.* A little way out of town I can offer you the house of an old relation of mine, where you can place her in all security, without any one knowing the least about the matter.

*Léan.* Ah! then indeed you will do me a great service. Here, take this and get possession of this fair one for me. As soon as Trufaldin sees my ring, the girl will be handed over to you. Take her for me to that house, when——But stay, here is Hypolyte close upon us.

## SCENE VIII.

HYPOLYTE, LÉANDRE, MASCARILLE.

*Hypolyte.* Léandre, I have some news which I ought to tell you, but would it be agreeable or not?

*Léandre.* To judge of that, and to answer off hand, I must know what it is.

*Hyp.* Give me your hand, then, as far as the church; I can tell you on the way.

*Léan.* (*to Mascarille*). Go, and serve me without any further delay. [*Exeunt.*

*Mascarille* (*alone*). Yes, I will give you a dish after my own taste. Was there ever in the world such a lucky fellow? Oh!

how Lélie would be delighted now! His sweetheart to fall into his hands in this manner! To get all his happiness from the source whence he would have expected his ruin! To be happy, and that by the hands of a rival! After this great exploit I shall expect to be painted as a hero, crowned with laurel, and this inscription underneath, *Vivat Mascarillus Knavorum Imperator.*

SCENE IX.

TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE.

*Mascarille.* Hullo!

*Trufaldin.* What do you want?

*Mas.* This ring, which you recognise, will tell you why I have come here.

*Tru.* Oh, yes, I know the ring again quite well. Wait here a moment, and I'll go and fetch the slave.

SCENE X.

A MESSENGER, TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE.

*Messenger.* Will you do me the favour, sir, to direct me to a gentleman——

*Trufaldin.* To what gentleman?

*Mess.* I think his name is Trufaldin.

*Tru.* What do you want with him? I am he.

*Mess.* Only to give him this letter.

*Trufaldin reads:*

"*Providence, which in its goodness takes care of my life, has just brought to my ears a most welcome report, that my daughter, who was stolen from me when only four years old, is a slave with you under the name of Célie. If you ever knew what it was to be a father, and to find yourself touched with natural affection, keep this dear child with you as if she were one of your own. I am now setting out from here in order to bring her back, and I desire to make you so handsome a recompense for your trouble, that in your good fortune (which I am determined to advance) you may bless the day when you made mine.*

"DON PEDRO DE GUSMAN,

"Madrid." "Marquis of Montalcana."

*Tru.* Though one cannot place much confidence in people of their nation, yet those who sold her to me certainly told me that before long some one would come to take her back, and that I

should then have no reason to complain. Yet, now, through my impatience, I was on the point of losing the fruits of a great expectation. (*To the Messenger.*) One moment later, and you would have had your walk for nothing. I was just going to give her up into his hands. But enough; I shall take all the care of her that he can desire. (*To Mascarille.*) You've heard what I've just read, and tell the gentleman who sent you here that I cannot keep my word. So he can come and have his money back again.

*Mascarille.* But what an insult to him!

*Tru.* Be off. I don't want any more talk.

*Mas.* What a vexatious letter! It has just upset all my hopes. This courier comes from Spain just when he is not wanted! May thunder and hail go with him! Never, surely, had so good a beginning such a sorrowful ending.

## SCENE XI.

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

*Mascarille.* Well, what transport of joy inspires you now?

*Lélie.* Oh, let me have my laugh before I tell you.

*Mas.* By all means!—let us laugh heartily, we have good reason to do so.

*Lél.* Oh! I shall not have to put up with any more of your complaints. You shall not have the chance of saying—you who are always crying out after me—that I ruin all your trickeries like a blunderer. I have just been playing one of the cleverest games possible. It is true that I am hasty and sometimes out of temper. But for all that, when I choose I have as good an invention as any man. Even you must own that what I have done shows very uncommon cleverness.

*Mas.* Let us know what this wonderful invention of yours has done.

*Lél.* Presently. Having been struck with great fear at seeing Trufaldin with my rival, I was considering how I could find a remedy against this evil, when, pulling myself together, I conceived, digested, and carried out a scheme before which all your plans, about which you talk so much, must strike their colours.

*Mas.* But what is it?

*Lél.* I beg you to have a little patience. Well, then, I write a letter very carefully, as from a great nobleman to Trufaldin, showing that having heard by great good luck that a certain slave in his possession named Célie was actually his daughter who had

been stolen from him long ago, he wished to come and redeem her, and begged Trufaldin on no account to part with her, but to take the greatest care of her: that on this account he was leaving Spain, and that he would give him such rich presents that he would not regret having caused a father's happiness.

*Mas.* Very well indeed!

*Lél.* Listen then. There's something better to follow. The letter was delivered, but can you conceive how? Why, in such a nick of time, that the courier told me that at that very moment there was a fellow waiting to carry her off. You may fancy what a fool he looked.

*Mas.* And do you mean to say that you have done this without selling yourself to the devil?

*Lél.* Yes. Would you have thought me capable of such a clever device? At least, you must praise my sharpness and the dexterity with which I have upset the carefully laid scheme of my rival.

*Mas.* To praise you as you deserve I'm quite lacking in eloquence, and cannot rise to the subject. Yes, to display properly this sublime effort, this grand stratagem of war, actually rehearsed before our eyes, this great effort of an invention which yields in power to no one living, my tongue is far too feeble, and I wish I had the talent of the most learned, so that I might sing in noble poetry or rehearse in flowing prose that you will be always, in spite of all that can be said, what you have been all your life, that is to say, a cross-grained fool with reason gone wrong and always running riot, with wits topsy-turvy and contrary judgment, a booby, a lout, an ass, a blunderer. What shall I say?—a hundred times more than I have said. This is your panegyric in brief.

*Lél.* Pray tell me the cause of your anger. Have I done any thing? Clear this matter up for me.

*Mas.* Oh no, you've done nothing, only don't come after me.

*Lél.* I'll follow you everywhere to get to the bottom of this mystery.

*Mas.* Do so. Follow on then. Get your legs into good order. I shall show you how to use them.

*Lél.* He's off! What can one make of this misfortune? How can I understand what he has been saying? And what harm can I possibly have done to myself?

## ACT III. Scene I.

MASCARILLE.

*Mascarille* (*alone*). Peace, my good nature; plead no more. You are simply a fool; I'll have nothing to do with it. Yes, I own my temper is in the right. To keep on putting together what a meddling fool undoes is too much for one's patience, and I ought to give it up after he has defeated such glorious attempts. But now let me reason the matter dispassionately. If I yield to my just impatience it will be said that I am giving way to difficulties, and that I have come to the end of my resources. What then will become of that public estimation which holds you to be a sublime rogue, and which you have acquired on so many occasions, never having been found wanting in invention? Honour, Mascarille, is a glorious thing; make no pause in your noble labours, and whatever a master may have done to anger you, complete the work, not to oblige him, but for your own glory. But how? What can you do when the clear stream is being perpetually troubled by this evil spirit? You see that every moment he obliges you to change your plans, and that it is fighting the air to try and stop that unbridled torrent which, in a moment, overturns the beautiful structures which your art has raised. Well, one more stroke at least out of pure kindness: let us risk success once more, and if he still persists in baffling our good fortune, then we must withdraw. In the meantime our affair would not turn out so badly if we could only ruin our rival, and if Léandre, weary of the pursuit, would only leave a clear field for me to carry out my plan. Yes! I have a most ingenious plan working in my brain, from which I could promise myself a glorious success if I could only get rid of this obstacle. Good! let me see if he is still obstinate in his attachment.

## Scene II.

LÉANDRE, MASCARILLE.

*Mascarille.* Sir, I've lost time and trouble too, for your man cries off.

*Léandre.* He has himself given me an account of the whole affair; but there's a good deal more in it. I have learnt that all this fine story of her having been carried away by gipsies, of a grandee for her father, of his setting out for this place from Spain, is nothing but a pure stratagem, a good joke, a laughable tale by which Lélie wished to upset our purchase of Célie.

*Mas.* Only fancy, what a knavish trick!

*Léan.* And yet for all that Trufaldin is so impressed with this foolish story, and swallows the bait of this shallow device so greedily, that he will not let any one undeceive him.

*Mas.* For this reason he will keep a close watch over her for the future, and I see no opening for doing anything more.

*Léan.* If this girl seemed to me lovable at first, I now think her perfectly adorable, and I am doubtful whether I should not take extreme measures to make her mine; reverse her destiny by plighting her my troth, and changing her servile bonds into matrimonial ones.

*Mas.* Would you marry her?

*Léan.* I hardly know. But, in short, if her position is obscure, her graceful manners and her modesty have extraordinary charms to attract the heart.

*Mas.* Her modesty, did you say?

*Léan.* What are you muttering about her modesty? Come, explain yourself.

*Mas.* Why, sir, you seem upset all at once. I think I should do better to hold my tongue.

*Léan.* No, no; speak out.

*Mas.* Well, then, if you must have it, I will try and open your eyes. This girl——

*Léan.* Go on.

*Mas.* Far from being of a retiring disposition, is the regular town's talk. She sets her cap at every man she thinks worth attracting, and when she has got all she can out of him she will quietly throw him over. She is very honeyed in her speech, and would pass for a prude; but I know—it's in my line to understand something of that kind of thing.

*Léan.* Célie——

*Mas.* Yes; her modesty is only put on, only a semblance, which vanishes before the glittering rays of gold.

*Léan.* What are you telling me? Can I believe such a thing?

*Mas.* No, don't believe it; marry this sly creature—all the town will applaud you.

*Léan.* This is indeed a surprise.

*Mas.* (*aside*). He has taken the bait. Courage! If he does swallow it, and get well hooked, we shall be rid of a very troublesome thorn.

*Léan.* Go to the post office and see if a letter has come for me. (*Exit Mascarille. Léandre alone, after having mused awhile.*)

Who would not have been taken in? If what he says is true, never did the look of a face take one in more completely.

## SCENE III.

LÉLIE, LÉANDRE.

*Lélie.* What may be the reason, sir, why you look so sad?

*Léandre.* Who? I?

*Lél.* Yes, yourself.

*Léan.* I have no reason at all.

*Lél.* I see plainly enough that Célie is the cause of it.

*Léan.* My mind does not dwell on such trifles.

*Lél.* For all that, you had some grand schemes about her. You may as well own it as they have failed.

*Léan.* If I were foolish enough to value her charm, I should laugh at all your tricks.

*Lél.* What tricks do you mean?

*Léan.* Oh! we know all about that.

*Lél.* All about what?

*Léan.* Why all your goings-on, from beginning to end.

*Lél.* This is all Greek to me; I can't understand it.

*Léan.* Pretend, if you like, not to understand me; but you need not be afraid of my disputing with you a possession which any one may have. I like a beauty that is not soiled; one who is free with every one has no charm for me.

*Lél.* Softly, softly, Léandre.

*Léan.* Ha! how simple you are! Go, I tell you, and see her. I shall not be jealous, and you may be congratulated. Her beauty's very uncommon, but she makes herself much too common.

*Lél.* Léandre, no more of this provoking language. Try as hard as you like to win her from me. I won't have my divinity's character run down by any one, and I would much rather put up with you as a rival than have you say a word against her character.

*Léan.* What I tell you comes from a very good source.

*Lél.* Whoever told you so is a rascal and a scoundrel. No one shall say a word against the girl. I know her very heart.

*Léan.* Well, I suppose Mascarille is a pretty good judge in the matter, and it was he who spoke lightly of her.

*Lél.* He?

*Léan.* None other.

*Lél.* What, does the insolent rascal dare to say a word against

an honourable girl like that, and to think I should make a joke of it? I'll lay you what you like that I force him to eat his words.

*Léan.* I'll take you that he doesn't.

*Lél.* Why, I'd thrash him within an inch of his life if he dared to say anything of the kind to me!

*Léan.* And I'll crop his ears on the spot if he does not stand to what he said.

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## SCENE IV.

LÉLIE, LÉANDRE, MASCARILLE.

*Lélie.* Ah! by good luck here he is. Come hither, you vile cur!

*Mascarille.* What's the matter?

*Lél.* You serpent's tongue, full of lies! how dare you speak against Célie! How dare you, too, say a word against the most virtuous girl that ever shone under ill-fortune!

*Mas.* Gently. What I said was part of my plan. (*Aside to Lélie, and making signs.*)

*Lél.* No, no; none of your winking or trying to make a joke of it. I am blind and deaf to all that you can say or do. If it were my own brother he should pay dear for it. To dare to say a word against one whom I adore is to wound me in the tenderest part. All those signs are useless. What was it that you said to this gentleman?

*Mas.* Pray, sir, don't quarrel about it, or I shall be off.

*Lél.* No, you don't stir a step.

*Mas.* Oh! oh!

*Lél.* Well, speak, then!—confess!

*Mas.* Let me go. (*Whispering to Lélie.*) I tell you it is an artful trick.

*Lél.* Make haste. What was it you said? Decide this point between us.

*Mas.* I said what I said; don't put yourself in a passion.

*Lél.* (*drawing his sword*). Ah! I'll make you talk in another style.

*Léan.* (*stopping him*). Stay a moment; abate somewhat of your anger.

*Mas.* Was there ever any one possessed of so little understanding?

*Lél.* Let me satisfy my outraged feelings on him!

*Léan.* It is taking too much on you to beat him in my presence.

*Lél.* What? Have I not the right to correct my own people?

*Léan.* What do you mean by "your people"?

*Mas.* (*aside*). Again! He'll discover everything.

*Lél.* If I chose to beat him to death, what then? He's my own servant.

*Léan.* No; at present he's mine.

*Lél.* This is a good joke! Pray how is he yours?

*Léan.* Most certainly.

*Mas.* (*whispering*). Gently.

*Lél.* Ha! what tale do you want to tell me?

*Mas.* (*aside*). Oh, the confounded blockhead! He's going to spoil everything. I can't get him to understand, make what signs I will.

*Lél.* You've got some queer notions, Léandre, and want to impose them on me. Is he not my servant?

*Léan.* Haven't you dismissed him from your service for some fault that he committed?

*Lél.* I don't know what you mean.

*Léan.* And did you not in your anger chastise him across the shoulders most unmercifully?

*Lél.* Certainly not. I discharge him, and thrash him! You must be laughing at me, Léandre, or else he has been making fun of you.

*Mas.* (*aside*). Pray go on, blockhead! you'll soon settle your affairs.

*Léan.* (*to Mascarille*). So all this thrashing was imaginary?

*Mas.* He does not know what he says. His memory——

*Léan.* No, no. All your signs won't do you any good. I can form an idea of your artful design; but I'll forgive you for the sake of your cleverness. It's enough for me that he has undeceived me, so that I see your motive for having imposed on me; and I am glad to have got off so easily when I had trusted myself to your hypocritical zeal. This ought to be called a hint to the reader. Farewell, Lélie, farewell; your most obedient servant. [*Exit.*

*Mas.* Courage, my brave boy! May good luck attend us! Let us draw the sword and bravely start on our campaign. Let us act "Olibvius, the slayer of the innocents."

*Lél.* He accused you of slandering.

*Mas.* And could not you see my design, and have left him to his mistake, which was doing you good, and had well-nigh cured him of his love? No, forsooth, he has an open, frank soul which cannot dissemble. I had cleverly insinuated myself into his rival's

favour; this trick would have put his sweetheart into my hands—when he must needs thwart me by a false message. I try to lessen the warmth of his rival's love, when my fine fellow must needs come and undeceive him. It is useless for me to make signs to show him that it is only a stratagem; he pushes his point home, and never rests till he has unravelled the whole affair. Grand and sublime effort of an imagination which yields to no man living! It's an excellent specimen, worthy, upon my word, to be presented to the king's museum.

*Lél.* I am not surprised that I baffle your efforts. Unless I am informed of your plans beforehand, I may make a hundred more mistakes of the same sort.

*Mas.* So much the worse.

*Lél.* At least, if you would be justly angry with me, give me some insight into your plans; but if the door is kept always closed, you must not wonder if I am taken unawares.

*Mas.* I believe you would be an excellent fencing-master, you are so wonderfully skilful in making feints and parrying thrusts.

*Lél.* Since the thing is done, it's no use thinking of it any more. My rival cannot in any case thwart me; and provided that your endeavours, on which I rely——

*Mas.* Let us drop this discourse, and talk of something else. I can tell you, I'm not so easily pacified. I am too angry. You must first render me a service, and then we will see afterwards whether I can again undertake your love affairs.

*Lél.* If that is all, I can refuse nothing. Tell me, do you want my blood, or must I draw my sword for you?

*Mas.* What strange ideas run in his head! You're of the same temper as those friends of the sword who are always more ready to draw than to produce a tester if one wanted it.

*Lél.* What can I do for you?

*Mas.* Well, then, you must absolutely appease your father's anger.

*Lél.* We've made it up already.

*Mas.* Yes, but not for me. I killed him this morning for love of you. The idea of it enrages him; and such fancies are cruel shocks to old men like him, as they give rise to melancholy reflections on their approaching end. The good man, old as he is, loves life dearly, and can bear no joke on the subject. He dreads the omen, and being in a rage with me, has, so they say, taken out a summons against me. I am afraid if I'm once lodged at the king's expense, that after the first quarter of an hour I may

like it so well that I shall find it difficult to come out again. There are a good many warrants out against me, of pretty long standing; for indeed virtue is always envied and persecuted in this cursed age. Go, then, and try and win him over.

*Lél.* Oh, yes, I can manage that; but at the same time you must promise——

*Mas.* Well, then, we'll see about it. (*Exit Lélie.*) Now for a little breathing-time after so much fatigue. Let us stop for awhile the course of our intrigues, and not plague ourselves like some unquiet spirit. Léandre at last is off guard, and Célie being kept safely, thanks to that artifice——

## SCENE V.

ERGASTE, MASCARILLE.

*Ergaste.* I have been looking for you everywhere, as I want to do you a service by informing you of a very important secret.

*Mascarille.* What may that be?

*Er.* There are no listeners about?

*Mas.* None at all.

*Er.* We are friends, as much as it is possible to be. I know all your plans, and your master's love affair. Look about you sharply by and by; Léandre has made a plot to carry off Célie, and I am told that he has arranged everything, and flatters himself that he will be able to get into Trufaldin's house by means of a masquerade—having learnt that at this season women of the neighbourhood often go masked to pay visits of an evening.

*Mas.* Good. That's enough. He has not yet succeeded in gaining his utmost wishes. I may be able presently to choke him off, and deliver a sly blow against this assault, by which I intend that he shall run himself through. He does not know all the gifts with which heaven has provided me. Good-bye. We'll drain a bottle together at our next meeting. [*Exit Ergaste.*

*Mas.* (*alone*). We must, indeed we must, get all the good we can for ourselves from this amorous intrigue, and by a dexterous and uncommon surprise try for good luck without any risk. If I get the start of him in the masquerade business, Léandre will have no reason to crow over us; and then if we take the prize before he comes, he will have to pay for the enterprise, for his plan having already taken wind, suspicion will fall on him, while we, being shielded from pursuit, need not fear any bad results from this hazardous attack. We shall escape making any disturbance, and use the cat's-paw to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. Now

then, let us go to mask ourselves with some good comrades, for if we are to be first in the field there must be no loitering. I know where the hare lies, and can, without any trouble, furnish myself at once with men and dresses. Depend upon it, I'll turn my dexterity to good account. If heaven has given me deception for my share, I'm not like those degenerate spirits who hide the talents that Providence has bestowed on them.

### Scene VI.

Lélie, Ergaste.

*Lélie.* What! he intends to carry her off in masquerade?

*Ergaste.* It is absolutely certain. One of the party having told me of the plot, I ran as quickly as I could to Mascarille, to tell him all about it; and he is gone, so he said, to break up their scheme by some suddenly devised stratagem of his own; and as I have accidentally met you here, I thought it my duty to let you know the whole affair.

*Lél.* I am extremely obliged to you for this news. I shall not forget this faithful service. (*Exit Ergaste.*) My amusing rascal will certainly play them some trick, but I should like, for my part, to second his design. It shall never be said that in a matter which concerns me so closely I could not stir more than a post. It must be near the time. I warrant they'll be surprised at the sight of me. Zounds! why didn't I bring my stick with me? But there, if any one attacks me, I have a brace of pistols and a good sword. Hullo! Any one there? I want a word with you.

### Scene VII.

Lélie, Trufaldin.

*Trufaldin.* What's the matter? Who's there?

*Lélie.* Fasten your doors carefully to-night.

*Tru.* What for?

*Lél.* There are certain fellows coming in masks, who intend to give you an unpleasant serenade. They mean to carry off Célie.

*Tru.* Good heavens!

*Lél.* And they're sure to be here very soon. Stay where you are. You can see everything from the window. Ah! What did I tell you? Don't you see them coming? Hist! I want you to see me open upon them. We shall have good sport if our cord does not break.

## SCENE VIII.

LÉLIE, TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE *and his party* (*masked*).

*Trufaldin.* So these pleasant rogues think to catch me napping.

*Lélie.* You masks there, where are you off to so quick? Won't you tell us all about it? Trufaldin, pray open the door that these mummers may play. Oh, heavens! how beautiful she is! and what a charming air! What, are you grumbling? May not one, without offence, remove the mask, and see your face?

*Tru.* Be off, you villainous rogues; go away from here, you ragamuffins! (*To Lélie.*) And you, sir, good-night, and many thanks.

*Lél.* What, Mascarille! is it you?

*Mas.* No, marry, it is not; it is some one else.

*Lél.* Alas! What a surprise! What ill fortune is ours! Could I possibly have guessed this, not having been told beforehand of the reasons which led you to disguise yourself. Unhappy that I am to have looked under that mask, and so have played you this trick without meaning it. I have a good mind, in the heat of my just anger, to fall on myself and inflict a hundred blows on my body.

*Mas.* Farewell, most refined wit, unparalleled imagination!

*Lél.* Alas! if your anger deprives me of your assistance, whom can I call upon?

*Mas.* The devil himself!

*Lél.* Ah! if your heart is not as insensible as brass or steel, once more at least let my imprudence be pardoned; if to obtain it I should kiss your feet, see me——

*Mas.* Come along, my mates, come along. I hear some people coming close behind us.

## SCENE IX.

LÉANDRE *and his suite* (*masked*), TRUFALDIN.

*Léandre.* No noise. Let us act in the best style.

*Trufaldin* (*at the window*). What! Masks besieging my door all the night. Gentlemen, pray don't take cold for nothing; every one who does so has surely plenty of time to lose. It is a little too late to carry Célie off. She begs you to excuse her this night. She is in bed, and so cannot speak to you. I am extremely sorry on your account. But to refresh you after the great pains you've been at for her sake, she sends you this perfumery. (*Empties a basin of dirty water on them.*)

Phew! that does not smell very sweet! I'm drenched with it. We are discovered, so we'd better be off.

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

LÉLIE (*dressed like an Armenian*), MASCARILLE.

*Mascarille.* There, you are got up in a most jolly fashion.

*Lélie.* You have by this means revived my dead hope.

*Mas.* My anger is always too soon over. It is of no use to swear and protest; I can't keep it up.

*Lél.* And in return, depend upon it, if I ever have it in my power, you shall have no cause to complain of my want of gratitude, and if I had only a single morsel of bread——

*Mas.* That will do. Now give all your thoughts to this new plot. However, if you commit any blunder, you can't lay it to the account of surprise; you ought to have learnt your part in this play off by heart.

*Lél.* But how did Trufaldin receive you at his house?

*Mas.* I got over the old man by a pretended zeal for him; I said I had come to tell him as earnestly as I could, that unless he looked well about him some people would surprise him; that they were taking their aim, from more than one quarter, at the girl about whose birth a false disclosure had been made; that they had wished to involve me in the matter, but that I had taken care to keep out of it; and that, being moved by zeal for his interest, I came to warn him to be upon his guard. Then, moralising, I discoursed seriously on the number of rogues one sees about every day, and said that for my part, being tired of the world and its evil ways, I wished to attend to my soul's salvation, to retire from all worry, and pass the rest of my days in peace near some good man; that if he thought well of it, I should like to end my life with him; and that he had so far gained my affection, that, without asking any wages, I would place in his hands, knowing it to be safe, some money which my father had left me, as well as my savings: of which, if it pleased heaven to take me first, he should be the sole heir, knowing that this was the best way to reach his heart. And since, in order that your sweetheart and you might find out some expedient for crowning your desires, I wished to arrange a private interview, he himself devised a way that promises well, by which you may openly stay in the same house with her; for he happened to tell me of a dead son of his, who he dreamt last night had come to life again. The

following is the story he told me, and on which I have formed a new scheme.

*Lél.* Enough; I know it all; you have already it told me twice.

*Mas.* Yes, yes; but when I've told it you even three times it may be that your intelligence, in spite of its sufficiency, may fail on some point or other.

*Lél.* But I can hardly restrain myself to wait so long.

*Mas.* Ah! but pray don't run so fast, for fear you should get a fall. Do you understand? You've a head-piece that's rather hard; so you must be quite clear in this matter. Some time ago Trufaldin left Naples—as he was then called, Zanobio Ruberti. A faction having caused an outbreak in the city, of which he alone was suspected (in fact, he's not a man to make a commotion in any state), obliged him to leave the place quietly by night. His very young daughter and his wife were left behind, and some time afterwards he received news of their death. Under this great affliction, wishing to take with him to some other town both his property and the only hope left to his race, a son named Horace, then a boy at school, he wrote to Bologna, where, that he might have the best instruction, he had committed the lad to the care of a tutor named Albert. But though the time and place were fixed for their meeting, two whole years passed without his seeing or hearing of them; so that after that time, supposing they must be dead, he came to this city, where he took the name he now bears, never having found in twelve years the least trace of this Albert or of his son Horace. This, then, is the story in rough outline, only repeated over again that you might be surer of the groundwork. Now, you're to be an Armenian merchant who has seen them both in Turkey, safe and sound. If I have made use of this means rather than any other for bringing these people to life again of whom he dreamt, it is because it is very common to hear of people taken captive at sea by the Turkish corsairs, and then restored to their families perhaps fifteen or twenty years afterwards. For my part I've heard a hundred tales of this kind, and so let's make use of them without troubling our brains any farther. You are to have heard them tell the story of their being sold as slaves, and to have furnished them with money to redeem themselves; but you having set out first on urgent business, Horace charged you to come here and see his father, whose position he had learnt, and with whom you were to stay for a few days till they arrived. Now I've given you a good long lesson.

*Lél.* These repetitions are needless. I understood the whole affair from the first.

I'll go in and give the first stroke.

*Lél.* Listen, Mascarille; there's only one point that troubles me. Suppose he should ask me to describe his son's appearance?

*Mas.* That's no great difficulty! Don't you know that he was quite young when he last saw him? and then, besides that, length of time and slavery must have completely altered him.

*Lél.* That's true. But tell me, if he should remember having seen me before, what must I do then?

*Mas.* Have you really lost your memory? I told you just now that, as he only had a passing view of you, that could not have made much impression on him, as he could not have seen you for above a minute; besides, your beard and dress would disguise you completely.

*Lél.* Very well. But now I think of it, what part of Turkey?

*Mas.* Oh, it's all the same, I tell you—Turkey or Barbary.

*Lél.* But the name of the town where I am to have seen him?

*Mas.* Tunis. He'll keep me all day, I think. He says such constant repetition is needless, and yet I've repeated the name of this town to him a dozen times already.

*Lél.* Go and start, then; I want nothing more.

*Mas.* At any rate be prudent, and act for the best. Don't give us any more of your inventions.

*Lél.* Leave me to manage. You're always so suspicious.

*Mas.* Horace, a schoolboy, at Bologna; Trufaldin—Zanobio Ruberti, a citizen of Naples; the tutor, Albert——

*Lél.* Ah! you're making me quite ashamed with all this preaching at me. Do you take me for a fool?

*Mas.* Not a perfect one; but very near it.

*Lél.* (*solus*). When I've no occasion for him he cringes like a spaniel, but now, because he knows very well he is giving me important help, his familiarity is unbearable.—Now I am going into the full sunshine of those bright eyes whose power has imposed on me a servitude so delightful: I am now going, without any hindrance, to paint to my charmer in glowing colours the torments my heart has suffered! I shall then know my fate.—But here they are.

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SCENE II.

TRUFALDIN, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

*Trufaldin.* Righteous heaven be thanked for this favourable turn in my fortune!

*Mascarille.* You are the man to see visions and dream dreams, since with you dreams are no idle dreams.

*Tru.* What thanks can I render you, what good can I do you, seigneur—you whom I ought to style the good angel of my happiness?

*Lélie.* Give yourself no trouble about that; I can dispense with thanks.

*Tru.* (*to Mascarille*). I have seen some one, I don't know where, having some resemblance to this Armenian.

*Mas.* That's what I was just saying; but one sees surprising likenesses sometimes.

*Tru.* Have you really seen this son of mine, on whom all my hopes are fixed?

*Lél.* Yes, Seigneur Trufaldin; he's one of the jolliest fellows in the world.

*Tru.* Did he give you the history of his life, and talk much about me?

*Lél.* More than ten thousand times.

*Mas.* (*aside to Lélie*). I should fancy less than that.

*Lel.* He described you just as I see you; your face, your air——

*Tru.* How could that be, when he has not seen me since he was seven years old? Why, even his tutor, after so long a time, could scarcely recognise me.

*Mas.* One's own flesh and blood preserve this likeness in quite another fashion. This likeness is shown by certain marks so strong that my father——

*Tru.* That will do. Where was it you left him?

*Lél.* In Turkey, at Turin.

*Tru.* Turin? Why, that's in Piedmont.

*Mas.* (*aside*). Oh, what an idiot! (*To Trufaldin.*) You don't understand him, he means Tunis; and there it was that he actually left your son: but the Armenians all have a custom, a particular faulty pronunciation, as it seems to other nations; in all their words they change a "*nis*" into "*rin*," and so instead of saying *Tunis* they pronounce *Turin*.

*Tru.* One needed this explanation in order to understand him. How did he tell you to find out his father?

*Mas.* (*aside*). See if he'll answer. (*To Trufaldin, who sees him gesticulating.*) I have just been practising a lesson in fencing. Formerly there was not a man anywhere who could match me, and I've used a foil in many and many a fencing-room.

*Tru.* That's not what I want to know now. (*To Lélie.*) What other name did he say that I should go by?

*Mas.* (*seeing Lélie still at fault*). Ah! Seigneur Zanobio Ruberti, what joy is heaven sending to you!

*Lél.* That is your true name: the other is assumed.

*Tru.* But where did he tell you that he first saw the light?

*Mas.* Naples seems a most agreeable place to live in, but no doubt to you it is most hateful.

*Tru.* Can't you let us talk without chattering?

*Lél.* It was in Naples that he first drew his breath.

*Tru.* Where did I send him when he was young, and to whom did I entrust him?

*Lél.* That poor tutor Albert, to whose discretion your care had committed him, deserves well of you, for having accompanied your son from Bologna.

*Tru.* Pshaw!

*Mas.* (*aside*). We shall be lost if this conversation lasts much longer.

*Tru.* I should be glad to learn from you something about their adventures; on board what vessel Fate brought this upon me.

*Mas.* I don't know how it is, but I do nothing but yawn. But Seigneur Trufaldin, do you consider that perhaps this gentleman would like some refreshment? and besides that, it's late.

*Lél.* Oh, no refreshment for me.

*Mas.* Oh, sir, you are hungrier than you imagine.

*Tru.* Please to walk in, then.

*Lél.* After you.

*Mas.* (*to Trufaldin*). Sir, in Armenia the masters of the house use no ceremony. (*Trufaldin goes in.*) (*To Lélie.*) You poor wretch, can't you say two words?

*Lél.* He surprised me at first. But don't give yourself any further concern; I have pulled myself together, and am going to talk away boldly.

*Mas.* Here comes our rival, who knows nothing of our plot. (*They enter Trufaldin's house.*)

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## Scene III.

### Léandre, Anselme.

*Anselme.* Stay, Léandre, and listen to something which closely concerns your peace and reputation. I do not speak to you as the father of my daughter, as a man interested in my own family, but as if I were your father, anxious for your welfare, without wishing to flatter you or to disguise anything from you. In short,

I deal with you in an open and honest spirit, as I should wish every one to deal with me and mine in like case. Are you aware how every one regards this amour of yours, which in one night has been published everywhere? To how much remark and ridicule has your adventure of last night exposed you! What opinion can people form of this capricious choice of a common gipsy as your wife, a strolling wench whose only employment is that of a beggar? I blushed for you more than for myself, though indeed I am involved in the scandal: myself, I say, whose daughter being promised to you in marriage, cannot suffer the insult without humiliation. I beg of you, Léandre, don't lower yourself any longer; open your eyes and see how blindly you have been acting. If we are none of us wise at all times, the most short-lived errors are always the best. When a man has no portion with his wife except her good looks, repentance follows hard upon marriage, and the handsomest wife has very little defence against the lukewarmness which follows possession. The joys of marriage are soon damped by the stern realities of life, and then come cares, anxieties, and sorrows, sons disinherited by the father's anger.

*Léandre.* In all you say, I have not heard one word which my mind has not already brought before me. I know how much I owe to the great honour you design for me, and of which I am unworthy; and I see, in spite of the energy with which I have struggled against it, that your daughter's worth and virtue are so great, that I am determined to try——

*Ans.* They are opening this door: let us go a little further off, for fear some bad influence should seize you unawares.

## SCENE IV.

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

*Mascarille.* We shall very soon see the wreck of our plot if you will persist in these fearful blunders.

*Lélie.* Must I for ever listen to your fault-finding? What have you to complain of? Have I not succeeded in everything I have said since——

*Mas.* So, so: witness the Turks whom you called heretics, and who, you solemnly affirmed, worshipped the sun and moon for their gods. Let that pass; but what vexes me beyond measure is that your love leads you to a strange forgetfulness; when you are near Célie it is like soup which, heated by too fierce a fire, swells, mounts up to the brim, and runs over all round.

*Lél.* Could one force oneself to a greater reserve? As yet I have scarcely spoken to her.

*Mas.* Yes, but it is not enough not to speak. By your gestures during the short time of supper you gave greater ground for suspicion than other people would have done in a whole twelvemonth.

*Lél.* And how so?

*Mas.* How so? Every one could see it. At table, where Trufaldin would force her to sit down, you never took your eyes off her; you blushed and sat dumb, hanging on her looks, and not paying the least attention to what you were being helped to. You were never thirsty but when she drank, and then, seizing the glass out of her hands, without rinsing it or throwing a drop of it away, you drank her leavings, and sought to drink on that side of the glass she had carried to her lips. Every morsel that her delicate hand had touched, or her teeth had pressed, you seized as a cat would a mouse, and swallowed most greedily. And then, besides all this, you kept up an intolerable noise with your feet under the table, and gave Trufaldin two hard kicks, for which he punished two innocent dogs, who would have picked a quarrel with you if they dared. And then, after all that, you say you behaved well! For my part my whole body was on the rack. Notwithstanding the cold, I was in a perspiration with my exertions. I hung over you as a bowler does over his bowl after he has delivered it, and tried to restrain your actions by a thousand distortions of my body.

*Lél.* Good gracious! How easy it is to condemn things of which you don't feel the enchanting cause. However, just to please you for once, I will control that love which imposes its laws on me. Henceforward——

## SCENE V.

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE, TRUFALDIN.

*Mascarille.* We were just talking about Horace's adventures.

*Trufaldin* (*to Lélie*). That was very well. Meantime, will you grant me the favour of a word with him in private?

*Lélie.* I should be very inconsiderate if I did not.

*Tru.* (*alone with Mascarille*). Now, listen to me. Do you know what I've just been doing?

*Mas.* No; but I soon shall do so, if you will be so good as to inform me.

*Tru.* From a great sturdy oak, nearly two hundred years old,

I have just cut off a splendid branch, chosen expressly, of a reasonable thickness, of which I made on the spot, with great zest, a cudgel, about (*showing his arm*), yes, about this size, rather tapering at one end, but, as I think, better than thirty saplings for belabouring the shoulders, for one can get a good hold of it; it is green, knotty, and strong.

*Mas.* But for whom, pray, is this prepared?

*Tru.* First of all for yourself; then for this good missionary, who would restore to me one person and cheat me out of another; for this Armenian, this merchant in disguise, introduced under the bait of a trumped-up story.

*Mas.* What! Don't you believe?

*Tru.* Don't look about for an excuse. Fortunately he himself discovered the cheat, by saying to Célie, as he squeezed her hand, that it was for her sake alone that he had come in this disguise. He did not notice my little goddaughter Jeannette, who heard every word. I don't doubt, though he didn't happen to mention it, that you are his cursed accomplice in all this.

*Mas.* Indeed you do me wrong. If one must contradict you, believe that he imposed on me first with this story.

*Tru.* Do you wish to prove to me that you are speaking the truth? Assist my arm in driving him away. Let us give this rascal a sound thrashing, then I will acquit you of everything.

*Mas.* Ay, ay, with all my heart I'll lay into him, and by that you shall see that I have not deceived you in anything. (*Aside.*) Ah, ah! Mister Armenian, you shall have a good thrashing, you who always spoil everything!

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## SCENE VI.

LÉLIE, TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE.

*Trufaldin* (*knocks at the door and addresses Lélie*). A word with you, pray. So, Mr. Impostor, you dare to deceive an honest man, and make game of him?

*Mascarille.* To pretend to have seen his son in another land in order to get the readier admission into his family.

*Tru.* (*beating Lélie*). Clear off; clear off at once!

*Lélie.* Oh, the scoundrel!

*Mas.* (*beating him also*). 'Tis thus that cheats——

*Lél.* Villain!

*Mas.* Are settled here. Keep that carefully for me.

*Lél.* What then? Am I the man to——

*Mas.* Come; be off, I tell you, or I'll beat your brains in.

*Tru.* This pleases me greatly. Come in. I am quite satisfied.

*Lél.* This to me! This glaring affront from a servant! Could any one have foreseen the action of this traitor, who has so insolently abused his master?

*Mas.* (*from Trufaldin's window*). May one ask, without offence, how your shoulders feel?

*Lél.* What! Have you still the impudence to speak to me in this manner?

*Mas.* See, then—see what it is to overlook little Jeannette, and always to have an ungovernable tongue. But this time I'm not angry with you; I've done scolding and swearing at you. Although the folly of the action was so great, yet my hand has expiated the fault on your backbone.

*Lél.* Ah! I am determined to take revenge for this shameful assault.

*Mas.* You have brought all this mischief on your own head?

*Lél.* I?

*Mas.* If you had not been an addle-pate when you were talking heedlessly to your idol, you would have perceived Jeannette close to you, whose sharp ear discovered the whole affair.

*Lél.* Could any one possibly hear a word I said to Célie?

*Mas.* How else, then, came your speedy expulsion? Yes, you are shut out by your own prating. I don't know whether you often play at picquet, but you have an admirable knack of throwing away your good cards.

*Lél.* Oh, I am the most unfortunate of all wretches! But I ask again, why should I have been turned out by you?

*Mas.* I never did anything better than undertaking that task: for by this means, at least, I escape all suspicion of being the author, or, at any rate, the accomplice in this artifice.

*Lél.* You should, at any rate, have laid it on more gently.

*Mas.* How stupid you are. Why, Trufaldin was watching us most closely. And further, I must tell you that under this useful cover I was not sorry to vent my vexation. In short, the thing is over, and if I have your word that you will never directly or indirectly revenge those blows which I gave you with such good will, then I promise you that, by the help of the position in which I am, I will satisfy your desires before two nights have passed.

*Lél.* Though your treatment of me was cruel, yet what would not such a promise induce me to do!

*Mas.* You promise it, then?

*Lél.* Yes, I do promise.

*Mas.* But this is not all; promise me that you will never meddle with anything I have in hand.

*Lél.* That shall be so.

*Mas.* If you fail, plague take you.

*Lél.* But be as good as your word to me, and think of my happiness.

*Mas.* Go and take off your coat, and put some ointment on your back.

*Lél.* Must that ill-fortune which pursues my steps always present to me disgrace upon disgrace?

*Mas.* What! are you not gone yet? Go from here at once! Above all, take care not to trouble about anything. Let it be enough for you that I am acting for you, and do not try to forward my plans in the slightest degree. Go, and stay quietly.

*Lél.* Yes, I'll keep to that.

*Mas.* Now let me see what course to take.

## SCENE VII.

ERGASTE, MASCARILLE.

*Ergaste.* Mascarille, I've come to tell you a piece of news which will give a sad blow to your designs. Now, while I am speaking to you, a young gipsy has come, who, however, is not black, and has a gentlemanly appearance. He is accompanied by a pale-faced old woman, and is going to call on Trufaldin, to repurchase the slave that you are after. He seems to be very keen after her.

*Mascarille.* No doubt it is the lover Célie spoke of. Were ever people's fortunes so embroiled as ours are? We are no sooner clear of one embarrassment than we fall into another. It is of no use that we learn that Léandre is on the point of giving up the affair, and troubling us no longer: that his father having arrived, contrary to all expectation, turns the balance in favour of Hypolyte; that he has changed the look of everything by his authority, and is going this very day to conclude the marriage treaty. As soon as one rival takes himself off, a more dangerous one turns up to deprive us of all the hope that remains. Nevertheless, by a wonderful exercise of my art I believe I shall be able to stop their going for a while, and so gain as much time as will be necessary to put the finishing stroke to this famous affair. A great robbery has been committed, by whom no one knows. These gipsy people are not generally thought much of, and so on a slight suspicion I can manage to get the young man imprisoned

for a few days. I know some thirsty officers of justice, who are always ready for such jobs. In the greedy hope of getting something, there's nothing that they will not attempt blindfold; be the person ever so innocent, his purse is a criminal for their benefit, and must pay a fine.

## ACT V. SCENE I.

MASCARILLE, ERGASTE.

*Mascarille.* Oh, the cur! The stupid cur! Blunder-headed turnspit! Shall we never be free from your persecution?

*Ergaste.* By the great care of the constable, your affair was going on all right; our man had just been nabbed, when your master must needs come upon the scene at that moment, like a madman, to upset your plot. "I won't allow," he says, in a haughty tone, "an honest man to be dragged off in this shameful manner. I can see by his looks what he is. I will answer for him, and be his bail." And as they made some resistance rather than let go their man, he charged them so vigorously, that, as they are a kind of folk who are very careful of their own persons, they are at this moment running off as hard as they can, each fancying he has a Lélie close upon him.

*Mas.* The idiot does not know that this gipsy is now in the house ready to carry off his treasure.

*Er.* Good-bye; pressing business obliges me to leave you. [*Exit.*

*Mas.* Yes, this last monstrous accident has positively stunned me. One would think, and I really believe it, that the blundering devil by which this fellow is possessed is delighted to dare me, and sends him wherever his presence can do me mischief. Yet, for all this I'm determined to go on, and we'll see which shall carry the day—this demon, or myself. Célie is somewhat in our confidence, and is most unwilling to depart. I will try to profit by this. But here they come: I must put my plan into execution. This furnished house is at my service; I can dispose of it as I choose. If fortune will only say the word, all will be ordered for the best. No one but myself has any right here, and I keep the keys. How strange that we should have had so many adventures in so short a time, and how many shapes a rogue is obliged to assume!

## SCENE II.

CÉLIE, ANDRÉS.

*Andrés.* You know, Célie, there is nothing that my heart has left undone to prove to you the intensity of its devotion. In the service of the Venetians, when I was but very young, my courage gained me some consideration, and I might some day, without being over-confident, have looked for some honourable distinction in their service. But I forgot everything for your sake. The sudden change you made in my heart enrolled your lover among your companions, and since then neither a thousand accidents nor your indifference have been able to alter my constant attachment to you. Being by chance parted from you much longer than I expected, I have spared neither time nor trouble to rejoin you. In short, having found the old gipsy woman, and full of impatience, having learnt your fate, how that for a certain sum which was of great consequence to them, and saved all the tribe from ruin, you had been left in pledge in these parts, I fly hither with all speed to break these bonds, and to receive from you what commands you are pleased to give. Yet I find you pensive and melancholy, when your eyes should have sparkled with joy. If a retired life has any attraction for you, I have made sufficient in the wars for us to live at Venice; but if I must still follow you I am quite content, and my heart will have no ambition other than to be near you, in whatever quality you please.

*Célie.* Your regard for me is so evident that I should be ungrateful to appear sad on that account: but just now my face gives no indication of the feelings of my heart. I am suffering from a violent headache, and if I have any influence with you, our journey should be put off at least three or four days till this indisposition shall have taken a turn.

*And.* Put it off as long as you like; all my thought is how to please you most. Let us look for a house where we may remain quietly. Ah, here is a bill that seems to have been put up just at the right moment.

## SCENE III.

MASCARILLE (*dressed as a Swiss*), LÉLIE, ANDRÉS.

*Andrés.* Seigneur Swiss, are you master of this house?

*Mascarille.* Me be at your serfice.

*And.* Can you lodge us well here?

*Mas.* Yes, me have very good shambers, ready furnish for stranger.

*And.* I hope yours is a respectable house.

*Mas.* Me see by your face you be one stranger in this town.

*And.* Why do you say so?

*Mas.* For why? Every one, man, woman, shild, know my 'ouse most respectable in der town.

*And.* Then I want comfortable rooms for this lady and myself.

*Mas.* Ah, you find one, two, three much comfortable room in in my litel 'ouse.

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SCENE IV.

LÉLIE, ANDRÉS; *afterwards* MASCARILLE.

*Lélie* (*alone*). Whatever may be the yearning of my impatient heart, my pledged word obliges me to wait and let another work for me, and to see, without daring to move, how heaven will dispose of my fate. (*To Andrés, who comes out of the house.*) Were you asking for any one lodging here?

*Andrés.* It is a furnished house, which I have just hired.

*Lél.* For all that, the house belongs to my father, and my servant sleeps here to take care of it.

*And.* I know nothing about that; the bill in the window shows it is to let. Read it.

*Lél.* Very true. I won't deny that it surprises me. Who the deuce could have put it there, and for what purpose? Ah, now in truth I can form a pretty good guess what it means! It can only come from the quarter I imagine.

*And.* May I venture to ask what this affair may be?

*Lél.* I should make a great secret of it to any one else, but it cannot concern you, and I am sure you will keep your own counsel. No doubt the bill you saw in the window must have been the invention of a servant of mine that I was speaking of. It is some subtle web that he has woven, to get a certain gipsy into my power, as I am smitten with her and must win her. I have missed her hitherto, though I have made several attempts.

*And.* Her name is——?

*Lél.* Célie.

*And.* Ah, why did not you say so? You'd only got to speak, and doubtless I would have saved you all the trouble that this scheme has cost you.

*Lél.* What! do you know her?

*And.* It is I who have just purchased her.

*Lél.* What a surprising tale!

*And.* Since her health did not allow her to depart, I have just placed her in this house, and I am much delighted that you have informed me of your intention.

*Lél.* What! Shall I obtain this happiness I hope for through you? Could you?

*And.* (*knocking at the door*). You shall be satisfied on that point directly.

*Lél.* What can I say to you? How can I thank you?

*And.* Pray don't; I want no thanks.

*Enter* MASCARILLE.

*Mascarille* (*aside*). Heaven bless us! if that isn't my fool of a master! He's sure to go and play us some fresh trick to upset us.

*Lél.* Who would have known him in this outlandish dress? Come here, Mascarille, you're welcome!

*Mas.* Me be man of honour, me no Masquerille!

*Lél.* What funny gibberish! It is really very good——

*Mas.* You go about your business, and make no laugh of me.

*Lél.* Get out with your masquerading, and recognise your master.

*Mas.* You go way. Me not know you.

*Lél.* Oh, it's all right; disguise yourself no longer.

*Mas.* If you no go, me give you one slap in de face.

*Lél.* Your Swiss jargon is needless, I tell you.

*Mas.* Me never no connaissance of you.

*Lél.* All is arranged; so disguise yourself no longer. We are agreed, and he has acted most generously. I have all that I could wish for, so you have no further cause for apprehension.

*Mas.* If by great good luck you have made all right, then I un-Swiss myself, and am as before.

*And.* This servant of yours did his very best for you. I will return to you, if you will wait a little. [*Exit.*

*Lél.* Now then, what have you to say?

*Mas.* That I am delighted to see our labour attended by such good success.

*Lél.* You were slow to leave your disguise, and could scarcely credit me.

*Mas.* Knowing you as I did, I was afraid, and this adventure is very surprising.

*Lél.* However, you must own that I have done a great deal at the last. I have made up for all my faults, and shall have the honour to give the finishing stroke to the work.

*Mas.* Let it be so. You will have been much more lucky than wise. *Enter* CÉLIE.

*And.* Is not this the object of your affections, of whom you were speaking to me?

*Lél.* Oh, what happiness can be equal to mine!

*And.* It is very true that I am greatly indebted to you for the favour you have done me, and if I did not acknowledge it I should be much to blame. But, in short, the favour would be hardly earned if I were to repay it at the price of my heart. Judge by the transport her beauty gives me, whether I ought to discharge my debt at such a cost. You are generous yourself, and would not desire it. Farewell, for some days; let us retrace our steps (*leads off Célie*).

*Mas.* I laugh, and yet I have not much inclination to do so. You're all agreed? He gives up Célie to you, and—— you understand me, sir?

*Lél.* It is too much. I will not again ask your assistance. I am no better than a dog, a villain, a detestable blockhead, not worthy anybody's care, incapable of doing any good. Go, leave off your efforts in behalf of an unlucky wretch, who will not allow any one to make him happy. After so many misfortunes, and so much blundering, death alone can give me any real aid. [*Exit.*

*Mas.* (*alone*). There he hit on the right way of crowning his fortune. There is lacking nothing, in short, but death to crown all his stupidity. But in vain does his indignation against the wrongs he has committed lead him to release me from my care and assistance. I'm resolved, whatever happens, to help him in spite of himself, and to vanquish his evil genius. The stronger the opposition, the greater the glory of overcoming it, and the difficulties by which one is beset are like a dressmaker's assistants who deck out virtue.

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## SCENE V.

MASCARILLE, CÉLIE.

*Célie* (*to Mascarille, who has been whispering to her*). Say what you will, and propose what they may, I expect very little from all this delay. The amount of success we have already seen may convince us how little chance there is of their coming to an agreement; and I have told you already that a heart like mine will not for the sake of one do injustice to another, and that I find myself strongly attached by different ties to both parties. If Lélie has love and its power on his side, Andrès has gratitude for his share, which will not permit my inmost thoughts ever to

harbour anything against his interests. Yes, if he has no longer a place in my heart, if the gift of my love cannot crown his devotion, at least I owe this to what he has done for me—not to choose another in contempt of his constancy, and that I should offer the same violence to my own wishes as I do to his inclinations, of which he has given such proof. Under these difficulties which duty throws in my way, you can judge how much hope you can allow yourself.

*Mas.* To say the truth, these are very troublesome obstacles, and I have not the art of working miracles, but I will use my utmost efforts, move heaven and earth, make every effort to try and find out some suitable expedient; and I will tell you shortly what can be done.

## SCENE VI.

*Hypolyte.* Ever since you've been among us, the ladies in these parts complain, and with some justice, of the robberies committed by your eyes, since you rob them of their best conquests, and make traitors of their lovers. There are few hearts that can escape the darts with which you have the art of striking people at first sight, and a thousand liberties offered to your chains seem to enrich you daily at our expense. For myself, however, I should make no complaint of the tyranny of your superior charms, if, when you have gained all my lovers, one of them had given me consolation for the loss of the others; but thus inhumanly to deprive me of both, is a harsh measure of which I venture to complain to you.

*Célie.* Madame, you make your attack with a certain grace, but I beg of you to show some mercy. Your eyes, ay, your own eyes, know their power too well to fear anything that I can do. They are too conscious of the force of their own charms to have much fear from the attacks of others.

*Hyp.* And yet I've said nothing but what all hearts feel, and, without naming others, it is well known that Célie has smitten both Léandre and Lélie.

*Cél.* I think that, as they have fallen into such a blind mistake, you will easily console yourself for their loss, and will find a more worthy lover who will not be capable of making so bad a choice.

*Hyp.* On the contrary, I look at the matter from quite a different point of view. I find such merit in your beauty, and see so many reasons to excuse the inconstancy of those who have been insensibly won by it, that I cannot blame the new devotion

for which Léandre has broken his former vows, and I shall soon, without anger or hatred, see him recalled to his former allegiance by the authority of his father.

## SCENE VII.

MASCARILLE, CÉLIE, HYPOLYTE.

*Mascarille.* Great news! wonderful news! An astonishing success I am going to tell you of.

*Célie.* What is it, then?

*Mas.* Listen, then; this is without any nonsense ---

*Cél.* Well, but what?

*Mas.* The conclusion of a true and genuine comedy. At this very moment the old gipsy——

*Cél.* What then?

*Mas.* Why, she was crossing the square, not thinking of anything particular, when another old woman, as haggard as herself, with a precious long nose, must needs make a quarrel about nothing, and use frightful language. This was the signal for a terrible fight. But instead of muskets, daggers, and spears, they only brandished in the air four dried-up talons, with which they tried to tear out each other's hair, and scratch each other's withered flesh. One heard only these words—"witch," "wolf," and worse. Off fly their caps, leaving a couple of bald heads to view, absurdly horrible. At the noise of the skirmish, Andrés and Trufaldin, and a number of other people, came running up to see what was the matter, and had trouble enough to part them. However, each one after this outbreak did her best to conceal the disgrace of her exposed head. Every one wanted to know what was the cause of such a quarrel, when she who had first raised the fray, in spite of the rags she was in, fixed her eyes for some time on Trufaldin, and said, in a high-pitched voice—"Yes, Seigneur Zanobio Ruberti, this is a fortunate meeting, if my eyes don't deceive me. I was told you were living in these parts, and I've found you just as I was giving myself a great deal of trouble for your sake. When you left your family at Naples, I had, as you know, your daughter in my care, whom I brought up in her infancy, and who at four years old showed a thousand little ways of gracefulness and attractive behaviour. She, whom you see here, this infamous hag, making herself very friendly in our family, stole away my darling. Alas! I have every reason to believe that, through excess of grief, your lady's days were shortened. Fearing the just anger you might show, I sent you

the news that they were both dead; but now that I have found this woman, I will make her tell me what has become of the child." At the name of Zanobio Ruberti, which she repeated several times in the course of her story, Andrés, having changed countenance for some time, addressed the astonished Trufaldin in the following terms: "Is it possible, then, that heaven has happily directed me to find him whom I have up to now vainly looked for, and could I have seen, without knowing him, the dear author of my being! Yes, father, I am your son Horace! Alberti, my tutor, having ended his days, and finding myself exposed to some anxieties, I left Bologna, and, forsaking my studies, I wandered about for six years, just as curiosity impelled me. However, after this time a secret desire urged me to revisit my home and my people. But in Naples, unhappily, I could not find you, nor get any news of you, except some confused reports; so having had my trouble for nothing, Venice for a time ended my fruitless wanderings, and since then I have lived without knowing anything of my family beyond its name." I leave you to judge whether, during this recital, Trufaldin was not transported with delight. Now, to cut the matter short, which you can inform yourselves about at your leisure, from the confession of this old gipsy-woman, Trufaldin owns you (*to Célie*) as his daughter; Andrés is your brother, and as he cannot marry his sister, an obligation he desires to own has led him to gain your hand for my master, whose father, being witness of all that took place, gives his full approval of the match; and to complete the joy of his family, he has proposed that his daughter should marry the newly-found Horace. See what a number of events are all taking place at once!

*Cél.* I feel perfectly overwhelmed by such wonderful news.

*Mas.* They are coming close behind me, except the two combatants, who are putting themselves to rights after the battle. Léandre is among them (*to Hypolyte*), and so is your father. I must go and tell my master that when everything seemed to be opposed to the fulfilment of his wishes, heaven has worked something like a miracle in his favour.

*Hyp.* The delight of this so overcomes me, that were it my own case I could not feel more pleasure. But here they come.

## SCENE VIII.

TRUFALDIN, ANSELME, PANDOLPHE, ANDRÉS, CÉLIE, HYPOLYTE, LÉANDRE: *afterwards* MASCARILLE *and* LÉLIE.

My child!

*Célie.* My father!

*Tru.* Do you know how much heaven has blessed us?

*Cél.* I have just heard the wonderful account.

*Hypolyte* (*to Léandre*). It would be in vain to make excuses for all your passionate speeches, when (*looking at Célie*) all that you can say I have before my eyes.

*Léandre.* I only ask for a generous pardon; and I call heaven to witness, that in this sudden return to my true devotion, my father has far less to do with it than the feeling of my heart.

*Andrès* (*to Célie*). Who could ever have believed that so pure a love should have been so impossible? But I retain all the kindest feelings of my heart for my dearest sister.

*Cél.* I may tell you frankly, dear brother, that my feeling for you never went beyond great esteem, which will now develop into the truest affection.

*Trufal.* But now I have found you, what will you think of me, when I tell you that I am thinking of parting with you, and of allowing this gentleman's son to marry you?

*Cél.* On you now depends my future.

*Enter* MASCARILLE *and* LÉLIE.

*Mas.* Now let us see if your devil of an ingenuity can destroy so sure a hope, and whether against your unexpected good luck even your blundering can set itself. By a most marvellous turn of fortune your desires are crowned, and Célie is yours.

*Lél.* Can I believe that the absolute power of heaven——

*Tru.* Yes, son-in-law; it is really so.

*Pandolphe.* It is all settled.

*And.* So I pay what I owe you.

*Lél.* (*to Mascarille*). I must embrace you thousands of times, in this excess of joy!

*Mas.* Oh, gently, gently, if you please! I am almost smothered. I fear much for Célie if you treat her so. One can do very well without such demonstrations.

*Tru.* (*to Lélie*). You know the happiness with which heaven has blest me; but since one and the same day has given joy to us all, let us not part till it is ended, and let Léandre's father be sent for at once.

*Mas.* Here you are, all provided for. Can't you find some one for poor Mascarille? I am very much inclined to get married.

*Anselme.* I think I know some one to suit you.

*Mas.* Let us go then; and may heaven bless us all with charming families!

# THE SCHOOL FOR HUSBANDS

## (*L'ÉCOLE DES MARIS*).

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SGANARELLE, } *brothers.*
ARISTE, }
ISABELLE, } *sisters.*
LÉONOR, }
LISETTE, *Léonor's maid.*

VALÈRE, *Isabelle's lover.*
ERGASTE, *Valère's valet.*
A MAGISTRATE.
A NOTARY.

SCENE—PARIS.

### ACT I. SCENE I.

SGANARELLE, ARISTE.

*Sganarelle.* If you please, brother, don't let us talk so much, but let each of us live according to his inclination. Though in years you have the advantage over me, and are old enough to be wise, I must tell you, all the same, that I don't intend to take any reproofs from you; my fancy is the only director I choose to follow, and I am quite content to live in my own way.

*Ariste.* But then, every one condemns it.

*Sga.* Yes, brother, fools like you.

*Aris.* Thank you; the compliment is kind.

*Sga.* I should like to know, since one must hear everything, what these fault-finders can blame in me.

*Aris.* That surly temper of yours, the uncouthness of which makes you shun all the pleasures of society, gives an odd air to all you do, and makes you a barbarian, even to your clothes.

*Sga.* I should, then, make myself a slave to custom, and not dress to my own liking? Would not you, with your foolish tales, my elder brother (for thank heaven you are so by twenty years, to tell you plainly, though it's not worth while to speak of it), I say would not you in these matters persuade me to follow the ways of your young coxcombs—oblige me to wear those little hats which cool their weak brains, and those powdered wigs whose great bushy curls obscure the form of the human face;

those short doublets which only come just below the arms, with the collars reaching to the waist; those sleeves which dip into the sauces at table, and the petticoats they call breeches; and those pretty shoes bedecked with ribands, which make you look like feather-footed pigeons; and those large fringed ornaments, in which your captive legs are confined in the stocks every morning, which make these fine gentlemen walk straddling as if they were shuttlecocks? I should delight you, no doubt, if I were equipped in this manner. You are, I see, dressed in this idiotic fashion.

*Aris.* One should always follow the majority, and not cause oneself to be stared at. Both extremes offend; and a wise man, in his clothes as well as in his words, should avoid anything affected, and, without too much haste, follow whatever change custom introduces. I do not think one should imitate those who continually exceed the fashion, and who are so fond of being in extremes that they would be vexed if any one went a step beyond them. But I hold it wrong, for whatever reason, to avoid obstinately what everybody else adopts; and it is better to be classed among the fools than to find oneself alone on the side of wisdom.

*Sga.* That savours of the old man who, to impose upon the world, conceals his grey hairs under a black wig.

*Aris.* It's a strange thing that you are always so careful to fling my age in my teeth, and that I constantly find you blaming my dress as well as my cheerfulness; as if old age should be condemned to give up all enjoyment, and think of nothing but dying; as if it were not attended by enough that is disagreeable, without being also crabbed and slovenly.

*Sga.* Let that be as it may, I am quite determined to make no alteration in my dress. In spite of the fashion, I mean to have a brim to my hat under which my head may find a convenient shelter; a good long doublet, buttoned close as it ought to be, to keep the stomach warm and encourage good digestion; a pair of breeches made to fit me exactly, and shoes in which my feet will not be tortured; such as our forefathers wisely wore. And if any one does not like the look of me, he has only got to shut his eyes.

## SCENE II.

LÉONOR, ISABELLE, LISETTE; ARISTE *and* SGANARELLE (*talking together in an undertone in front of the stage, unperceived*).

*Léonor* (*to Isabelle*). I take it on myself, in case you should be blamed.

*Lisette* (*to Isabelle*). Always in one room, without seeing any one!

*Isabelle.* Such is his disposition.

*Léo.* I pity you for it, sister.

*Lis.* (*to Léonor*). It is well for you, madame, that his brother is of quite another temper; and fate was very kind to you in letting you fall into the hands of a man of common sense.

*Isa.* It's a wonder that he has not locked me up or taken me out with him to-day.

*Lis.* For my part, I should send him to the devil, with his ruff, and——

*Sga.* (*against whom Lisette stumbles*). Allow me to ask where you're all going to?

*Léo.* We don't know yet; I was persuading my sister to walk out and enjoy this mild fine weather. But——

*Sga.* (*to Léonor*). For your part you may go where you think proper (*pointing to Lisette*). You have but to wander about both together; but as for you, madame (*to Isabelle*), if you please, I forbid you to go with them.

*Aris.* Ah! brother, give them leave to go and amuse themselves.

*Sga.* I am your most obedient servant, brother.

*Aris.* Youth always wishes——

*Sga.* Youth is foolish, and old age too sometimes.

*Aris.* Do you think there's any harm in her being with Léonor?

*Sga.* No, but I think it better for her to be with me.

*Aris.* But——

*Sga.* But her actions must be under my control. I know, in short, the interest I ought to take in them.

*Aris.* Am I less concerned in those of her sister?

*Sga.* Oh! every one must judge and act as he pleases. They have no relations, and our friend their father in his last hour committed them both to us, enjoining both of us either to marry them ourselves, or (if we did not feel so disposed) to marry them to others. He gave us in writing the full authority both of father and husband over them from their childhood. You undertook one, I took charge of the other. You govern yours according to your own will; but leave me, I beg of you, to manage mine as I choose.

*Aris.* It seems to me——

*Sga.* It seems to me—and I say it openly—that I am talking quite properly on such a subject. You allow your charge to go about smartly and gaily dressed. With all my heart. Let her

have a footman and a waiting-woman. I agree to it. Let her gad about, and love idleness, and be at liberty to be run after by the young sparks. I am well contented. But I am determined that mine shall live according to my fancy, and not her own ; that she shall be clothed in a decent stuff gown, and wear black satin only on holidays ; that she shall stay at home like a discreet person and apply herself entirely to household affairs, mend my linen in her leisure time, or else knit stockings for amusement. But she shall not listen to the discourse of coxcombs, nor ever go out without some one to look after her. Human nature is weak, and I hear all the stories that are going about. I do not choose to be made a fool of if I can help it, and as it is her fortune to marry me, I will take the same care of her as of myself.

*Isa.* You have no reason, that I know of——

*Sga.* Hold your tongue ! I'll let you know whether you are to go out without me !

*Léo.* What then, sir ?

*Sga.* Lord ! madame, no words if you please. I have no wish to talk with you, for you are overwise.

*Léo.* Are you sorry to see Isabelle with us ?

*Sga.* Well, yes, to tell the truth, since you spoil her for me. Your visits here displease me, and I beg that you will come here no more.

*Léo.* Would you have me speak plainly too ? I do not know how she takes all this, but I know very well what effect distrust would have on me ; and though one mother bore us, we can hardly be sisters if your constant behaviour produces any love in her.

*Lis.* Really, all these precautions are scandalous. Are we in Turkey, that women are to be locked up ? For we are told that in that country they are treated like slaves, and the people are cursed by heaven for it. Our honour, sir, must be weak indeed, if it must be continually watched. And do you think, after all, that these precautions are any hindrance to our purposes ? When we have taken anything into our head, the cunningest man is a donkey to us. All this vigilance is but a fool's dream. The surest way, let me tell you, is to trust us. He who restrains us is himself in great danger ; and our honour desires always to take care of itself. We are almost inspired with a wish to sin, when such care is taken to hinder us ; and should I find myself fettered by a husband, I should have very strong inclination to justify his apprehensions.

*Sga.* (*to Ariste*). This is your training, my fine tutor ! Can you listen to it without emotion ?

*Aris.* Her discourse, brother, should only make one laugh, though indeed there is some reason in it. Women love to enjoy a little liberty, and are ill restrained by so much austerity: distrustful care, bolts and gratings, will make neither wives nor maidens virtuous. It is honour that will keep them to their duty, not any severity that we exercise over them. To speak sincerely, a woman who is discreet only because she is forced to be, is an uncommon article. It is vain for us to try and govern all their actions; in my opinion we must try and gain their hearts. And take what care one might, I should not think my honour very safe in the hands of a person who, under the assaults of temptation, only lacked an opportunity of transgressing.

*Sga.* This is all nonsense.

*Aris.* So be it; but I always hold that we should instruct young people good-humouredly, reprove their failings with great gentleness, and not make them dread the very mention of virtue. My care of Léonor has been guided by these maxims; I have not turned slight liberties into crimes; I have continually given way to her youthful wishes; and I thank heaven I've no cause to repent it. I have given her leave to enter into good society; I have permitted her to go to various amusements, plays, and balls. These are things which, for my part, I judge very suitable to form the minds of young people; and the world is a school in which more is to be learnt than from any book. Léonor likes to spend money in clothes, linen, and ribbons. What would you have me do? I try to gratify her wishes. These are pleasures which one should allow to young girls of our families when we can afford it. Her father's command orders her to marry me; but I don't intend to act like a tyrant towards her. I know perfectly well that our ages are little suited, and so I leave her entirely to her own choice. If four thousand crowns a year, a great affection, and tender care can in her opinion make up for the difference in our ages, she may take me for her husband; if not, let her make her choice elsewhere. If she can be happier without me, I consent to it, and would rather see her married to another than gain her hand against her will.

*Sga.* Oh, how sweet he is! All sugar and honey!

*Aris.* In short, that's my notion, and I thank heaven for it. I shall never follow those rigid maxims which make children wish their parents dead.

*Sga.* But the liberty granted in youth cannot easily be abridged, and this way of thinking will be disagreeable to you when her mode of living has to be altered.

*Aris.* And why must it be altered?

*Sga.* Why?

*Aris.* Yes, why?

*Sga.* I don't know.

*Aris.* Is there anything in it to compromise one's honour?

*Sga.* What? If you marry her, can she expect the same liberty as a wife which she had when she was a girl?

*Aris.* Why not?

*Sga.* Will your love be so complaisant as to allow her patches and ribbons?

*Aris.* Certainly.

*Sga.* And to let her run about like a mad thing to every ball and party?

*Aris.* Yes, indeed.

*Sga.* And shall you allow the young fellows to come to her house?

*Aris.* And what then?

*Sga.* Shall you allow them to amuse themselves, and make her presents?

*Aris.* I have no objection.

*Sga.* And is your wife to hear their fine speeches?

*Aris.* Why not?

*Sga.* And shall you look upon the visits of these coxcombs in such a way as to show that they do not trouble you?

*Aris.* Of course.

*Sga.* Go along; you're an old fool! (*To Isabelle.*) Go indoors; I will not have you listen to such scandalous teaching.

[*Exit Isabelle.*

*Aris.* I desire to trust myself to the fidelity of my wife, and intend to live as I always have done.

*Sga.* How pleased I shall be when he's tricked!

*Aris.* I cannot tell for what fate I am born; but if *you* should fail to be so, the fault must not be laid at your door, seeing you have done all in your power to bring it about.

*Sga.* Laugh on, you giggler! What a pleasure it is to see a man facetious at almost sixty years old!

*Léo.* I guarantee him against the fate you speak of, if I give him my troth—he may assure himself of it; but I would answer for nothing if I were to be your wife.

*Lis.* There's a conscience due to those who trust us, but it's delicious, really, to cheat such people as you.

*Sga.* Begone, with your cursed ill-bred tongue.

*Aris.* You bring this ridicule on yourself, brother. Good-bye;

change your temper, and be forewarned that locking up a wife is a very bad plan. I am your most obedient servant. [*Exit Ariste.*

*Sga.* I'm not yours. (*Alone.*) Oh, how well suited they are to each other! What a charming family! A senseless old fellow who acts the fop in a crazy worn-out body, a girl who is mistress, and an arrant coquette; impudent servants. Not even Wisdom herself could succeed, but would lose sense and reason in the task of regulating such a family. Isabelle might lose in such company the principles of honour which she has learnt from me, and in order to prevent it I intend shortly to send her back to revisit our cabbages and turkeys.

## SCENE III.

VALÈRE, ERGASTE, SGANARELLE.

*Valère* (*at the back of the stage*). There's Sganarelle, the Argus that I detest; the stern guardian of her whom I adore.

*Sganarelle* (*believing himself to be alone*). Is not the corruption of manners nowadays something surprising?

*Val.* I'll speak to him if I can, and try to get acquainted with him.

*Sga.* Instead of that severity which in former times so admirably formed the virtuous character, young people are now absolutely unrestrained in their excesses, and do not take——

*Val.* (*after bowing to Sganarelle from a distance*). He does not see that we are bowing to him.

*Ergaste.* He's blind of that eye; let us go to the right side of him——

*Sga.* I must leave this place. A city life can only produce in me——

*Val.* (*gradually approaching nearer*). I must try and gain admittance to his house.

*Sga.* (*hearing a noise*). What! I thought somebody spoke. (*Believing himself alone.*) In the country, thank heaven, these fashionable fooleries do not offend my eyes.

*Er.* (*to Valère*). Speak to him.

*Sga.* (*again hearing a noise*). What is it? (*Not perceiving any one.*) My ears tingle—— (*Soliloquises again.*) There, all the amusements of our young women go no further than—— (*Valère bows*). Is that to me?

*Er.* Go nearer.

*Sga.* (*without attending to Valère*). Thither no coxcomb comes. (*Valère bows again.*) What the deuce! (*Ergaste bows on the other side.*) Again? What a number of bows!

*Val.* Sir, perhaps this meeting interrupts you.

*Sga.* That is possible.

*Val.* But yet, the honour of making your acquaintance is to me so great a happiness, so exquisite a pleasure, that I had a great desire to pay my respects to you.

*Sga.* That may be so.

*Val.* And to wait on you, and assure you without any dissimulation that I am entirely at your service.

*Sga.* I believe it.

*Val.* I have the good fortune to be one of your neighbours, for which I ought to thank my happy destiny.

*Sga.* That's well.

*Val.* But, sir, do you know the news which is current at Court, and is thought to be true?

*Sga.* What does it matter to me?

*Val.* That's true; still, a man sometimes may be envious to hear the latest news. Shall you go to see the magnificent preparations for the birth of our Dauphin?

*Sga.* If I choose.

*Val.* One must own that Paris affords us a hundred delightful pleasures, which are nowhere else to be found. The country in comparison is a solitude. How do you pass your time?

*Sga.* About my own affairs.

*Val.* The mind needs some relaxation, and sometimes gives way through too earnest attention to serious business. What do you do of an evening before bedtime?

*Sga.* What I please.

*Val.* Certainly, nothing could be said better. It is a reasonable answer, and good sense is evident in never doing anything but what one pleases. If I thought you were not too busy, I should come to your house now and then after supper to pass away the time.

*Sga.* Your most obedient servant!

## Scene IV.

Valère, Ergaste.

*Valère.* What do you think of this whimsical fool?

*Ergaste.* He has a surly way of answering, and receives people like a bear.

*Val.* How mad I am.

*Er.* At what?

*Val.* At what? Why it provokes me to see her I love in the

power of a savage, a watchful dragon, whose severity will not allow her any liberty.

*Er.* All the better for you, and on the effect of it you should build your surest hopes of success. You must know for your encouragement that a woman who is watched is half-won, and the gloomy temper of husbands and fathers has always promoted the interest of lovers. I am very little of an intriguer, it is my smallest accomplishment; I do not profess to be a ladies' man: but I have served a score of these women-hunters, and they always told me that it was their greatest delight to meet with these horrid husbands who never enter their houses without beginning to scold; these obstinate brutes who regulate every point of their wives' conduct without rhyme or reason; who, haughtily pluming themselves on the name of husband, fly in their wives' faces before the eyes of their admirers. "We know," they say, "how to take advantage of this." The vexation of the ladies at such outrages is a capital vantage ground for further attacks. In a word, the surliness of Isabelle's guardian is a circumstance very much in your favour.

*Val.* But during the four months that I have loved her so dearly I have never been able to get a moment's conversation with her.

*Er.* Love quickens the wits, but it has not had that effect on yours. If I had been——

*Val.* Well, what could you have done, when she's never to be seen without that brute, and there are neither maids nor footmen in the house whose assistance I could count on by the flattering bait of a reward?

*Er.* Then she does not yet know that you love her?

*Val.* That is a point I am in doubt about. Wherever that churl has taken the fair one, she has always seen me following her like her shadow, and my looks have sought hers day by day that I might express to her the depth of my love. My eyes have spoken strongly, but who could tell me whether they could make their language understood?

*Er.* It is true that language may sometimes be obscure, when it has neither writing nor speech for its interpreter.

*Val.* What can I do to get out of this great trouble, and to let my angel know that I love her? Tell me of some way.

*Er.* That is what we must contrive. Let us go home for a little while that we may think it over the better.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

ISABELLE, SGANARELLE.

*Sganarelle.* That will do. I know the house and the person solely by the description you have given me.

*Isabelle* (*aside*). O heaven! be propitious to me, and favour the artful contrivance of an innocent passion.

*Sga.* Do you say that you were told that his name is Valère?

*Isa.* Yes.

*Sga.* Good, you need not make yourself uneasy. Go into the house and leave me to act. I will go and settle this young scatter-brain.

*Isa.* (*going in*). I have taken in hand a very bold scheme for a young woman, but the unreasonable harshness with which I am treated will be my excuse with every considerate person.

## SCENE II.

*Sganarelle* (*knocking at Valère's door*). Let us lose no time. This is the place. Who goes there? I must be dreaming. Hulloa! I say, hulloa! is any one there? I don't wonder now, after this discovery, that he came here just now in such an amiable manner; but I must make haste, and settle his foolish hope——(*Ergaste comes out hastily.*) A plague on the lout who comes in my way like a post, on purpose to throw me down.

*Valère.* Sir, I regret——

*Sga.* Ah, it is you I am looking for.

*Val.* Me, sir?

*Sga.* Yes, you. Isn't your name Valère?

*Val.* Yes.

*Sga.* I am come to talk with you, if you will.

*Val.* Can I be so happy as to do you any service?

*Sga.* No, but I wish myself to do you a good turn, and it is that which brings me to your house.

*Val.* To my house, sir?

*Sga.* To your house; is that so surprising?

*Val.* It is to me, and I am overjoyed at the honour.

*Sga.* Let's drop the honour, I beg of you.

*Val.* Won't you walk in?

*Sga.* There's no occasion for it.

*Val.* I beg of you, sir.

*Sga.* No! I will not go a step further.

*Val.* While you stay here I cannot hear you.

*Sga.* For my part I will not stir.

*Val.* Well, then, I must give in. As the gentleman is so determined, bring a chair here at once.

*Sga.* I'll talk standing.

*Val.* How can I allow such a thing?

*Sga.* Oh! what a frightful necessity!

*Val.* Such rudeness would be inexcusable.

*Sga.* Nothing can be so rude as not to listen to people who want to speak to you.

*Val.* I give way then.

*Sga.* You can't do better. (*They make great ceremony about putting on their hats.*) There is no need of so much ceremony. Will you hear me?

*Val.* Certainly, and very gladly.

*Sga.* Tell me then: Do you know that I am the guardian of a young and tolerably good-looking lady who lives in this neighbourhood, and is called Isabelle?

*Val.* Yes.

*Sga.* Then if you know it, I need not inform you. But do you know likewise that, being sensible of her charms, she interests me more than merely as a guardian, and I intend to do her the honour of making her my wife?

*Val.* No.

*Sga.* Then I inform you of the fact, and that it will be as well for you not to trouble her further with your love-making.

*Val.* Who? I, sir?

*Sga.* Yes, you. Let us have no dissembling.

*Val.* Who told you that I was in love with her?

*Sga.* People that one may give some credit to.

*Val.* Well, but who, pray?

*Sga.* Why her own self.

*Val.* She!

*Sga.* Yes, she; is that saying enough? But like an honest girl who has loved me from her childhood, she told me all just now, and moreover charged me to let you know that since she has been followed everywhere by you, her heart, which your pursuit exceedingly offends, has understood but too well the language of your eyes; that your secret desires are sufficiently known to her; and that it is giving yourself needless trouble to endeavour further to explain a love that is contrary to the affection which she entertains for me.

*Val.* And you say she, of herself, makes you——

*Sga.* Just so—come and give you this frank and true information; and that, having observed the violent love that has taken possession of your heart, she would have let you know her sentiments before now, if, in her agitation, she could have found some one by whom she could communicate them. But at last her painful necessity impelled her to make use of me to let you know, as I have said, that her affection is denied to every one but myself, that you have ogled her long enough, and that if you have any brains at all you will use them in some other way. Farewell till I see you again. This is what I had to tell you.

*Val.* (*aside*). Ergaste, what do you say to this?

*Sga.* (*aside*). He is very much surprised.

*Ergaste* (*aside*). It is my opinion that there is nothing in it to displease you, but that some clever mystery is concealed under it; and, in short, that this message does not come from one who would destroy the love she inspires in you.

*Sga.* (*aside*). He takes it as he ought.

*Val.* You think, then, it is mysterious?

*Er.* Yes—but he is looking at us. Let us get out of his sight.

*Sga.* (*alone*). How visible his confusion is in his face. He looked for no such message, be sure. Now let us call Isabelle; she shows what effect education has upon the mind. Virtue is all she cares for, and her heart is so full of it that the very looks of a man displease her.

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## SCENE III.

ISABELLE, SGANARELLE.

*Isabelle* (*aside, entering*). I'm afraid that my lover, full of his devotion to me, does not comprehend the full meaning of my message, and even from my prison-house I will run the risk of another, that may make my meaning clearer.

*Sganarelle.* Here I am back again.

*Isa.* Well?

*Sga.* Your message had its full effect, and your man is done with. He would have denied that his heart was smitten with love, but when I assured him that I came from you, he seemed struck dumb and confounded, and I don't believe he'll come here any more.

*Isa.* Ah, what do you tell me? I very much apprehend the contrary, and that he will trouble us more than once again.

*Sga.* What reason have you for this apprehension?

*Isa.* You had hardly gone out of the house, when, putting my

head out of the window to take the air, I saw a young man at the opposite turning, who came from that impertinent fellow, wished me good morning most unexpectedly, and then threw into my room a box containing an enclosure sealed like a love-letter. I would at once have thrown it back to him, but he was at the end of the street, and my heart is swelling with vexation.

*Sga.* Just mark the cunning and the knavery!

*Isa.* It is my duty at once to send back the box and the letter to this wretched lover of mine, and I shall want some one for that purpose, as I could not be so bold as to ask you——

*Sga.* On the contrary, my darling, this is a fresh proof of your love and fidelity to me; my heart gladly accepts the office, and you oblige me hereby more than I can say.

*Isa.* Take it, then.

*Sga.* Well, let us see what he could write to you.

*Isa.* Good heavens! pray do not open it!

*Sga.* Why not?

*Isa.* Would you give him reason to suppose that I had done so? An honourable woman ought always to avoid reading the letters a man may send her. The curiosity one then discloses shows a secret pleasure in listening to sentimentalities about oneself; so I think it as well that this letter should be immediately conveyed back to him, sealed as it is, that he may so much the better learn how extremely my heart despises him, so that his passion may lose all hope for the future, and may never again attempt such an impertinence.

*Sga.* She is certainly right. Well, your virtue and discretion charm me. I perceive that my lessons have taken root in your mind, and, in short, you show yourself worthy to be my wife.

*Isa.* I would not, however, fetter your wishes. You now have the letter, and can open it.

*Sga.* No, I don't care about it; your reasons are too good, and I am just going to discharge the trust you place in me. Afterwards I shall have a word to say a few doors off, and then shall come back to set your mind at rest.

## SCENE IV.

*Sganarelle* (*alone*). How I brim over with delight to find her such a prudent girl! What a treasure of honour I have in my house. To take the glances of love as treason! To receive a love-letter as a great insult, and to send it back by me to her

would-be lover! I should like to know whether, under such circumstances, my brother's ward would have acted as discreetly. Truly, girls are just what you make them.—Hullo, there! (*knocking at Valère's door*).

*Ergaste.* Who's there?

*Sga.* Take this, and tell your master he must not impertinently presume to write any more letters, and send them in gold boxes, since Isabelle is extremely offended at it. See, she has not even opened it. He will now learn what she thinks of his love-making, and what chance of success he may look for in it.

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SCENE V.

VALÈRE, ERGASTE.

*Valère.* What has that surly brute been giving you?

*Ergaste.* This letter, sir, which, with this box, he says that Isabelle received from you, and that in consequence she is extremely angry; that she has returned it to you without opening it. Please to read it quickly, and see if I am mistaken.

*Valère* (*reads*):—

*This letter, no doubt, will surprise you, and both the design of writing it and the manner of conveying it to you may be thought very bold in me, but I find myself in such a situation as no longer to keep within bounds. The just dread of a marriage with which I am threatened in six days, makes me run all risks; and being resolved to free myself by some means or other, I thought I ought rather to choose you than despair. However, do not imagine that my sentiments of regard for you arise solely from my unhappy fortune; this only hastens the confessing of them, and makes me dispense with those formalities which the propriety of my sex demands. It depends on yourself alone to make me speedily yours, and I wait only till you show me what your love intends before I let you know the resolution I have taken. But, above all, remember that time is pressing, and that two hearts that love should understand each other on the slightest hint.*

*Er.* Well, sir, is not this trick original? For a young girl, her intelligence is not amiss. Would any one believe her capable of these love stratagems?

*Val.* Ah! I find her perfectly adorable! This token of her sense and her regard redoubles my love for her, and adds to the sentiments with which her beauty inspires me.

*Er.* The dupe is coming; consider what you must say to him.

## SCENE VI.

SGANARELLE, VALÈRE, ERGASTE.

*Sganarelle.* Oh, thrice, and four times blest be this edict which forbids extravagance in dress! The troubles of husbands will no longer be so grievous, and the demands of the wives will now be kept within bounds. How much I thank the king for this decree, and for the ease of these same husbands, I could wish that coquetry were forbidden as well as laces and embroidery. I have bought the edict on purpose that Isabelle may read it to me aloud: and for want of other employment, that shall be our amusement after supper. (*Perceiving Valère.*) Now, my fair-haired gentleman, will you send any more love-letters enclosed in gold boxes? No doubt you thought you had to do with some young coquette fond of intrigues, and open to flattery; but you see how your presents are received, and take my word for it you're only wasting your powder. She's discreet; she loves me; and your addresses affront her. So be off, and aim at some one else.

*Valère.* Ay, indeed, sir, your merit, which every one acknowledges, is too great an obstacle to my desires: and it would be madness in me, sincere as is my devotion, to contend with you for Isabelle's love.

*Sga.* You are quite right. It would be madness.

*Val.* Nor should I have devoted my heart to the pursuit of her beauty, I could have foreseen that this unhappy heart would have found a rival so formidable as yourself.

*Sga.* I believe it.

*Val.* Now I have no room for hope, I yield to you, sir, and without a murmur.

*Sga.* You do well.

*Val.* Fate so orders it; and so much virtue shines in you, that I should do wrong to behold with an angry eye the tender sentiments which Isabelle has for you.

*Sga.* That's understood.

*Val.* Yes, yes; I yield to you. But, sir, I beg of you (and it is the only favour a despairing lover asks, whose present torment you alone occasion), I entreat you to assure Isabelle that if for three months my heart has loved her, it has been a pure and spotless love, and never had a thought which her honour could be displeased at?

*Sga.* Yes.

*Val.* That, having nothing but my own inclinations to gratify, all my desire was to obtain her for my wife, if fate had not opposed

an obstacle to my earnest wishes in you, who captivate her heart.

*Sga.* Very well.

*Val.* Further, that happen what will, she must not suppose that I can ever forget her charms; and that whilst I must submit to the decrees of Heaven, I am destined to love her to my latest breath, and that the only thing which puts an end to my addresses is the just regard I have for your merit.

*Sga.* That is wisely said, and I will at once go and inform her of this speech, which will not be disagreeable to her. But if you take my advice, you will do your best to drive this passion out of your head. Farewell!

*Ergaste* (*to Valère*). Excellent dupe!

*Sga.* (*alone*). I am very sorry for this poor, good-natured wretch. It was very unfortunate for him to have taken it into his head to capture a fortress which I had conquered. (*Knocks at his own door.*)

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## SCENE VII.

SGANARELLE, ISABELLE.

*Sganarelle.* No lover ever showed more vexation at a letter being returned unopened. His hopes, in short, are utterly destroyed, and he retires from the contest. But he earnestly entreated me to tell you that in loving you he never had a thought which your honour could have been reasonably displeased at, and that having only his own inclinations to gratify, all his desire was to obtain you for his wife, if fate had not opposed an obstacle to his earnest wishes in me, who captivate your heart; that, happen what will, you must not suppose that he can ever forget your charms; that whatever decrees of Providence he must submit to, he is destined to love you to his latest breath, and that if anything puts an end to his addresses it is the just regard he has for my merit. These are his own words, and, so far from blaming him, I think he is a very good fellow, and pity him for loving you.

*Isabelle* (*to herself*). I am not mistaken in my secret belief in his love for me, and his looks always assured me of its innocence.

*Sga.* What do you say?

*Isa.* That it is unkind in you to pity a man for whom I have mortal hatred, and that if you loved me as much as you say you do, you would perceive how much I am affronted by his addresses.

*Sga.* But he did not know your sentiments, and his love and honourable intentions do not deserve——

*Isa.* Do you call it a good intention to wish to run away with eople? Is it like a man of honour to form plans of taking me rom you and marrying me by force, as if I were a creature that ould support life after such a disgrace?

*Sga.* What do you mean?

*Isa.* Why, that this base lover really talks of running away with me. But I cannot imagine, for my part, by what secret means he learnt so soon that you intended marrying me in a week at the farthest, since it was but yesterday you told me so; but it is said that he means to anticipate the day which shall unite your fate and mine.

*Sga.* Oh, that does not mean anything.

*Isa.* Pardon me! He is a very honourable man, and does not entertain for me——

*Sga.* He is in the wrong, and this is carrying the jest too far.

*Isa.* Come, your good-nature encourages his folly. If just now you had talked to him sharply, he would have dreaded your rage and my resentment, for even since his letter was rejected, he has spoken of this scandalous design; and as far as I can learn, his passion makes him still believe that my heart approves of him, and that, whatever the world may think, I wish to avoid marrying you, and that I should be delighted to be freed from you.

*Sga.* He must be mad?

*Isa.* In your presence he knows how to dissemble, and his intention is to play upon you; but be certain that the traitor is imposing on you with his fair speeches. I must say that I am very unhappy when, after all my endeavours to live honourably, and to repulse the addresses of a vile libertine, I must be exposed to the vexation of dreading his infamous attempts on me.

*Sga.* You have no need to fear anything.

*Isa.* For my part, I assure you that unless you show yourself exceedingly angry at such an impudent attempt, and quickly find out some means of freeing me from the persecutions of such a bold adventurer, I will give up everything, and not endure the vexatious affronts he puts on me.

*Sga.* Come, don't make yourself so unhappy, my little wife! I'll go and find him out, and make him sing another tune.

*Isa.* Tell him plainly that it is useless for him to deny it, for I was informed of his design on good authority; and after this warning I dare him to surprise me, whatever he may attempt. In short that, without further waste of sighs or time, he ought to know what my feelings are towards you, and that if he would

avoid causing a calamity he must not need telling the same thing twice.

*Sga.* I'll tell him all that's necessary.

*Isa.* But say it in a tone to make him understand that I mean it with all my heart.

*Sga.* Well, I promise you I'll forget nothing.

*Isa.* I'm impatient for your return. Pray make all the haste you can. I languish if you're out of my sight for a moment.

*Sga.* I'll return immediately, darling. (*Alone.*) Does there exist a better and a more discreet person? Ah! how happy I am, and what a pleasure it is to meet with a wife after my own heart! This is how wives ought to be, and not like some that I know, downright coquettes, who allow themselves to be courted, and make their honest husbands pointed at all over Paris. (*Knocks at Valère's door.*) Hulloa! my enterprising young gentleman!

## SCENE VIII.

VALÈRE, SGANARELLE, ERGASTE.

*Valère.* Why, sir, what brings you here again?

*Sganarelle.* Your follies!

*Val.* How?

*Sga.* You know very well what I've come to talk about. To speak plainly, I thought you had more sense. You think to put me off with your fine speeches, and yet are secretly nourishing your foolish hopes. You see I wished to treat you in a friendly manner, but at last you will force me into a passion. Are you not ashamed, considering who you are, to contrive such schemes as you do, and to intend running away with a woman of honour, and to interrupt a marriage on which her whole happiness depends?

*Val.* Pray, sir, who told you this wonderful news?

*Sga.* Not to deceive you, I had it from Isabelle herself, who for the last time sends you word by me, that she has shown you plainly enough whom she chooses; that her heart, which is entirely mine, is enraged at such a scheme; that she would rather die than put up with an insult; and that you will occasion terrible events, unless you put an end to all this disturbance.

*Val.* If she really said what you have just told me, I own that I cannot carry my pretensions any further. These expressions are clear enough to show me that all is over, and I must bow to the sentence she has passed.

*Sga.* You say "If"? Do you doubt it then, and fancy all the complaints I have brought you from her are mere pretences? Would you like her to explain the sentiments of her own heart for herself? To set you right I willingly consent to it. Follow me, and you shall see whether there is anything in what I have told you, and whether her youthful heart hesitates between us. (*Goes and knocks at his own door.*)

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SCENE IX.

ISABELLE, SGANARELLE, VALÈRE.

*Isabelle.* What! do you bring him here to me? What is your object? Do you take his side against me? And do you, charmed with his rare qualities, force me to love him, and endure his visits?

*Sganarelle.* No, dearest, I set too great a value on your heart for that; but he imagines that what I told him is an idle fiction; he believes that I have been speaking for myself, and that I am cunning enough to misrepresent you as full of hate towards him, and tenderness for me. So I wish that you would yourself irrevocably cure him of a mistake which nourishes his pretensions.

*Isa.* (*to Valère*). What! does not my heart display itself fully to you? And can you still doubt whom I love?

*Val.* Indeed, madame, all that this gentleman told me from you might well surprise me. I must confess I had some doubt about it, and that the final sentence which decides the fate of my unbounded love must have such an effect upon me, that it can be no offence if I ask to hear it a second time.

*Isa.* No, indeed; such a sentence should not surprise you. He has told you my real thoughts, and I hold them to be sufficiently founded on reason to prove how sincere they are. Yes, I wish it to be known, and I ought to be believed, that fate here presents two objects to my view, which, inspiring me with different sentiments, agitate all the feelings of my heart. One, by a reasonable choice, to which honour engages me, possesses all my esteem and love; and the other, in return for his affection, has all my anger and aversion. The presence of one is agreeable and dear to me, and fills my heart with joy; but the sight of the other inspires my heart with secret feelings both of hatred and horror. To see myself the wife of one is all my desire; but I had rather lose my life than be married to the other. But it is sufficient that I declare my real sentiments, for I languish too

long under this cruel anxiety; the person I love must now use his utmost diligence to destroy the hopes of him I hate, and deliver me by a happy marriage from a punishment I dread much more than death.

*Sga.* Yes, my darling, all my thought is to satisfy your wish!

*Isa.* It is the only way to make me happy.

*Sga.* You shall be so shortly.

*Isa.* I know it is very bold for young girls to declare their love so freely.

*Sga.* No, no.

*Isa.* But in the condition in which fate has placed me, this freedom may be allowed me; and I can without a blush make this tender acknowledgment to one whom I already consider as my husband.

*Sga.* Ah! my poor child, my heart's darling!

*Isa.* Then pray let him think of proving his devotion to me.

*Sga.* Well then, kiss my hand.

*Isa.* Without any more sighs, let him conclude a marriage which I heartily desire, and accept in return the assurance I here give him, that I will never listen to the vows of any other person. (*She pretends to embrace Sganarelle, but gives her hand to Valère to kiss.*)

*Sga.* Ah, ha! my pretty duck, my dear little darling! you shall not pine very long, I promise you! (*To Valère.*) There, say no more. You see I don't compel her to speak. Her heart beats for none but me.

*Val.* Very well, madame, very well: your meaning is plain enough. I see by this speech what it is you urge me to; and ere long I shall be able to free you from the presence of one who causes you so much annoyance.

*Isa.* You could not give me a greater pleasure: for, in short, the sight is grievous to endure—it is hateful to me, and the horror is so great——

*Sga.* There, there.

*Isa.* Does my talking thus displease you? Do I——

*Sga.* Oh no, I don't say that at all; but, to tell you the truth, I'm sorry for his condition, and your aversion shows itself too strongly.

*Isa.* I cannot show it too much on such an occasion.

*Val.* Well, you shall be satisfied, and after three days your eyes shall never again rest on the object which is so hateful to you.

*Isa.* Heaven grant it. Farewell.

*Sga.* I pity your misfortune, but——

*Val.* No, you shall hear no complaint from me; the lady certainly does justice to us, and I will do my best to carry out her wishes. Farewell.

*Sga.* Poor young fellow! His grief is extreme. Come and embrace me; I am her second self. (*Embraces Valère.*)

## SCENE X.

ISABELLE, SGANARELLE.

*Sganarelle.* I think he is very much to be pitied.

*Isabelle.* Indeed, I don't think so at all.

*Sga.* As to the rest, darling, your love makes the deepest impression on me, and I desire to reward it. Eight days are too long to wait, considering your impatience; to-morrow I'll marry you, and will not invite——

*Isa.* What, so soon as to-morrow?

*Sga.* You pretend reluctance out of modesty, but I know how much pleasure my decision gives you, and you wish it was already done.

*Isa.* But——

*Sga.* Let us go and make all preparations for this wedding.

*Isa.* (*aside*). O heaven! inspire me with some thought how to hinder it.

## ACT III. SCENE I.

ISABELLE.

*Isa.* Yes, death itself is a hundred times less dreadful than this fatal marriage into which they want to force me; and whatever I do to avoid the terror of it ought to meet with some indulgence from those that would blame me. Time presses: it is night; let me go without any fear, and commit my fortune to the fidelity of a lover.

## SCENE II.

SGANARELLE, ISABELLE.

*Sganarelle.* I've returned, and to-morrow I'll send.

*Isabelle.* O heaven!

*Sga.* Is it you, darling? Where are you going so late? You told me when I left you that, being rather tired, you would shut

yourself in your room; nay, you desired that on my return I would let you rest till to-morrow morning.

*Isa.* It's true; but——

*Sga.* But what?

*Isa.* I'm confused, as you see, and I do not know how to tell you the reason.

*Sga.* How so? What can this mean?

*Isa.* A surprising secret. It is my sister who obliges me to go out now, and who, with an object for which I greatly blame her, asked me to let her have my room, and I've locked her up in it.

*Sga.* What for?

*Isa.* Could one believe it? She is in love with that young man whom we sent away.

*Sga.* What, with Valère?

*Isa.* Desperately. Nothing can exceed her passionate love. You may form some idea of its violence from the fact of her coming here alone at this hour to reveal to me the anguish of her mind, and to tell me that she will certainly die unless she can obtain what she has set her heart upon: that for above a year this intrigue has been secretly carried on; and that at the very commencement of it they engaged themselves to each other by a mutual promise of marriage.

*Sga.* Wretched girl!

*Isa.* Further, on learning to what despair I had driven the man whom she loves to see, she came to beg that I would let her do what she could to prevent a separation that would pierce her to the heart, and that I would permit her to converse with her lover under my name this evening in the little street into which my room looks, where, counterfeiting my voice, she could talk a little kindly to him, and so tempt him to stay—and, in short, that she might dexterously turn to her own account the attachment which she knows he has for me.

*Sga.* And do you think that——

*Isa.* For my part, I'm furious with her. "What, sister," I said, "are you out of your mind? Are you not ashamed to be in love with a fellow of this sort who changes from day to day? To forget your sex, and to deceive the hope of a man to whom Providence has allied you?"

*Sga.* He well deserves it, and I'm very glad of it.

*Isa.* In short, my vexation made use of a hundred reasons to reproach her for so much baseness, and to enable me to refuse what she this night requested: but I found her desires so

importunate, she shed so many tears, heaved so many sighs, and so often told me that I should drive her to despair if I would not yield to her wishes, that at last, in spite of myself, I was forced to give way; and in order to justify this night's intrigue, which tenderness for my own flesh and blood made me assent to, I was going to get Lucrèce, whose virtues you are always praising, to come and sleep with me; but you surprised me by your quick return.

*Sga.* No, no; I won't have all this mystery in my house. I should not mind so far as my brother is concerned, but they may be seen by some one in the street, and she whom I honour by making my wife must not only be modest and well-bred, but she must not be even suspected. Let us go and turn out the shameless creature; and as to her passion——

*Isa.* Ah! you'll shame her too much, and she may justly complain of me for not being able to keep her secret. Since I must withdraw my consent to her scheme, stay here at least until I have sent her away.

*Sga.* Well, then, do so.

*Isa.* But above all things conceal yourself, I entreat you, and see her go without saying a word to her.

*Sga.* Yes, for love of you I will restrain my anger, but the very instant she's outside the door, I will go and find my brother without delay; it will delight me to run and tell him of this affair.

*Isa.* I entreat you, then, not to mention my name. Good-night, for I am going to my room at once.

*Sga.* Until to-morrow, my own. (*Alone.*) How impatient I am to see my brother and inform him of his luck. The good man is duped, in spite of all his high-flown language, and I would not mind laying twenty crowns on it.

*Isa.* (*in the house*). Yes, sister, I am sorry to incur your displeasure, but it is not possible for me to do as you wish. My honour, which is dear to me, will run too great a risk. Farewell. Go before it is too late.

*Sga.* There she goes, fuming in fine style, I warrant. For fear she should return, let us lock the door.

*Isa.* (*going out*). O heaven, forsake me not in my plans!

*Sga.* (*aside*). Where can she be going? Let us follow her a little way.

*Isa.* (*aside*). The night, however, favours me in my distress.

*Sga.* Why, she's gone to her lover's house. What can be the meaning of all this?

## SCENE III.

VALÈRE, SGANARELLE, ISABELLE.

*Valère* (*coming out hastily*). Yes, yes, I will make an attempt to speak this very night.—Who's there?

*Isabelle.* Make no noise, Valère; I have anticipated you. I am Isabelle.

*Sganarelle.* You lie, you hussy, it is not she. She follows too closely the laws of honour which you forsake; and you assume falsely both her name and voice.

*Isa.* (*to Valère*). But were it not that you by holy matrimony——

*Val.* Indeed, that is the only end of my destiny, and here I make you a solemn promise that to-morrow I will go where you please and have the ceremony performed.

*Sga.* (*aside*). Poor deluded fool!

*Val.* Come in with perfect confidence. I now defy the power of your hoodwinked guardian, and before he shall take you from me, I will stab him to the heart with a thousand blows.

*Sga.* (*alone*). Oh, I assure you I have no desire to take her from you, the shameless creature, a slave to your passion. I'm not jealous of your promise to her, and, believe me, you shall be her husband. Ah! let us surprise him with his brazen-faced girl! The memory of her father, who was so justly respected, together with the great interest I have in her sister, make it right that I should endeavour at least to preserve her honour. Hulloa! (*He knocks at the door of a magistrate.*)

## SCENE IV.

SGANARELLE, *the Magistrate, the Notary, Attendants.*

*Magistrate.* Who's there?

*Sganarelle.* Your servant, Mr. Magistrate. We want your presence officially. Please follow me with your light.

*Mag.* We were going——

*Sga.* It's a very urgent affair.

*Mag.* What is it?

*Sga.* To go in there and surprise two people, who must be honestly married. It is a girl of ours whom a certain Valère has deceived, and got into his house by promising her marriage. She comes of a noble and virtuous family, but——

*Mag.* Oh, if that is the business, our meeting is very fortunate, for we have a notary here.

*Sga.* I beg your pardon?

*Notary.* Yes, sir, a public notary.

*Mag.* And a man of honour.

*Sga.* Of course. Go in at that door; make no noise, but mind that no one comes out. You shall be well repaid for your trouble; but don't allow yourselves to be bribed.

*Mag.* What! do you believe that an officer of justice——

*Sga.* I don't say it as a reflection on your office. I'll fetch my brother here at once. Let the link-boy accompany me. (*Aside.*) I am going to give this passionless man a grand time of it. Hulloa! (*He knocks Ariste's door.*)

SCENE V.

ARISTE, SGANARELLE.

*Ariste.* Who is knocking? Ah, ah, brother, what do you want?

*Sganarelle.* Come along, you old governor, you superannuated fop, I'll show you something pretty!

*Aris.* What is that?

*Sga.* I bring you good news.

*Aris.* What?

*Sga.* Pray where is your Léonor?

*Aris.* Why do you ask? I believe she's gone to a friend's house, to a ball.

*Sga.* Ay, ay; follow me. You shall see what kind of a ball the young miss is gone to!

*Aris.* What do you mean?

*Sga.* You have brought her up vastly well. It is not right to be always finding fault; great gentleness wins the mind, while distrustful watching, bolts, and grates make neither wives nor maidens virtuous. By too much severity we cause them to go wrong; and women require a little liberty. In truth, she has taken her fill of it, the artful hussy; and virtue is very accommodating.

*Aris.* What is the drift of all this talk?

*Sga.* Come, my elder brother, it is what you well deserve; and I would not for twenty pistoles you should have missed this fruit of your silly maxims. It's plain what effect our instructions have produced on two sisters; one avoids lovers, the other runs after them.

*Aris.* Unless you make this riddle clearer to me——

*Sga.* The riddle is that her ball is at M. Valère's, that I saw

her go there by night, and that at this present moment she's in his arms.

*Aris.* Whom do you mean?

*Sga.* Léonor.

*Aris.* I beg you to cease your banter.

*Sga.* Banter! It's a great joke to hear him talk of "banter." Poor wretch! I tell you again and again that Valère has got your Léonor at his house, and that by a mutual promise they were engaged to be married before he thought of Isabelle.

*Aris.* This story is so utterly improbable——

*Sga.* He won't believe it, though he sees it. It makes me wild. Age is worth little when it cannot supply this—— (*touching his forehead with his finger*).

*Aris.* What, brother, do you want——

*Sga.* Good gracious! I want nothing: only follow me, and your mind will soon be put at ease. You shall see whether I am imposing on you, and whether they have not been engaged for more than a year.

*Aris.* A likely story, that she should consent to this engagement without letting me know of it—me who, since her childhood, have in everything shown her perfect kindliness, and a hundred times over have declared I would never constrain her inclinations.

*Sga.* However, your own eyes shall judge of the matter. I have sent for a magistrate and a notary, as it is our interest that the honour which she has lost should be restored by marriage on the spot; for I do not imagine that you are so mean-spirited as to make her your wife with this stain, unless you have still some arguments to raise yourself above ridicule.

*Aris.* I shall never be so extremely weak as to desire the possession of a heart against its will. But, after all, I can't believe——

*Sga.* What endless talking! Come along; this dispute might last for ever.

## Scene VI.

Here's no occasion for compulsion. Gentlemen, if you only wish that they should be married, your anger may be appeased on the spot, as they are both equally inclined to it. Valère has already declared in writing that he will take as his wife the lady now with him.

*Ariste.* And the girl?

*Mag.* She is locked in, and will not come out unless you consent to gratify their wishes.

## SCENE VII.

*Magistrate*, VALÈRE, *Notary*, SGANARELLE, ARISTE.

*Valère* (*at the window*). No, gentlemen, no one comes into this house till this consent has been given. You know who I am, and I have done my part in signing the document, which they can let you see. If it is your intention to approve of the match, you must likewise add your signatures in confirmation. If not, you may take away my life sooner than take from me the object of my love.

*Sganarelle.* Oh, no! We've no thought of separating you from her. (*Aside.*) He's not yet undeceived as to Isabelle; let us take advantage of the mistake.

*Aris.* But is it Léonor?

*Sga.* (*to Ariste*). Be quiet, do.

*Ariste.* But——

*Sga.* *Will* you be quiet?

*Aris.* I want to know——

*Sga.* What, again? Hold your tongue, I tell you.

*Val.* In short, whatever may be the consequences, *Isabelle* has my solemn promise, as I have hers; and, all things considered, mine is not an alliance that you ought to disapprove of.

*Aris.* What he says is not——

*Sga.* Hold your tongue: I have a reason for it, and you shall know the secret.—Well, without any more words, we both consent that you shall marry her who is now with you.

*Magistrate.* Those are the terms in which the document is drawn up, and there is a blank for the name, since we did not see her. Now set your hands to it, and the lady will set you all at ease afterwards.

*Val.* I agree to it in that way.

*Sga.* And so do I. (*Aside.*) We shall have a grand joke presently. (*Aloud.*) There, sign first, brother; that honour belongs to you.

*Aris.* But why all this mystery?

*Sga.* Bother your impertinence!—come, sign, you simpleton.

*Aris.* He talks of Isabelle; you of Léonor.

*Sga.* Don't you consent, brother, if it is she, to leave them to their plighted faith?

*Aris.* Undoubtedly.

*Sga.* Sign, then, and I will do the same.

*Aris.* So let it be, but I can't understand anything of the matter.

*Sga.* You shall be enlightened.

*Mag.* We'll be back again presently.

*Sga.* (*to Ariste*). Well, now I'll tell you the end of all this. (*They withdraw to the back of the stage.*)

## SCENE VIII.

LÉONOR, LISETTE, SGANARELLE, ARISTE.

*Léonor.* Oh, what a martyrdom I have endured! How wearisome all these young fools appear to me. I've stolen away from the ball on their account.

*Lisette.* Yet they all try to make themselves agreeable to you.

*Léon.* For my part, I never met with anything more insufferable. I should prefer the most ordinary conversation to all the silly speeches of these babblers about nothing. They think that everything must give way to their flaxen wigs, and fancy themselves the wittiest people in the world when, in a wretched, bantering tone, they rally one stupidly about the love of an old man; whereas I value the affection of such an old man beyond all the giddy raptures of a youthful brain. But don't I perceive——

*Sganarelle* (*to Ariste*). Well, this is the state of the matter——. Oh, I see her approaching, and her maid with her.

*Ariste.* Léonor, without being angry, I think I have good reason to complain. You know I have never wished to lay any constraint upon you, and I have promised you more than a hundred times to allow you full liberty to gratify your own wishes. But your heart, despising my approval, has engaged itself by troth as well as by love, without acquainting me. I do not repent of my indulgence towards you, but your conduct affects me very much, for my fond affection for you has not deserved it.

*Léon.* Why you talk in this way I have no notion, but be assured I am the same as I always have been. Nothing can alter my attachment to you. Any other attachment would seem to me a crime, and if you would satisfy my desires, the sacred knot should make us one to-morrow.

*Aris.* On what grounds then, brother, came you ——

*Sga.* What! Are not you now coming from Valère's rooms? Have not you this very day declared your love for him? And have you not for a year past been devoted to him?

*Léon.* Who has drawn such fine pictures of me, and taken the trouble to invent such calumnies?

## SCENE IX.

ISABELLE, VALÈRE, *Magistrate*, *Notary*, ERGASTE, LISETTE, LÉONOR, SGANARELLE, ARISTE.

*Isabelle.* Sister, I beg you generously to pardon me if I have brought any scandal on your name by the liberties I have taken. The great perplexity of a sudden surprise gave me the idea of this shameful trick. Your example condemns such an outrageous action, but fate has dealt differently with you and me. (*To Sganarelle.*) As for you, sir, I do not wish to excuse myself to you, since I do you a service rather than use you ill. Heaven never designed us for one another. I found myself unworthy of your love, and greatly preferred to be in the hands of another, rather than prove undeserving of such a love as yours.

*Valère.* For my part, sir, I esteem it my glory and my highest happiness to receive her from your hands.

*Ariste.* Brother, you must swallow this quietly; your own behaviour is the cause of it. I think your lot unhappy in this respect, that, knowing how you have been taken in, no one will pity you.

*Lisette.* Well, for my part, I'm extremely glad of it; this reward of his watchfulness is a notable stroke.

*Léonor.* I hardly know whether it ought to be approved, but, for my part, I'm sure I can't blame it.

*Ergaste.* He seemed born to be a cuckold, and he is fortunate to have escaped while on the way to it.

*Sganarelle* (*after standing for some time like one stunned*). No, I cannot get over my astonishment. This devilish trick perplexes my understanding, and I verily believe that Satan himself could not be so wicked as this jilt. I would have staked my life on her. Unhappy is the man who puts his trust in woman after this; the best of them are constantly hatching mischief; the whole sex were made to ruin the world. I renounce the treacherous sex for ever, and they may go the deuce with all my heart.

*Er.* Good.

*Aris.* Let us all go to my house. Come, Mons. Valère, to-morrow we will endeavour to appease his anger.

*Lis.* (*to the audience*). If any of you are acquainted with bearish husbands, do not fail to send them to our school.

# THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES

## (*L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES*).

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ARNOLPHE, *alias Mons. de la Souche.*
AGNÈS, *a young, simple-minded girl, brought up by Arnolphe; daughter of Enrique.*
HORACE, *lover of Agnès, son of Oronte.*
ALAIN, *a peasant, Arnolphe's valet.*
GEORGETTE, *a countrywoman, Arnolphe's maid.*
CHRYSALDE, *Arnolphe's friend.*
ENRIQUE, *brother-in-law of Chrysalde, father of Agnès.*
ORONTE, *father of Horace and friend of Arnolphe's.*
A NOTARY.

SCENE—A SQUARE IN A TOWN.

### ACT I. SCENE I.

CHRYSALDE, ARNOLPHE.

*Chrysalde.* You have come to marry her, do you say?

*Arnolphe.* Yes; I want to conclude the affair to-morrow.

*Chrys.* We're here alone, and may converse, I think, without fear of being overheard. Would you have me open my heart to you as a friend? Your intention makes me tremble for you, and however you consider the matter, it is a very great piece of rashness in you to marry.

*Ar.* That's true, friend. Perhaps you find reason at home to be apprehensive for me! Your own forehead makes you imagine, I suppose, that horns are everywhere the infallible accompaniment of matrimony.

*Chrys.* Those are accidents no one is secure against, and the precautions people take against them seem to me extremely foolish. But what I fear for you is that raillery which a hundred husbands have borne the brunt of. For, in short, you know that neither high nor low have been exempt from your criticisms; that your chief delight, wherever you are, is to make a great outcry about secret intrigues.

*Ar.* Very good. Is there any other city in the whole world where husbands are so patient as here? Does not one see all kinds of them fooled at home in every way? One heaps up wealth which his wife distributes to those who seek to seduce her. Another—a little more happy, but not less deceived—sees presents made every day to his wife, and yet no jealousy disturbs his mind, because she tells him it is out of regard to her virtue. One makes a great bustle, which is of little use; another, in perfect tranquillity, lets affairs take their course, and seeing the fop come to his house, very civilly takes his gloves and cloak. One wife, with female cunning, pretends to make a confidant of her faithful husband, who sleeps securely under such delusion, and pities the poor lover for taking pains—which he does not throw away. Another, to clear herself from being extravagant, says that she wins at play the money she spends; and the silly husband, not dreaming at what game she is playing, thanks heaven for what she gains. In a word, there are everywhere these objects of satire, and may not I, as a looker-on, laugh at them? May I not of our fools——

*Chrys.* Yes; but whoever laughs at others, should fear that in return others will laugh at him. I hear what the world says, and how people divert themselves by talking of what goes on around them; but whatever is told in places where I may be, no one has ever seen me triumph at such stories. I am reserved enough in that respect; and although on these occasions I might condemn the allowance of certain freedoms, and it would not be my plan to put up with what some husbands endure quietly, yet I have never cared to say this—for after all it is to be feared lest the satire come home, and one should never positively swear what any body would or would not do in such a case. Thus should fate, which directs all things, bring some human disgrace upon me, I'm almost sure that, after my behaving in this manner, people would be satisfied with a quiet laugh, and it may be that I should have the benefit of some folks saying, "What a pity!" But as for you, dear friend, the case is quite different, and I tell you that you'll run a terrible risk; for as your tongue has always been ready to banter long-suffering husbands, and you've been a very devil let loose against them, you must walk very straight if you would not be made a laughing-stock. And if they get the least hold on you, take care they do not publish your affair at the market cross.

*Ar.* Oh, my friend, don't trouble yourself. He'll be mighty clever who catches me on that point. I am acquainted with all

the artful tricks and subtle contrivances women employ to make fools of us; and since we're duped by their cleverness, I've secured myself against that accident, for the lady I shall marry will have innocence enough to preserve my forehead from any evil influence.

*Chrys.* And do you suppose that a foolish girl, in one word——

*Ar.* To marry a foolish girl does not make one a fool. I believe, like a good Christian should, that your better half is very discreet. But a clever wife is a bad omen, and I know what it has cost some people for having married wives with too much talent. Do you think I am going to charge myself with the care of a witty wife who would talk of nothing but assemblies and private parties, who would write soft effusions in prose and verse, whom marquises and wits would visit, whilst, under the name of madame's husband, I should be like a saint whom no one notices? No, no, I don't want a lofty mind; a woman that writes understands more than she should do. I intend that mine shall have so little of the sublime, that she shall not even know what a "rhyme" is; and if she were playing at Basket, and were to be asked in her turn, "What's put into it?" I would have her answer, "A cream tart." In a word, I would have her extremely ignorant; it is enough, to speak plainly, if she knows how to say her prayers, to love me, to sew and to spin.

*Chrys.* So, then, you have a fancy for a stupid wife?

*Ar.* So much so, that I would prefer an ugly fool to a very handsome woman with a great deal of wit.

*Chrys.* Wit and beauty——

*Ar.* Virtue is sufficient.

*Chrys.* But how, after all, could you ever teach a fool to know what it is to be virtuous? Besides, I should think it very tiresome for a man to have a fool with him all his lifetime. Do you think you take a right view, and that one's trust can be surely founded in constancy? A woman of sense may act contrary to her duty, but she must do so knowingly; whereas a fool may fail in hers without desiring or even thinking of it.

*Ar.* To this argument, to this profound discourse, I would answer as Pantagruel did to Panurge, "Persuade me to marry a woman that is not a fool, preach to me, plead with me from January to June, and you'll be astonished, when you've done, to find that you've not persuaded me the least."

*Chrys.* I will not say a word more to you.

*Ar.* Every one to his own way. With a wife, as in everything, I'll follow my own wishes. I'm rich enough, I think, to

take a wife who may owe everything to me, whose humble and entire dependence on me can never reproach me either with her birth or her fortune. A soft and quiet look amongst other children inspired me with a love for her when she was only four years old. Her mother being very badly off, it came into my mind to ask for her; and the poor countrywoman, understanding my desire, was very glad to get rid of her. I had her brought up in a little out-of-the-way convent, in strict accordance with my views—that is to say, enjoining them to bring her up as much like a fool as possible. Thank heaven, the result answered my utmost expectations; and when grown up, I found her so simple-minded that I could not be sufficiently thankful for having found a wife entirely to my mind. I brought her home, and, as my house is continually open to a hundred kinds of people, as it is necessary to take precautions, I have kept her apart in this other house, where no one comes to visit me: and that her good disposition may not be spoilt, I only have persons about her who are as foolish as herself. But you will say, "Why this long story?" It is to let you see the care I have taken. The end of the matter is that I want you to come and sup with her this evening, as I know what a true friend you are. I should like you to examine her a little, and see whether I'm to be blamed for my choice.

*Chrys.* I agree to it.

*Ar.* In conversation you can form an opinion as to her appearance and her innocence.

*Chrys.* What you have told me on that point cannot——

*Ar.* My description comes even short of the truth. I admire her simplicity on all occasions, and sometimes she so expresses it that I am ready to die with laughter. The other day—would you believe it?—she was greatly puzzled, and came and asked me, with unparalleled simplicity, if children came through the ears.

*Chrys.* I rejoice at it very much, Monsieur Arnolphe.

*Ar.* Will you persist in calling me by that name?

*Chrys.* Ah, do what I will, it comes to the tip of my tongue, and I never remember Monsieur de la Souche. What the deuce put it into your head to re-christen yourself at forty-two years of age, and to take to yourself a title from a rotten old stump on your farm?

*Ar.* Besides that the house is known by that name, La Souche pleases my ear more than Arnolphe.

*Chrys.* What a shame it is to quit the true name of one's ancestors, to assume another based upon fancies! Yet this is the whim of many people, and, without including you in the com-

parison, I knew a country fellow called "Fat Peter," whose whole estate being only a small patch, he made a muddy ditch round it, and assumed the pompous name of Monsieur de L'Isle.

*Ar.* You might dispense with instances of that kind. In short, De la Souche is the name I bear. I've a reason for it; I find a pleasure in it; and to call me by any other is not courteous——

*Chrys.* Most people, however, find it difficult to submit to it, and I see even still, by the directions of your letters——

*Ar.* I bear it easily from those who are not informed, but you——

*Chrys.* Well, well; we'll have no quarrel about that. I'll take care to accustom my mouth to call you nothing else but Monsieur de la Souche.

*Ar.* Good-bye. I knock here only to wish them good-day, and to say that I have come back.

*Chrys.* (*going away*). Indeed I think he's a fool in every way.

*Ar.* He's a little touched on certain points. It's wonderful to see how passionately every man is attached to his own opinion. Hulloa! (*knocking at his own door*).

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## SCENE II.

ALAIN, GLORGETTE, ARNOLPHE.

*Alain:* Who knocks?

*Arnolphe.* Open the door. (*Aside.*) They'll be very glad, I suppose, to see me after ten days' absence.

*Al.* Who's there? *Arn.* I.

*Al.* Georgette! *Georgette.* Well?

*Al.* Open the door there. *Geor.* Go and do it yourself.

*Al.* You go and do it. *Geor.* Faith, I won't go.

*Al.* And I won't go.

*Ar.* Here's a nice kind of ceremony while I am left outside. Hulloa, hulloa there!

*Geor.* Who's knocking at the door?

*Ar.* Your master.

*Geor.* Alain!

*Al.* Well?

*Geor.* It's the master. Open the door quickly.

*Al.* You go and open it.

*Geor.* I can't; I'm blowing the fire.

*Al.* I can't move for fear of the cat, in case my sparrow got out.

*Ar.* Whichever of you two doesn't come and open the door shall go four days without anything to eat.

*Geor.* (*to Alain*). What's the good of your coming, when I'm running there?

*Al.* Why you, more than I? A fine trick!

*Geor.* Get you gone then.

*Al.* I won't. Get you gone yourself.

*Geor.* I'll open the door.

*Al.* I'll open it myself.

*Geor.* You sha'n't open it.

*Al.* No more shall you.

*Geor.* Nor you.

*Ar.* I think I need have plenty of patience.

*Al.* (*entering*). However, it's me, sir.

*Geor.* (*entering*). I am your servant—it is me.

*Al.* Were it not for respect to my master here, I'd——

*Ar.* (*receiving a blow from Alain*). Plague on you!

*Al.* I beg your pardon, sir.

*Ar.* Look at that idiot, there!

*Al.* She, sir, is quite- - -

*Ar.* Hold your tongues, both of you. Stop your fooling and attend to what I ask you. Well, Alain, how are all here?

*Al.* Why, sir, we—we—(*Arnolphe pulls off Alain's hat. He puts it on again.*) Sir, we—we are—thank heaven—we, we—— (*Arnolphe again takes off Alain's hat, and afterwards a third time.*)

*Ar.* Impertinent ass! who taught you to talk to me with your hat on your head?

*Al.* You do well, sir; I was in the wrong.

*Ar.* (*to Alain*). Fetch Agnès down. (*To Georgette.*) Was she melancholy after I went away?

*Geor.* Melancholy? Oh no.

*Ar.* What! No?

*Geor.* Yes, yes.

*Ar.* Why then——

*Geor.* Yes, may I die but she continually expected your coming back, and we saw neither horse, ass, nor mule pass by the house which she did not take for you.

## SCENE III.

AGNÈS, ALAIN, GEORGETTE, ARNOLPHE.

*Arnolphe.* Her work in her hand! A good sign. Well, Agnès, I'm come back from my journey. Are you glad of it?

*Agnès.* Yes, sir, thank God!

*Arn.* And I too am glad to see you again. You've been well all the time, it seems?

*Ag.* Except for the fleas that disturbed me in the night.

*Arn.* Oh, we must find some one to catch them for you.

*Ag.* You'll do me a kindness.

*Arn.* I'll think of it. What are you doing there?

*Ag.* I am making some nightcaps for myself. Your nightshirts and caps are done.

*Arn.* Ah, that's well. Go upstairs—don't tire yourself. I shall be back again presently and talk to you about affairs of consequence. (*All being gone in.*) You heroines of the age, you learned ladies, that utter tender and fine sentiments—I defy at once all your verses, your romances, your letters, your love-letters, and all your knowledge to be worth as much as this modest and virtuous ignorance!

## SCENE IV.

HORACE, ARNOLPHE.

*Arnolphe.* It is not by riches one should be tempted, and provided that honour be—Whom do I see? Is it he? Ay. I'm mistaken. No, no. But it is. Nay, it is he himself—Hor——

*Horace.* Monsieur Ar——

*Ar.* Horace.

*Hor.* Arnolphe.

*Ar.* What joy! How long have you been here?

*Hor.* Nine days ago.

*Ar.* Really——

*Hor.* I went directly to your house, but to no purpose.

*Ar.* I was in the country.

*Hor.* Yes, you'd been gone ten days.

*Ar.* How children shoot up in a few years! I'm surprised to find him grown so, after having known him no bigger than this.

*Hor.* You see what I am now.

*Ar.* But pray now, how is Oronte your father, my good and dear friend whom I esteem and revere? Is he hearty still? He knows how interested I am in all that concerns him; we haven't seen one another these four years, nor, which is more, written to one another, I think.

*Hor.* He's even livelier than I am, Monsieur Arnolphe. I had a letter for you from him; but by another written since, he sends me word that he is coming himself—though I don't know the reason.

Do you know which of your citizens it can be who has returned here with great wealth which he has gained during the last fourteen years in America?

*Ar.* No. But were you told his name?

*Hor.* Enrique.

*Ar.* No, I don't know him.

*Hor.* My father speaks to me of him and his return as if I ought to be perfectly acquainted with him, and writes me word that they are setting out together on an important business, the nature of which his letter does not mention. (*Horace gives Oronte's letter to Arnolphe.*)

*Ar.* I shall certainly be extremely glad to see him, and do all in my power to entertain him. (*After having read the letter.*) Letters between friends should be less ceremonious; all these compliments are needless. You might freely have made use of my purse, without his taking the trouble to write to me on the subject.

*Hor.* I am one who take people at their word, and just now I am in want of a hundred pistoles.

*Ar.* Indeed you are laying me under an obligation by making use of me in this manner, and I am glad that I have them here. Keep the purse and all.

*Hor.* It must——

*Ar.* Enough of that. Well, what do you think of this city?

*Hor.* The people are very numerous, the buildings superb, and I think the amusements are admirable.

*Ar.* Every one has his pleasures, suitable to his taste. But as for those who are called ladies' men, they have enough to satisfy them, for the women are regular coquettes; you will find them both fair and dark, and of a pleasant temper, and the husbands are the most complaisant in the world. It is an amusement fit for a prince, and it is often a comedy for me to see the tricks that are played. Perhaps you have already smitten some one. Have not you had that luck yet? People like you are worth more than gold; you're of the sort to make husbands jealous.

*Hor.* To conceal nothing from you of the real truth, I have a love adventure in these parts, and your friendship obliges me to tell you about it.

*Ar.* (*aside*). Good. Here's some new love-tale to note down in my pocket-book.

*Hor.* But I beg, however, that this matter may be a secret.

*Ar.* Oh, indeed!

*Hor.* You're well aware that in these matters if a secret gets wind, it upsets all one's arrangements. I must freely own to you, then, that there is a fair lady in this place who has made a conquest of my heart. My little attentions have at once had so much success that I obtained free admittance to her, and without boasting too much or doing her an injustice, my affair with her is making very good progress.

*Ar.* (*laughing*). Ha, ha. And she is——?

*Hor.* (*showing him where Agnès lives*). A young creature who lives in the house with red walls, that you can see from here. She's a simpleton, indeed, through the unparalleled folly of a man who hides her from the world; but in that ignorance by which he intends to enslave her, her charms shine forth sufficient to enchant one—a perfectly endearing manner, and a certain tenderness which no heart can be proof against. But perhaps you have already seen this young star of love, adorned with so many attractions. They call her Agnès.

*Ar.* (*aside*). Oh, I shall burst!

*Hor.* As for the man, I think they call him la Zousse or Source; I did not pay much attention to his name. He's rich, from what they told me, but over-wise—no. They spoke of him to me as a ridiculous fellow. Do you know him?

*Ar.* (*aside*). This is a bitter pill.

*Hor.* Why don't you answer?

*Ar.* Oh ay, I know him.

*Hor.* He's a fool, isn't he?

*Ar.* Heh—

*Hor.* How now, what do you say? Heh!—oh, that means yes. Ridiculously jealous? A fool? Ah! I find he's just as I was told. In short, the lovely Agnès has enthralled me; to tell you the truth she's a charming creature, and it would be a sin to allow so rare a beauty to remain in the hands of this queer fellow. All my endeavours, all my dearest wishes, are to make her mine, in spite of this jealous wretch; and the money I made so free as to borrow of you is for no other purpose than to complete this laudable enterprise. You know better than I do that in all our undertakings gold is the master-key, and that sweet metal which distracts so many heads, procures the victory in love as well as war.—But you don't seem pleased. Is it that you disapprove of my design?

*Ar.* No, I was considering.

*Hor.* The conversation tires you. Farewell. I'll wait on you by and by to thank you.

*Ar.* (*believing himself to be alone*). What! must it——

*Hor.* (*coming back*). Once more I beg of you to be careful, and not go and divulge my secret.

*Ar.* (*again believing himself to be alone*). How my soul now feels——

*Hor.* (*returning*). Especially to my father, who might perhaps be angry.

*Ar.* (*thinking he may come back again*). Oh, what have I suffered during this conversation! Never was vexation equal to mine. With what imprudence and extreme haste he came to give an account of this business to me, of all men! Though my other name occasions his mistake, blunderhead, will he always show so much rashness? But after enduring what I did, I had to control myself till I had discovered what I have to fear. I had to encourage his foolish babbling to the end to inform myself perfectly thereby of what is going on privately between them. Let me try to rejoin him; I don't think he's gone far. I will endeavour to get everything out of him. I tremble at the misfortune that may arise from it; we often seek more than we wish to find.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

ARNOLPHE.

*Arnolphe.* It really is well for me, I believe, that I have had my walk for nothing, and missed the way he went: for indeed the overwhelming trouble of my heart could not altogether have concealed itself from him. It would have shown the grief that is preying on me, and I would not have him know what he is ignorant of at present. But I am not the man to put up with this, and allow this young spark to do as he likes. I'll put an end to it, and learn at once how far they have gone. I am deeply concerned for my honour; for I look upon her as my wife already. She cannot have gone wrong without covering me with shame, and all she does will be set down to my account. Oh, fatal absence! most unfortunate journey! (*Knocks at his door.*)

## SCENE II.

ALAIN, GEORGETTE, ARNOLPHE.

*Alain.* Ah! sir, this time——

*Arnolphe.* Be quiet. Come here, both of you. This way, this way. Come along, come along, I say.

*Georgette.* Oh, you frighten me, and make my blood run cold.

*Ar.* So this is the way you have obeyed me in my absence, and have agreed to deceive me!

*Geor.* (*falling at Arnolphe's knees*). Oh, pray, sir, don't eat me up!

*Al.* (*aside*). I feel sure some mad dog has bitten him.

*Ar.* Eugh! I can't speak, I'm so upset. I am dying with anxiety to find out the real truth. You cursed scoundrels! you've allowed a man to come here, have you? (*To Alain, who tries to run away.*) You want to run off, do you? Tell me this moment —(*To Georgette.*) If you dare to stir—(*To Alain.*) Yes, I'll have you both—(*Alain and Georgette both rise and again try to escape.*) Whichever stirs, I'll murder him. How came that man into my house? Answer me, make haste! quick, at once, without stopping to think! Will you speak?

*Al.* and *Geor.* Oh, oh, oh! (*Both falling at his knees.*)

*Geor.* My heart fails me.

*Al.* I'm half dead.

*Ar.* (*aside*). I feel in a cold sweat; let me take a little breath. I must walk and cool myself. Could I have imagined, when I knew him as a little boy, that he would grow up for this? Oh, heavens! how my head suffers! I think it will be better gently to obtain from her own mouth an account of what concerns me. I must try and calm down my passion! Patience, my heart; gently, gently. (*To Alain and Georgette.*) Get up, go indoors, and tell Agnès to come down.—No, stop. (*Aside.*) They'll go and tell her of the vexation that troubles me, and she will feel no surprise. (*To Alain and Georgette.*) Wait here for me, and I will call her out myself. [*Exit.*

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## SCENE III.

ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

*Georgette.* Good heavens! how terrible he is. His looks frighten me horribly. I never saw a more frightful Christian!

*Alain.* That gentleman has made him very angry; I told you so.

*Geor.* But why on earth does he make us keep our mistress so closely confined to the house? Why does he want to hide her so carefully from all the world, and cannot bear to see any one come near her?

*Al.* It is because it makes him jealous.

*Geor.* But how comes this foolish notion into his head?

*Al.* Well, it comes—it comes because he's jealous.

*Geor.* Yes, but *why* is he so? And what makes him so very angry?

*Al.* It's because jealousy—do you understand, Georgette?—is a thing that—that troubles people, and drives people away from the neighbourhood of the house. I'll give you a comparison to make you understand it better. Now tell the truth: if you had made some nice soup, and some hungry fellow came and ate it all up, shouldn't you fall into a passion and be ready to beat him?

*Geor.* Oh, yes, I understand that.

*Al.* Well, it's just like that. Woman really is a man's soup, and when any one sees other people trying to dip their fingers into his soup, he falls at once into a violent rage.

*Geor.* Yes, but why does not every one do the same? Why do some people seem quite pleased when their wives are in the company of fine gentlemen?

*Al.* Because every one has not this gluttonous love, that would keep all to itself.

*Geor.* If I am not near-sighted, I see him coming.

*Al.* Your eyes are good; it is he.

*Geor.* Look how melancholy he is.

*Al.* That's because he's vexed.

## SCENE IV.

ARNOLPHE, AGNÈS, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

*Arnolphe.* A certain Greek gave the Emperor Augustus a piece of advice, as useful as it was true—that when any occurrence puts us into a passion, we should first of all repeat the alphabet, so that in the meanwhile our anger may cool, and that we may do nothing we ought not to do. This advice I've followed in the matter of Agnès, and I have brought her on purpose that, under the pretence of taking a walk, the suspicions of my disordered mind may artfully give the conversation a turn, which shall sound her heart, and clear the matter up quietly. Come, Agnès. (*To Alain and Georgette.*) Go indoors.

## SCENE V.

ARNOLPHE, AGNÈS.

*Arnolphe.* What a nice walk!

*Agnès.* Very nice.

*Ar.* What a delightful day!

*Ag.* Most delightful.

*Ar.* Is there any news?

*Ag.* Yes, the kitten's dead.

*Ar.* That's a pity. But what then? We're all mortal, and every one must look out for himself. Did it rain whilst I was in the country?

*Ag.* No.

*Ar.* Did you feel dull?

*Ag.* I never do feel dull.

*Ar.* What have you been doing the last nine or ten days?

*Ag.* I've made six shirts, and I think as many caps.

*Ar.* (*after considering a little*). The world is a strange thing, my dear Agnès. Consider the scandal there is in it, and how everybody gossips. Some of the neighbours have been telling me that a young man, a stranger, came here when I was gone, and that you permitted him to see and talk with you. But I gave no heed to these slandering tongues, and would have laid a wager that it was false——

*Ag.* Oh, pray don't do that, for you'll lose.

*Ar.* What! Is it true that a man——

*Ag.* Quite true. He scarcely stirred out of the house, I assure you.

*Ar.* (*aside.*) This sincere avowal shows me at least her ingenuousness. (*Aloud.*) But it seems to me, Agnès, if I remember rightly, that I forbade you seeing any one.

*Ag.* Yes, but you don't know why I saw him. I'm sure you'd have done as I did.

*Ar.* Perhaps; but anyhow, tell me all about it.

*Ag.* It is very surprising and almost incredible. I was sitting on the balcony, working in the cool, when I saw a well-made young man pass under the trees close by, and when he saw me looking at him he immediately bowed to me very respectfully, and, not to be outdone in civility, I returned him a curtsy. He immediately bowed to me again, and I took care to make him another curtsy. Then he bowed a third time, and I instantly returned a third curtsy. He walked to and fro, making me, every time that he passed, the most beautiful bow possible, and I, looking at him earnestly all the while, made him as many curtsies; so that if night had not come on I should still have continued, being unwilling to give way, or that he should think me less civil than he was.

*Ar.* Very well.

*Ag.* The day after, when I was at the door, an old woman came up and said to me, "My child, may heaven bless you and long preserve you in all your beauty! It has not made such a charming creature as you in order to throw away its gifts, and you ought to know that you have wounded a heart which is now forced to complain."

*Ar.* (*aside*). Oh, you agent of Satan! Cursed wretch!

*Ag.* "I! Have I wounded any one?" I answered, quite astonished. "Wounded!" she answered, "yes, you have wounded him grievously. It is the gentleman whom you saw from the balcony yesterday." "Alas!" I said, "how could I have been the cause of that? Did I let fall anything on him carelessly?" "No," she said, "your eyes have given the fatal blow, and it is from their glances all his hurt proceeds." "Good gracious!" I said, "I never was so surprised in my life! Can my eyes do people any harm?" "Yes, daughter," she said, "your eyes have a deadly poison in them which you do not know of. In a word, the poor wretch is languishing away, and if so be," continued the kind old woman, "your cruelty refuses to help him, he'll be a dead man in two days' time." "Goodness me!" I said, "that would be a great misfortune. But what does he want of me?" "My child," she said, "he only wishes to have the happiness of seeing and talking with you. Your eyes alone can prevent his ruin, and remedy the mischief they have done." "With all my heart," I said; "and since it is so, he can come and see me as often as he likes."

*Ar.* (*aside*). Oh! cursed sorceress. Soul poisoner! May hell repay you for your charitable plots!

*Ag.* That's how he saw me, and was cured. Now, don't you think yourself that I was right? Could I, after all, have the conscience to let him die for want of help—I who am so pitiful towards all suffering creatures that I can't see a chicken die without crying?

*Ar.* (*aside*). All this has only proceeded from an innocent mind; and I must blame my own indiscreet absence for it, which left this perfect goodness exposed to the designs of artful seducers. I am afraid that this rascal, by his imprudent pretences, has pushed matters beyond a joke.

*Ag.* What is the matter with you? I think you are rather cross. Is there any harm in what I have just told you?

*Ar.* No; but tell me what followed, and how the young man behaved in his visits.

*Ag.* Oh! you can't think how delighted he was. He lost his

illness as soon as I saw him. If you knew of the beautiful casket he has given me, and the money he has given Alain and Georgette, I am sure you would like him as much as we do.

*Ar.* Well, but tell me a little more about him.

*Ag.* Well, he said he loved me with an unparalleled love, and spoke to me in the most beautiful language possible. He talked about things that I never heard the like of. Every time he spoke, his pleasant words delighted me beyond expression, and raised in me a feeling I can't describe.

*Ar.* (*aside*). What a tormenting inquiry into a fatal secret, where the inquirer suffers all the pain! (*To Agnes.*) Besides all this talk, and these pretty ways, didn't he give you some caresses?

*Ag.* Oh, yes! He took both my hands and my arms, and never seem tired of kissing them.

*Ar.* Nothing more? (*seeing her confused*).

*Ag.* Yes; he—— *Ar.* What?

*Ag.* Took—— *Ar.* Ugh!

*Ag.* The—— *Ar.* Yes?

*Ag.* I dare not. You would perhaps be vexed with me.

*Ar.* No. *Ag.* Yes, you will.

*Ar.* No, indeed. *Ag.* Give me your word, then.

*Ar.* On my word and honour.

*Ag.* He took—— You will be angry.

*Ar.* No.

*Ag.* Yes.

*Ar.* No, no, no, no! The devil, what a mystery! What has he taken from you?

*Ag.* He——

*Ar.* (*aside*). I am suffering the tortures of hell.

*Ag.* Well, he took that riband you gave me. To tell you the truth, I could not help it.

*Ar.* (*taking breath*). Let the riband pass. But I want to know if he did anything besides kiss your arms.

*Ag.* What? Do people do other things?

*Ar.* No; but did not he want to try any other remedy for his disease?

*Ag.* No. You may be sure, if he had, I should have done anything in my power to help him.

*Ar.* (*aside*). Thanks to heaven, I have come off well enough. I may well be called fool, if I let myself in again. (*Aloud.*) Now, Agnès, as you knew no better, I'll say no more about it. What's done is done; but I must tell you that, by flattering

you, this young fellow only wants to deceive you, and then laugh at you.

*Ag.* Oh, no! He told me so more than twenty times.

*Ar.* Ah, but you don't know what his word is worth. However, I must tell you, that to accept presents and listen to the idle tales of these coxcombs, to allow them to kiss your hands and charm your heart, is a mortal sin, the greatest that can be.

*Ag.* A sin, do you say? But why? for what reason?

*Ar.* For what reason? Why, the reason is that Heaven is angry at such doings.

*Ag.* Angry! But why should it be angry? It is so sweet, and so pleasant! I am delighted with the pleasure I find in it. I had no idea of it before.

*Ar.* Yes, yes, there's a great pleasure in all that sort of thing; but it should be tasted in an honourable manner, and the sin removed by marriage.

*Ag.* Is it no longer a sin, then, when one is married?

*Ar.* No.

*Ag.* Then pray marry me at once.

*Ar.* If you wish it, so do I; in fact I came back on purpose to marry you.

*Ag.* Is it possible?

*Ar.* Yes.

*Ag.* How glad you'll make me.

*Ar.* Ay! I don't doubt but what matrimony will please you.

*Ag.* You wish, then, that we two- ——?

*Ar.* Nothing more certain.

*Ag.* In that case, how I shall embrace you!

*Ar.* And I shall do the same by you.

*Ag.* For my part, I don't understand when people make a joke. Are you speaking seriously?

*Ar.* Yes; you shall find that I am.

*Ag.* We shall be married, then?

*Ar.* Yes.

*Ag.* But when?

*Ar.* This very evening.

*Ag.* (*laughing*). This very evening?

*Ar.* This very evening. Does it make you laugh, then?

*Ag.* Yes.

*Ar.* It is my desire to see you happy.

*Ag.* Indeed how greatly I am obliged to you; and what pleasure I shall enjoy with him!

*Ar.* With whom?

*Ag.* With—why with him.

*Ar.* With him!—that's not at all my intention. You're in a great hurry, I think, to make choice of a husband. In a word, it is some one else whom I design for you, who is ready to take you. And as for that gentleman, I intend, if you please (even if the malady with which he amuses you should be the death of him), that henceforward you break off all communication with him; that when he comes to the house, by way of compliment you shut the door in his face, and if he knocks throw a stone at him out of the window, and oblige him in good earnest to appear there no more. Do you understand me, Agnès? I shall be hidden in a corner, and be witness of your behaviour.

*Ag.* Alas, but he's so handsome, he is.

*Ar.* Well, that's a fine speech!

*Ag.* I sha'n't have the heart.

*Ar.* No more talk. Go upstairs.

*Ag.* But what? Will you——

*Ar.* That's enough—I'm master. I order; go and obey.

## ACT III. SCENE I.

ARNOLPHE, AGNÈS, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

*Arnolphe.* Indeed, everything has succeeded well, and I am extremely pleased. You've followed my directions to a wonder, and driven that insinuating young coxcomb quite out of the field. See what it is to have a discreet adviser. Your innocence, Agnès, had been taken advantage of, and see into what a condition you had got, without thinking of anything. You were entering the high road to perdition, if I had not come to set you right. One knows only too well the ways of these fops; they've fine knee ornaments, plenty of ribands and feathers, large wigs, good teeth, and a very smooth tongue. But I assure you there's a cloven foot beneath, and they are really demons seeking to devour innocent girls. However, this time, thanks to my care, you have had a fortunate escape. The spirit with which I saw you throw that stone at him, which upset all his schemes, confirms me in my idea not to put the wedding off any longer, for which I told you to prepare yourself. But first of all I must have a little talk with you, which will be to your advantage. (*To Alain and Georgette.*) Bring out a chair here, in the open air. As for you, if you ever——

*Georgette.* We'll remember all your instructions perfectly. The other gentleman imposed on us. But——

*Alain.* If ever he finds his way in here any more, may I never have another drink. Besides, he's a blockhead. The other day he gave us two crown pieces which were light weight.

*Ar.* Get what I ordered for supper; and as for our contract of which I spoke, one of you go and fetch the notary who lives at the corner of the market-place.

## SCENE II.

ARNOLPHE, AGNÈS.

*Arnolphe* (*seated*). Now, Agnès, put away your work so as to listen to me. There (*putting his finger on her forehead*), look at me while I am speaking, and give heed to every word I say. Agnès, I am going to marry you, and you ought, a hundred times a day, to bless your good fortune and to think of the humble condition which you were in, and at the same time admire my goodness, which, from the station of a poor country girl, raised you to the rank of an honourable citizen's bride, who hitherto has kept clear of all such engagements, and whose heart has refused to twenty charming people the honour he is going to give to you. You ought, I say, constantly to bear in mind of how little account you would be without this glorious alliance, so that this consideration may the better teach you to deserve the station I shall place you in, that you may always know yourself, and always give me reason to pride myself on what I am about to do. Matrimony, Agnès, is no joke; serious duties are required of a wife, and I do not intend to lift you to that position merely for your own freedom and pleasure. Your sex is made only for dependence—all the power is on the side of the beard; they are two parts of the same body, yet these parts are by no means equal—one is the superior, the other subordinate. The one is in all cases subject to the other which governs, and that obedience which the soldier shows to his general, the servant to his master, a child to his father, the lowest monk to his superior, does not come near the tractableness, the submission, the humility, and the profound respect which a wife should have for her husband, her chief, her lord and master. When he looks at her in a serious manner, she should turn her eyes on the ground at once, and never presume to look him in the face, until he favours her with a gracious glance. This is what our wives nowadays do not understand; but do not be corrupted by the example of other people. Take care not to

imitate those wretched coquettes, whose pranks are talked about everywhere; beware of being captured by the assaults of the evil spirit—that is to say, hearken to no young coxcomb.

Consider, Agnès, that in making you half of myself, I am giving my honour into your keeping, and this honour is delicate, and easily offended; you must understand that there is no trifling on such a matter as this, and that in hell there are boiling cauldrons, in which wives who lead bad lives are plunged for ever. What I am telling you is no idle tale, and you must lay these lessons well to heart. If you follow them sincerely, and avoid being a coquette, your soul will be as white and spotless as a lily, but if you lose your honour it will become as black as a coal; you will appear a hideous creature to every one, and at last, being the devil's own property, you will go and boil for ever in hell—from which may the goodness of heaven preserve you. Now make a curtsy. As a probationer in a convent must know her duty, so she that marries should do the same; and I have in my pocket a writing of great importance, which will teach you your duty as a wife. I don't know who wrote it, but it is some good creature, and I'd have it to be your only study. (*He gets up.*) Stop; let us see if you can read it easily

*Agnès* (*reads*)—

THE MAXIMS OF WEDLOCK, OR THE DUTIES OF A MARRIED WOMAN; TOGETHER WITH HER DAILY EXERCISE.

FIRST MAXIM.—She who weds honourably must bear in mind, in spite of present custom, that the man who marries her takes her for himself alone.

*Ar.* I will explain to you what that means, but for the present go on reading.

*Agnès continues*—

SECOND MAXIM.—She ought only to deck herself according to her husband's wish. The care of her beauty concerns him alone, and she ought not to consider whether other people think her plain.

THIRD MAXIM.—Far be it from her to study ogling, beauty-wa..es, paints, pomatums, and a thousand other things for setting off the complexion. These are always mortal poisons to honour, and the pains taken to appear handsome are seldom for the husband's sake.

FOURTH MAXIM.—When she goes out, she ought, as honour requires, to conceal the glances of her eyes under her hood, for in order to please her husband perfectly she ought to please no one else.

FIFTH MAXIM.—Besides those who come to visit her husband, propriety forbids her receiving any friends. Those gay young fellows, who come only to see the wife, are not agreeable to the husband.

SIXTH MAXIM.—She must refuse all presents from men, for in the age in which we live, people give nothing for nothing.

SEVENTH MAXIM.—Among her possessions, although it may be annoying, she needs neither writing-desk, ink, paper or pens. The husband, by good rule, should write everything that goes from the house.

EIGHTH MAXIM.—Those disorderly meetings called assemblies, which always disturb the minds of women, ought properly to be forbidden; for it is there that they conspire against their poor husbands.

NINTH MAXIM.—Every woman who would preserve her honour, must refrain from gambling as a terrible thing; for play is very enticing, and often leads a woman to stake all she has.

TENTH MAXIM.—She must not appear on public promenades, nor at picnics; for sensible people believe that the husband always pays for such entertainments.

ELEVENTH MAXIM.—

*Ar.* You shall finish it by yourself, and by and by I will explain everything to you properly. I have a little affair of business to attend to. I have but a word to say, and I sha'n't be long. Now go in, and take particular care of that little book. If the notary comes, let him wait a little while.

## SCENE III.

ARNOLPHE.

*Arnolphe.* I can't do better than make her my wife. I shall be able to manage her just as I choose. In my hands she's just like a piece of wax, which I can mould as I please. In my absence I narrowly escaped being ruined through her excessive innocence. But to say the truth, it is much better that one's wife should err on this side, for such mistakes are easily amended. All simple people are attentive to advice, and if they're led out of the right way, a word or two will bring them into it again immediately. But a clever wife is quite another kind of creature; our fate depends on her judgment only; nothing can prevent her doing what she takes a fancy to, and our advice is worth no more than if we tried to wash a blackamoor white. Her wit enables her to laugh at our maxims, to represent her faults as virtues, and to find out ways of

deceiving the cleverest people, in order to bring about her blameworthy purposes. We labour in vain to parry the blow; a woman is a very devil in intrigue, and when her caprice has silently passed sentence on our honour, we have to put up with it. A great many good people could say as much. But my blunderhead shall have no reason for laughing; he has met with what he deserved for his chattering. This is the common fault of our Frenchmen, they are never satisfied when they are in luck; a secret seems always to trouble them, and this senseless vanity is so dear to them, that they would rather lose their happiness than not talk of it. The devil must have a special power over women, when they choose such empty heads——But here he comes! I must keep everything dark, and find out whether he is greatly mortified.

SCENE IV.

HORACE, ARNOLPHE.

*Horace.* I have just come from your house, where it seems as if fate had decreed I should never meet you; but I will go so often that at last some day——

*Arnolphe.* For goodness' sake don't let us begin these foolish compliments! Nothing vexes me so much as this idle ceremony, and if I had my way it should be put an end to. It is a wretched custom in which most people waste two-thirds of their time. Let us put on our hats, then, without any more ado. (*Puts on his hat.*) Now as to your love affair: may I be informed, Monsieur Horace, how you are getting on with it? I was for a while disturbed by a fancy, but I've been thinking it over since. I admire the quick progress you made at the beginning, and am anxious to learn the issue of it.

*Hor.* Indeed, since I opened my heart to you I have been very unfortunate.

*Ar.* Ah! How so?

*Hor.* Cruel fortune has brought my fair one's master back again out of the country.

*Ar.* What a misfortune?

*Hor.* And besides, to my great regret, he knows what passed privately between us.

*Ar.* How the deuce could he have learnt the affair so soon?

*Hor.* I do not know, but it certainly is so. I was going at my usual hour to go and pay a short visit to this charming girl, when both the man and maid, with an entirely changed voice and look,

barred my way and shut the door in my face with a "*Get you gone, you're a nuisance.*"

*Ar.* Shut the door in your face?

*Hor.* In my face!

*Ar.* That was rather hard.

*Hor.* I would have talked to them through the door, but to all that I could say their answer was, "*You sha'n't come in; master has forbidden it.*"

*Ar.* Didn't they open the door after all?

*Hor.* No. And Agnes confirmed the fact of the master's return by speaking to me from the window, bidding me begone in a very angry tone, and throwing a stone at me.

*Ar.* What! a stone?

*Hor.* Yes, a stone, and not a light one either, thrown with her own hand. That's the way in which she received my visit.

*Ar.* Indeed this is no trifling matter. I am afraid the affair is in a bad way.

*Hor.* It is true. This unfortunate return of his has done me the greatest harm.

*Ar.* Really, I can assure you that I am very sorry for you.

*Hor.* This man upsets all my plans.

*Ar.* Oh, that's nothing; you must find some means of putting them right again.

*Hor.* I must try and get some intelligence, and disappoint the strict vigilance of this jealous fellow.

*Ar.* You'll easily do that; and the girl, after all, loves you?

*Hor.* Yes, she certainly does.

*Ar.* Oh, you'll gain your end.

*Hor.* I hope so.

*Ar.* That stone has upset you; but you must not be surprised at it.

*Hor.* That's certain, for I found out that my rival was there, and was carrying on the whole affair without showing himself. But what surprised me, and will equally surprise you, is another incident that I am going to tell you of, a bold stroke made by my young beauty, which you would never have expected from her simplicity. It must be confessed that love is a great teacher; he teaches us to be what we never were before, and very often an entire change of our manners is with him only the work of a moment. He breaks through all the obstacles of nature in us, and his sudden results have the appearance of miracles. In an instant he makes a miser liberal, a coward brave, a churl obliging. He makes the dullest intellect fit for everything, and gives wit to

be so before me, or else the devil prompted this piece of cunning. After all, that fatal letter will be the death of me. I see that this traitor has got hold of her mind, and has drawn me out and fixed himself there. This makes me despair and gives me mortal pain. I suffer doubly by being robbed of her heart, for my love suffers as well as my honour. It makes me mad to see both my place usurped and my careful plans defeated. I am well understanding in order to punish her unlawful love, I need only have astonishing evil destiny, and she would revenge me by all this? What do grievous to lose the thing one loves.

in my choice, why a part my jealous rival has has neither relati[illegible] me——

abuses my care, my kindness, my

after this disgraceful affair so—(*Arnolphe forces a laugh*)—at this ness. Fool that you are! ssion, fortified in his own house against I'm wild with rage; I co[illegible]ones as if I wanted to enter by storm; face. I'll go indoors fo[illegible]encourages all his servants to drive me so scandalous an actio[illegible]ed upon even before his face, by means of dishonour; but if it[illegible] by her whom he wishes to keep in the utmost me the fortitude w[illegible]

my part, I must own, although his return has my love affair, yet I think it so amusing that I cannot ing when I think of it. It seems to me that you don't

*Arno*ough at it.

mind (*with a forced laugh*). I beg your pardon, I am laughing hor as much as I can.

co*Hor.* But now, as a friend, I must show you her letter. Her is and has here written down all that her heart has felt, but in terms so affecting, so full of goodness, of innocent tenderness and sincerity; in short, in the very manner in which pure nature expresses the first wound that love gives.

*Ar.* (*to himself*). So this is what comes of your learning to write, you hussy. It was against my wish that the art was taught you.

*Hor.* (*reads*)—

*I want to write to you, but I do not know how to begin. I have some thoughts which I should like you to know, but I do not know how to tell them to you, and distrust my words. As I begin to understand that I have been always kept in ignorance, I am afraid of writing something that might be wrong, or saying more than I should do. In truth, I can't tell what you've done to me, but I find that I'm ready to die with vexation for what I am forced to do against you, and I shall be in the greatest distress to do without*

or I will destroy all your hopes, and you won't have much cause to laugh at me.

## SCENE II.

NOTARY, ARNOLPHE.

*Notary.* Oh, there he is! Good day to you. I'm quite ready to dra[illegible] the contract as you wish.
*so, for as I am [illegible]ing him*). How must it be done?
*me the greatest wron*[illegible]in the usual form.
*die of vexation at it.* I must think seriously over my pre-
*Ar.* (*aside*). What a w[illegible]
*Hor.* What did you say [illegible]ary to your interest.
*Ar.* I? Nothing. I only [illegible]guard against any surprise.
*Hor.* Did you ever read more [illegible]fairs are in my hands. You of all the wicked endeavours of an [illegible]till you have received the better nature be found; and isn't it certa
to spoil such a charming mind? to wis[illegible] let anything out, the ness of such an intelligence in ignorance
love has begun to tear off the veil, and if by [illegible]ossip; the contract star I can deal with this animal, this traitor, [illegible]. scoundrel, this brute—— [illegible] her?
*Ar.* Good-bye. [illegible]ortune which
*Hor.* Why are you in such a hurry?
*Ar.* I have just thought of a very urgent matter of bus[illegible]iculty.
*Hor.* But don't you know any one (as you live so near) can get me admission into this house? I speak freely with [illegible]an and it is not surprising that one should be able to serve friends like manner. At present I've no one there but people who a[illegible] set to watch me; both the man and maid, in spite of all I could do, were not even civil enough to listen to me. I had a certain old woman whom I kept in my pay for some time, who had really a wonderful genius. She was of great use to me at first, but the poor creature died four days ago. Can't you show me some way?
*Ar.* No, indeed. You will find one very well without me.
*Hor.* Farewell, then. You see what confidence I place in you!

## SCENE V.

ARNOLPHE.

*Arnolphe.* How am I obliged to mortify myself before him! What trouble I have to conceal my tormenting anguish! What a sharp wit for such a simpleton! And the traitress pretended to

be so before me, or else the devil prompted this piece of cunning. After all, that fatal letter will be the death of me. I see that this traitor has got hold of her mind, and has drawn me out and fixed himself there. This makes me despair and gives me mortal pain. I suffer doubly by being robbed of her heart, for my love suffers as well as my honour. It makes me mad to see both my place usurped and my careful plans defeated. I am well aware that in order to punish her unlawful love, I need only leave her to her evil destiny, and she would revenge me herself; but it is very grievous to lose the thing one loves. Good heavens! after so much philosophy in my choice, why must I be so infatuated by her charms? She has neither relations, friends, nor money; she abuses my care, my kindness, my affection, and yet I love her even after this disgraceful affair so that I cannot throw off this fondness. Fool that you are! Have you no sense of shame? Oh, I'm wild with rage; I could give myself a thousand slaps on the face. I'll go indoors for a while, just to see how she looks after so scandalous an action. Heaven grant that I may be free from dishonour; but if it is decreed that I must suffer it, at least give me the fortitude which some persons have to bear such troubles.

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

*Arnolphe.* I can scarcely stay a moment in any one place; my mind is suffering from a thousand anxieties how to manage at home and abroad so as to checkmate all the efforts of this coxcomb. With what a look did the traitress endure my gaze! She is in no way concerned at what she has done; and although she has brought me within an inch of the grave, one would say, to look at her, that she is not concerned at it. The more calm she appeared, the more enraged I found myself, and the furious anger which filled my heart only redoubled my ardent passion. I was provoked, vexed, incensed against her, and yet I never saw her look so handsome. Her eyes never appeared so piercing, nor did they inspire me with such eager desires, and I felt that I must burst if disgrace crowned my evil destiny. What? Have I brought her up with so much tenderness and precaution? Have I taken her to me since her infancy? Have I built my dearest hopes on her growing beauty? And for thirteen years have I fondled her as my own, as I supposed, in order that a young fool that she's enamoured of may come and carry her off in my very teeth, even when she's half married to me. No, by Jove, young fellow, no! You may try what tricks you please: either I lose my labour,

or I will destroy all your hopes, and you won't have much cause to laugh at me.

## SCENE II.

NOTARY, ARNOLPHE.

*Notary.* Oh, there he is! Good day to you. I'm quite ready to draw up the contract as you wish.

*Arnolphe* (*not seeing him*). How must it be done?

*Not.* It must be in the usual form.

*Ar.* (*not seeing him*). I must think seriously over my precautions.

*Not.* I'll do nothing contrary to your interest.

*Ar.* (*not seeing him*). I must guard against any surprise.

*Not.* It is enough that your affairs are in my hands. You must by no means sign the contract till you have received the portion, for fear of being cheated.

*Ar.* (*not seeing him*). I am afraid if I let anything out, the affair will become the talk of the town.

*Not.* But it's very easy to prevent any gossip; the contract can be made quite privately.

*Ar.* (*not seeing him*). But how shall I settle with her?

*Not.* The jointure should be in proportion to the fortune which she brings you.

*Ar.* (*not seeing him*). I love her, and that is my great difficulty.

*Not.* In that case, the wife may have so much the more.

*Ar.* (*not seeing him*). How to behave to her on such an occasion?

*Not.* The law says that the intending husband shall settle on the intended wife the third part of her portion: but that goes for nothing; you may do a great deal more if you wish it.

*Ar.* (*not seeing him*). If—— (*perceiving him*).

*Not.* As for the survivor's interest, let them settle that between them. I say that the future husband can dowry his intended wife just as he thinks fit.

*Ar.* Eh?

*Not.* He may give her so much the more if he has a great affection for her, and wishes to please her, and that by way of dowry or settlement as they call it, which will be lost by her death; or go away entirely to the lawful heirs of the said wife, upon her decease; or by custom, as people may prefer, or as a gift by deed in form which may be made either mutual or single. Why do you shrug your shoulders? Do I talk like a fool, or don't I understand

makers, glove-washers, and frippery women,—in short, all those people who make it their business to carry out intrigues, in an underhand manner. However, I've seen the world, and understand the tricks of it, and this young man must be uncommonly clever if he can get admittance for either letter or message.

## SCENE VI.

HORACE, ARNOLPHE.

*Horace.* It is very lucky for me to meet you here, for I can assure you I've just had a very narrow escape. When I went from you I saw Agnès, quite unexpectedly, on the balcony, all alone, enjoying the cool breezes from the trees close by. After having made me a sign, she managed, somehow, to get down into the garden, and to open the door. But we had scarcely got into her room, before she heard the sound of that zealous man's footsteps on the stairs, and all she could do at such a pinch was to lock me up in a large closet. He came at once into the room; I could not see him, but I heard him walking to and fro at a great rate, without speaking a word: but he kept on sighing grievously every now and then, sometimes giving great thumps on the table, striking a little dog that barked at him, and flinging about in a mad fashion everything that came in his way. He even broke, in his passion, the very flowerpots with which the dear girl had ornamented the mantelpiece. No doubt the prank she had been playing had come to the ears of this jealous old fool. At last, having by numberless tricks of this sort given vent to his rage, this stupid fellow left the room, and I my closet. We would not risk staying together after this, for fear some one might come; but to-night, when it is late, I am to get into her room, without making any noise: by coughing gently three times she will know who it is, and then, by a ladder and the help of Agnès, my love will try to gain admittance for me. I tell you all this as my only friend; joy increases by being imparted, and should one taste the utmost happiness a hundred times over, it would not be satisfactory unless it were known by some one. I am sure you will sympathise in the success of my affair. Good-bye; I am going to see to what is necessary.

## SCENE VII.

ARNOLPHE.

*Arnolphe.* What! will my evil fate drive me to despair, and not allow me even breathing time? Blow after blow! Am I to

see all the care my wisdom and vigilance have taken, defeated by their craftiness? And shall I, in the maturity of life, be made a fool of by a simple girl, and a scatter-brained young idiot? For twenty years past, like a sensible philosopher, I had been contemplating the unhappy fate of married men, and have carefully informed myself of all the accidents which plunge the most prudent into misfortune. Pondering this in my own mind, and profiting by the mishaps of others, wishing at last to marry, I have tried to find a way to secure myself against all chance of the fate of other husbands. For this grand idea I thought that I had put in practice whatever human policy could suggest, but as if it were decreed by fate that none should be exempted from it after all the experience and enlightenment that twenty years could afford me, and having carefully studied how to conduct myself warily in the matter, I have acted contrary to the practice of so many husbands, only to find myself involved in the same disgrace at last! Oh, cruel destiny! thou hast lied unto me after all. Still, I am in possession of my coveted object, and if my heart is stolen from me by this wretched fop, I will see that he does not take anything else, and this night, which they choose for their fine exploit, shall not pass so agreeably as they imagine. It is some pleasure to me in the amidst of so much uneasiness that I have had notice of the snare laid for me, and that this blunder-headed fellow, who would do his best to ruin me, actually makes a confidant of his rival.

## SCENE VIII.

CHRYSALDE, ARNOLPHE.

*Chrysalde.* Well, shall we have some supper before our walk?

*Arnolphe.* No, I don't care to have anything to eat to-night.

*Chrys.* What is the meaning of this fancy?

*Ar.* Please to excuse me; I've something in hand.

*Chrys.* Will not your wedding that you had decided on take place?

*Ar.* You're troubling yourself with other people's business.

*Chrys.* Oh, ho! you're very sharp! What is it disturbs you? Have you met with any misfortune in love, my friend? By the look of you, I could almost swear you have.

*Ar.* Let what will happen to me, I shall at least have the advantage of being unlike certain people, who quietly allow young fellows' visits.

*Chrys.* It's a strange thing that with so much knowledge you

should always get so frightened on these matters, that you should place in them your highest happiness, and fancy there is no other honour in the world. To be a miser, a brute, a cheat, a wretch and a coward, is nothing in your opinion, compared with that blot; and however a man may have lived, he's a man of honour if he's not a cuckold. To get to the bottom of the matter, why will you suppose that all our honour depends on such an accident; and that a virtuous mind has reason to reproach itself for an evil which it cannot hinder? Why will you have it, I say, that in taking a wife one deserves either praise or blame, according to her will, and make a horrible monster out of the injury done by her infidelity? Be persuaded that a man of honour may have something worse to fear than being made a fool of by a woman; that none being secure from the accidents of fate, this one might be thought of less consequence; and, in short, that all the evil, let the world think what it will, lies in the way one takes it. To behave well under these difficulties one must, as in all others, avoid extremes, and not be like those over good-natured people, who, proud of such affairs, are constantly inviting their wives' followers, praising them everywhere, and crying up their good qualities; who seem to partake of all their ideas, go to all their parties and meetings, and make every one wonder at their assurance in showing their faces there. This way of acting is certainly very much to be blamed, but the other extreme is no less to be condemned. As I do not approve of such persons as make friends with their wives' lovers, I have no more sympathy for those whose indiscreet resentment, which rages and scolds, draws the eyes of all the world upon them, and who by the disturbance they make seem unwilling that any one should be ignorant of all their misfortune. There is a medium between these two extremes, and a wise man will adopt it. Then there is no reason to blush for a wife's worst action. So that whatever people may say of it, the husband's calamity may after all be less terrible than it seems, and, as I said before, all the cleverness consists in making the best of it.

*Ar.* After this fine speech, all the brotherhood ought to thank your lordship, and any one who hears you speak will rejoice to enrol himself among the number.

*Chrys.* I don't say that it is just what I blame, but as a wife is the gift of fate, one should act as in a throw of dice, where, if what you expect doesn't come up, you must play dexterously, and with good-tempered resignation improve your luck by good management.

*Ar.* That is to say, always eat and sleep well, and persuade yourself that all that signifies nothing at all.

*Chrys.* You think to laugh at what I say; but, to be plain with you, I see a hundred things in the world more to be dreaded, and which I should think a much greater misfortune than this you are so terribly afraid of. Do you imagine that if I were forced to make my choice I wouldn't rather prefer to be what you say, than to be married to one of those good women whose perverseness makes a quarrel about nothing; those dragons of virtue who are always pluming themselves on their prudent behaviour, and who, because they do not do us a slight injury, take it on themselves to treat people with contempt, and because they are true to us, expect us to put up with everything from them? Once more, my friend, let me tell you that the infidelity of a wife is really but what one chooses to make it, and need not be so very serious.

*Ar.* If you're of a mind to be contented with it, for my part I've no wish to try it; and rather than submit to such a thing——

*Chrys.* Oh, don't swear, for fear of being perjured. If fate so orders it, all your precautions are superfluous, and your advice will not be taken in the matter.

*Ar.* Am I certain to be deceived then?

*Chrys.* You make a great fuss. Indeed, a thousand persons are so, who, without disparagement to you, in person, courage, wealth, and family would not be compared with you.

*Ar.* For my part I seek no comparison with them. But in a word, this raillery is disagreeable; let's have done with it, if you please.

*Chrys.* You're in a rage. We shall learn the reason. Farewell; but remember, whatever your honour may tell you on this subject, to swear that you will not be so is halfway towards what we were talking of.

*Ar.* Again I swear it, and am going at once to find out a good remedy against that misfortune. (*He runs and knocks at his own door.*)

## SCENE IX.

ARNOLPHE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

*Arnolphe.* My friends, now is the time that I implore your help. I am gratified by your regard for me, but you must show it specially on this occasion; and if you serve me as I believe you will, you may count on a good reward. The man you know of

(do not speak a word) intends, as I am told, to trick me this very night, and get by a ladder into Agnès' chamber. But we three must lay a trap for him. I want each of you to take a thick stick, and when he's almost at the top of the ladder (for at the right moment I will open the window), both of you fall on the rascal for me, and give him such a thrashing that he will not care to come back again. However, don't mention me at all, or make any appearance of my being behind. Now, have you spirit enough to serve my resentment?

*Alain.* If it's only a matter of thrashing, sir, depend upon us, and you shall see whether I strike with a dead man's arm.

*Georgette.* Though mine may not seem to be so strong, it shall play its part in drubbing him.

*Ar.* Go indoors then, and, above all, be sure not to tattle. (*Alone.*) This will be a useful lesson for my neighbour, and if all the husbands in this city would receive their wives' lovers in the same way, there would soon be not so many of them about.

## ACT V. SCENE I.

ARNOLPHE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

*Arnolphe.* Traitors, what have you done by your violence?

*Alain.* Sir, we only carried out your orders.

*Ar.* That excuse won't serve you. You were told to beat him, not to murder him; I desired you to rain your blows on his back, not on his head. Good heavens! what an event fate has now brought upon me! What can I decide on when I see the man dead? Get you indoors, and be sure you say nothing of the harmless order I gave you. (*Alone.*) It will soon be daylight, and I will go and consider what to do under this misfortune. Alas! what will become of me, and what will his father say when he hears of this unexpected affair?

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## SCENE II.

HORACE, ARNOLPHE.

*Horace* (*aside*). I must go and make out who it is.

*Arnolphe* (*believing he is alone*). Could one ever have foreseen—— (*Horace knocks against him, but he does not recognise him.*) Who goes there?

*Hor.* Is that you, Monsieur Arnolphe?

*Ar.* Yes; but who are you?

*Hor.* I'm Horace. I was going to your house to ask you a favour. You're out early.

*Ar.* (*to himself, aside*). Surprising! Is it enchantment? Is it a vision?

*Hor.* To tell you the truth, I was in great trouble, and I thank heaven's goodness for meeting you here so luckily. I have to tell you that everything has succeeded even much better than I could have hoped, and that through an accident which might have ruined all. I don't know how the assignation which we had made came to be suspected, but just as I had got up to the window, some people made their appearance, contrary to all my expectation, and began striking me furiously, so that I missed my footing, and fell to the ground; my fall, at the expense of some bruises, saved me, I verily believe, from a good thrashing. These people (I expect old jealous-head was one of them) imagined that my fall was occasioned by their blows, and as my pain made me lie a good while motionless in the same place, they thought that they had murdered me, which at once alarmed them all. I listened to all their noise in profound silence. Each accused the other of the violence, and, complaining of their ill-fortune, they came quietly without any light to see if I were dead. I leave you to guess whether in the night I was not able to assume the appearance of a real dead body. They went away very much frightened, and as I was thinking how I could get away, young Agnès—greatly frightened by my pretended death—came to me in great concern. She had heard what these people were saying to one another, and, escaping notice in the midst of all this disturbance, she easily slipped out of the house. Finding, however, that I was not really hurt, she gave way to an indescribable transport of delight. What shall I say more to you? At last this charming creature has yielded to the dictates of her love, and, being unwilling to go home any more, has committed herself and her fortune to my fidelity. Mark this proof of innocence, and consider to what grievous perils the gross imprudence of this jealous fool might have exposed her if I cared less for her. But my love is too pure, and I would rather die than wrong her. I see charms in her worthy of a better fate, and nothing but death shall part us. I foresee my father's opposition to it, but in time we shall appease his anger. Her endearing charms transport me, and we ought to be happy throughout life. Now, what I desire of you (relying on your secrecy) is that I may put this beauty into your hands, and that you will so far assist my plans, that you will conceal her in your house for a day or two at least. For besides its

being necessary to conceal her flight from the world, to prevent any pursuit after her, you know that a young girl being seen in the company of a young man gives rise to suspicions; and as I have trusted you with the whole secret of my love, being well assured of your prudence, so to you only, as a generous friend, can I commit this beloved treasure.

*Ar.* I am entirely at your service; don't doubt it.

*Hor.* And will you really do me this kind office?

*Ar.* Very willingly, I assure you; I am charmed to have this opportunity of serving you, and thank heaven for having given it me. I never did anything with so much pleasure.

*Hor.* How much I am indebted to your goodness! I was afraid you would make a difficulty; but you know the world, and your wisdom can excuse the heat of youth. One of my servants is taking care of her round this corner.

*Ar.* But how shall we manage it? for it is growing light. If I take her here, perhaps I shall be seen, and if you came to my house the servants would chatter. To make matters quite safe, you must bring her to me in some darker place. That alley of mine is convenient, and I will go and wait for her there.

*Hor.* It is very right to take these precautions. For my part, I shall only put her into your hands, and then go home at once, quietly.

*Ar.* (*alone*). Ah, Fortune! this propitious chance makes amends for all the mischief thy caprice has done me.

## Scene III.

Agnès, Horace, Arnolphe.

*Horace* (*to Agnès*). Don't be uneasy about the place I'm taking you to. It is a very safe lodging for you. It would ruin all for you to lodge in the same house with me. Go in at this door, and you will be shown the way. (*Arnolphe takes her without her recognising him.*)

*Agnès* (*to Horace*). Why are you leaving me?

*Hor.* Dear Agnès, it must be so.

*Ag.* I beg of you to come back soon.

*Hor.* My love will sufficiently urge me to do so.

*Ag.* I have no happiness when you are not here.

*Hor.* Away from you I too am sad.

*Ag.* Alas! if that were true, you would stay here!

*Hor.* What! can you doubt my excessive love?

*Ag.* No; but you don't love me as I love you. (*Arnolphe pulls her.*) Ah! I am being pulled too hard.

*Hor.* Dear Agnès, that is because it is dangerous for us two to be seen together here; and this true friend whose hand is drawing you in, does so from the prudent interest he takes in our concerns.

*Ag.* But to follow a stranger who——

*Hor.* Do not be afraid. You are sure to be well in such hands.

*Ag.* I would much sooner find myself in Horace's, and I should have—— (*To Arnolphe, who pulls her again.*) Wait a little.

*Hor.* Farewell. The daylight drives me away.

*Ag.* When shall I see you, then?

*Hor.* Very soon, you may be sure.

*Ag.* How weary I shall be till that time comes.

*Hor.* (*going away*). Heaven be thanked, my happiness is no longer in suspense, and I can now sleep in security.

## SCENE IV.

ARNOLPHE, AGNÈS.

*Arnolphe* (*muffled up in his cloak, and disguising his voice*). Come along; I sha'n't let you lodge here. I have prepared a room for you elsewhere, and intend to place you where you will be safe enough. (*Showing himself.*) Do you know me?

*Agnès* (*recognising him*). Ah!

*Ar.* The sight of me frightens you, hussy; and it is a disappointment to you to see me here. I interrupt the love contrivances you have in your head. (*Agnès looks if she can see Horace.*) Don't fancy that your eyes can call your lover back to help you; he's gone too far to give you any assistance. Ah! so young, and yet to play such pranks. Your simplicity, which appeared to be unequalled, asked if children came through the ear, and yet you know well enough how to make assignations by night, and can steal out quietly to run after a lover. How trippingly your tongue ran on with him; you must have taken lessons in some very good school. Who the deuce has taught you all this so suddenly? It seems that you are no longer afraid of ghosts. This lover of yours has given you courage in the night-time. Oh, you hussy, to arrive at such a pitch of deceit!—to form such a design notwithstanding all my kindness! Little serpent that I've warmed in my bosom, which,

as soon as it has any feeling, ungratefully tries to injure him who cherished it!

*Ag.* What are you scolding me for?

*Ar.* Indeed I'm very much in the wrong.

*Ag.* I don't see any harm in what I've done.

*Ar.* Isn't running after a lover a scandalous action?

*Ag.* He is a man who says he wants to marry me. I followed your directions, for you told me that to avoid wrong-doing one must marry.

*Ar.* Yes, but I intended marrying you myself, and it seems to me that I let you know my meaning plainly enough.

*Ag.* Yes, but to speak frankly, he's more to my taste than you are. With you matrimony is a troublesome, disagreeable thing, and you give a terrible account of it; but there, he makes it out to be so brim full of pleasure, that it makes one wish to be married.

*Ar.* Ah, that's because you love him, you traitress!

*Ag.* Yes, I do love him.

*Ar.* And you have the assurance to tell me so?

*Ag.* Why, if it's true, mayn't I say so?

*Ar.* Ought you to love him, you shameless creature?

*Ag.* Alas! how can I help it? He alone is the cause of it, and I never thought of it when it came about.

*Ar.* But you ought to have driven away all thoughts of love.

*Ag.* How can one drive away what is pleasant?

*Ar.* And didn't you know that it displeased me?

*Ag.* I? Not in the least. What harm can it do you?

*Ar.* Very true. I've great reason to rejoice at it! At this rate, then, you don't love me?

*Ag.* You!

*Ar.* Yes.

*Ag.* Alas, no.

*Ar.* What do you mean by "no"?

*Ag.* Would you have me tell a lie?

*Ar.* And pray, Miss Impudence, why don't you love me?

*Ag.* You shouldn't blame me for it; why did not you make yourself loved as he did? I didn't hinder you that I know of.

*Ar.* I tried all I could to do so, but I had my trouble for nothing.

*Ag.* Then he understands it better than you do, for he made me love him without any trouble at all.

*Ar.* (*aside*). See how the creature answers and argues. Plague upon it! Could one of your real fine ladies have said more? Ah, I little knew her; or else, in these cases, a simple woman

understands more than the wisest man. (*To Agnès.*) Since you're so good at reasoning, my fine logician, is there any reason why I should have maintained you so long at my own expense for him?

*Ag.* No; he'll repay you every farthing.

*Ar.* (*aside*). She has a way of talking which doubles my vexation. (*Aloud.*) Is it in his power, think you, hussy, to repay me the obligation you are under to me?

*Ag.* I am not indebted so much to you as you seem to think.

*Ar.* Is it nothing to take care of your education from your infancy?

*Ag.* You've been at great pains in that respect, truly, and have had me thoroughly instructed in everything! Do you imagine I flatter myself so far as not to know in my own mind that I am utterly ignorant? I am ashamed of it myself, and at my age I don't wish any longer to pass for a fool if I can help it.

*Ar.* You hate ignorance, and, cost what it will, you are determined to learn something from your young spark?

*Ag.* Certainly. It is from him that I know what I can know, and I feel much more obliged to him than to you.

*Ar.* I do not know what hinders my revenging this saucy language with a box on the ears. I am distracted at the sight of her provoking coldness, and to give her a beating would be a satisfaction to me.

*Ag.* Alas! you can do it if it would please you.

*Ar.* (*aside*). That speech and that look disarm my rage, and bring back a tenderness which effaces all her guilt. How strange it is to love, and that men should be subject to such weakness on account of these traitresses. Every one knows their imperfection; they are made up of extravagance and indiscretion; their mind is wayward and their understanding weak; nothing is more frail, nothing more unsteady, nothing more false; and yet, for all that, in the world we do everything for these creatures. (*To Agnès.*) Well, let us make it up. Go, little traitress, I forgive you all, and am fond of you again. Learn by this how much I love you, and, seeing I'm so good, love me in return.

*Ag.* I should like to gratify you with all my heart. What would it cost me, if I could do it?

*Ar.* My dear life, you can if you will! (*He sighs.*) Only listen to that loving sigh, behold this dying look; look at my person, and have done with this young fop and the love he offers you. He must certainly have cast some spell over you, for you would be a hundred times happier with me. Your great wish is to be

fine and gay, and I promise you that you always shall be so. I shall be caressing you day and night; I will fondle you, kiss you, devour you! You shall do all you like. Can I say more? (*Aside.*) *How far will my infatuation carry me?* (*Aloud.*) Nothing really can be equal to my love. What proof of it would you have me give you, you ungrateful girl? Would you like to see me weep? Shall I beat myself? Shall I tear my hair out? or kill myself? You have only to speak the word, cruel creature, and I am ready to do it to convince you of my love.

*Ag.* Stop; all your talking does not touch my heart. Horace would do more by two words than you with all your discourse.

*Ar.* Ah! this is too great an insult; it provokes my anger too far. I'll carry out my design, you intractable wretch, and pack you out of the town at once. You reject my addresses and drive me to extremity, but a convent cell shall revenge me for all.

### SCENE V.

ALAIN, ARNOLPHE.

*Alain.* I don't know how it can be, sir, but it seems to me that Agnès and the dead man's body have gone away together.

*Arnolphe.* Here she is. Go and shut her up in my room. (*Aside.*) He won't come and look for her there. Besides, it's only for half an hour. I'll go and get a coach that I may dispose of her in a safe place. (*To Alain.*) Fasten yourselves in well, and be sure you don't let her out of your sight. (*Aloud.*) Perhaps she may get rid of this love by change of scene.

### SCENE VI.

HORACE, ARNOLPHE.

*Horace.* Ah, Monsieur Arnolphe, I've come to see you, quite overwhelmed with sorrow. Heaven has completed my misfortune, for, by a fatal stroke of extreme injustice, they want to tear from me the beauty I love. My father has just arrived, he alighted close by here; and, in short, the cause of his coming, which, as I told you I did not know, is, that he has arranged a match for me, without writing me one word about it, and that he has come here to celebrate the wedding. Judge, by the share you have taken in my trouble, whether a more grievous disappointment could have befallen me. That Enrique, whom I asked you about yesterday, is the cause of the misfortune I am suffering from. He has come with my father to complete my ruin, as it is his only daughter for

whom I am destined. I thought I should have fainted when they first spoke of it, and, not caring to hear any more (as my father talked of paying you a visit), I came here beforehand, with my mind full of apprehension. I beg of you not to let him know anything of my engagement, as it might enrage him; and as he has great confidence in you, try and dissuade him from this match.

*Arnolphe.* Ay, ay.

*Hor.* Advise him to put it off for a time, and, as a friend, give me what assistance you can in my love.

*Ar.* I won't fail to do so.

*Hor.* My hopes are all in you.

*Ar.* Quite right.

*Hor.* I look on you as my real father. Tell him that my age—— But I see him coming; hear the reasons I can give you. (*They remain in one corner of the stage.*)

## SCENE VII.

ENRIQUE, ORONTE, CHRYSALDE; HORACE, ARNOLPHE (*in a corner apart*).

*Enrique* (*to Chrysalde*). As soon as ever I saw you, even if I had not been told, I should have known you. I see in you the features of that charming sister whom marriage once made mine; and I should have been happy if cruel destiny had permitted me to bring back that faithful wife to enjoy with me the keen delight of seeing all her relations after our long misfortunes. But since the irresistible power of fate has deprived us for ever of her dear company, let us endeavour to resign ourselves and to be contented with the only fruit that remains of our love. It concerns you nearly, and without your consent I should do wrong to dispose of this pledge. To marry the son of Oronte is in itself an honourable alliance, but I want you to be pleased with this match as well as myself.

*Chrysalde.* You have a bad opinion of my judgment if you doubt my approval of so reasonable a choice.

*Arnolphe* (*aside to Horace*). Ay, I'll serve you in the best way I can.

*Horace* (*to Arnolphe*). But beware of one thing——

*Ar.* (*to Horace*). Be under no concern.

*Oronte* (*whom Arnolphe embraces*). Oh, how full of tenderness is this embrace!

*Ar.* How delighted I am to see you!

*Or.* I've come here.

*Ar.* I know what brings you, without your telling me.

*Or.* Have you been told already?

*Ar.* Yes.

*Or.* So much the better.

*Ar.* Your son opposes this match, and, his heart being pre-engaged, looks upon it as a misfortune. He even wished me to dissuade you from it; but for my part all the advice that I can give you is to exert the authority of a father, and not allow the wedding to be put off. Young people should be governed with a high hand; we do them harm by being indulgent to them.

*Hor.* (*aside*). Oh, traitor!

*Chrys.* If it is against his inclination, I think we should not force him. My brother, I believe, will be of the same opinion.

*Ar.* What! will he let himself be governed by his son? Would you have a father be so weak as not to know how to make youth obey him? It would be a fine thing to see him, at his time of life, taking orders from one who ought to receive them from him. No, no, he is my intimate friend, and his honour is mine. His promise is given, and he must keep it. Now let him show firmness, and force his son's affections.

*Or.* What you say is right; and as regards this match, I'll be answerable for my son's obedience.

*Chrys.* (*to Arnolphe*). For my part I am surprised at the eagerness you show for this match, and cannot guess what motive you can have for it.

*Ar.* I know what I know, and I say what I ought.

*Or.* Yes, yes, Monsieur Arnolphe, he is——

*Chrys.* That name displeases him. He is Monsieur de la Souche, as I've told you already.

*Ar.* It's no matter.

*Hor.* (*aside*). What is this I hear?

*Ar.* (*turning towards Horace*). Ah, there lies the secret, and you can judge what my duty was.

*Hor.* (*aside*). Into what trouble——

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## SCENE VIII.

GEORGETTE, ENRIQUE, ORONTE, CHRYSALDE, HORACE, ARNOLPHE.

*Georgette.* Sir, if you're not here, we shall hardly be able to keep Agnès in. She is doing all in her power to get away, and will perhaps throw herself out of the window.

Bring her to me, for I intend to take her away from

here. (*To Horace.*) Don't be troubled at all this: continual good fortune would make a man proud, and every one has his turn, as the proverb says.

*Horace* (*aside*). Good heavens! what misfortunes can equal mine? Was ever any one so overwhelmed as I am?

*Ar.* (*to Oronte*). Hasten the day of the ceremony. I will be there, and already I invite myself to it.

*Oronte.* That really is my intention.

## SCENE IX.

AGNÈS, ALAIN, GEORGETTE, ORONTE, ENRIQUE, ARNOLPHE, HORACE, CHRYSALDE.

*Arnolphe* (*to Agnès*). Come here, my beauty! come here; you who are headstrong and can't be managed. Here's your lover, to whom, as an amends, you may make a humble and obliging curtsy. (*To Horace*). Farewell. This result rather crosses your wishes, but all lovers are not fortunate.

*Agnès.* Can you, Horace, let me be carried away like this?

*Horace.* My trouble is so great, I hardly know where I am.

*Ar.* Come along, chatterbox, come along.

*Ag.* No; I want to stay here.

*Oronte.* Explain this mystery. We are all staring at one another without being able to understand it.

*Ar.* I'll explain it to you when I have time. Good-bye now.

*Or.* Where, then, are you going to? You don't speak to us as you ought.

*Ar.* I have advised you, in spite of his grumbling, to carry out the match.

*Or.* Yes, but in order to carry it out (if you were told all), were you not informed that she whom we mean is in your house, and is the daughter of the charming Angélique by her private marriage to Monsieur Enrique? What did you mean by what you said just now?

*Chrys.* I, too, was surprised at his behaviour.

*Ar.* What?

*Chrys.* My sister, by a private marriage, had a daughter, whose existence was concealed from all the family.

*Or.* To prevent discovery, her husband put the child out to nurse in the country under a false name.

*Chrys.* At that time, fate being against him, he was obliged to leave his native land.

*Or.* And run a thousand perils in countries beyond the sea——

*Chrys.* Where he has acquired, by industry, what envy and roguery deprived him of in his own country.

*Or.* On his return into France, he at once sought out the woman to whom he had intrusted the care of his daughter.

*Chrys.* And the countrywoman said frankly that, at the age of four years, she had entrusted her to you.

*Or.* (*to Arnolphe*). And that she did it on account of your charity, as she was herself in extreme poverty——

*Chrys.* And he, full of happiness and satisfaction, has brought the woman here.

*Or.* In short, you will see her come here presently to clear up this mystery to every one.

*Chrys.* (*to Arnolphe*). I can guess pretty nearly what a punishment this must be to you. But fortune has really been kind to you in the affair, and as you don't want to be deceived, the best thing you can do is not to marry.

*Ar.* (*going away in a furious passion*). Oh!!

*Or.* What makes him go off without saying a word?

*Hor.* Oh, father! you shall know the whole of this surprising mystery. Accident had brought to pass what your prudence had intended. I was already engaged to this dear creature by the endearing ties of mutual love. In a word, she's both the very one you were looking for, and the one for whose sake I was about to vex you by disobeying you.

*Enrique.* I made no doubt of it from the moment I saw her, and my heart has yearned to her ever since. Ah! my daughter, how delighted I am with these tender transports!

*Chrys.* I could do the same, brother, with all my heart, but this is not a proper place for it; let us go indoors to clear up these mysteries, to discharge the obligation we owe our friend, and give thanks to heaven which orders all for the best.

# THE MISER

## (*L'AVARE*).

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HARPAGON, *father of Cléante and Élise: in love with Mariane.*
CLÉANTE, *son of Harpagon, in love with Mariane.*
ÉLISE, *daughter of Harpagon, in love with Valère.*
VALÈRE, *son of Anselme, in love with Élise.*
MARIANE, *daughter of Anselme, in love with Cléante.*
ANSELME, *father of Valère and Mariane.*
FROSINE, *an intriguing woman.*
MAÎTRE SIMON, *a broker.*
MAÎTRE JACQUES, *Harpagon's cook and coachman.*
LA FLÈCHE, *Cléante's valet.*
MISTRESS CLAUDE, *Harpagon's servant.*
BRINDAVOINE, LA MERLUCHE, *Harpagon's lacqueys.*
A COMMISSARY AND HIS CLERK.

SCENE—PARIS, IN HARPAGON'S HOUSE.

### ACT I. SCENE I.

VALÈRE, ÉLISE.

*Valère.* What! my charming Élise, have you grown melancholy, after the obliging assurances you were so good as to give me of your fidelity? I hear you sighing, alas! in the midst of my joy. Tell me, is it out of regret for having made me happy? And do you repent that engagement which the warmth of my love drew from you?

*Élise.* No, Valère; I cannot repent of what I have done for you. I find myself drawn on by a most delightful influence, and I have not even strength to form the wish to undo what has been done. But, to tell you the truth, this very success makes me uneasy, and I am very much afraid of loving you more than I ought to do.

*Val.* And, Élise, what can you fear in the kindness you feel towards me?

*Él.* Alas! a thousand things at once—my father's anger, my family's reproaches, the world's censure; but, above all, Valère,

a change in your affection, and that cruel coldness with which so many of your sex frequently requite the too warm proofs of an innocent love.

*Val.* Ah! do not wrong me by judging me by others. Suspect me of anything, Élise, rather than of failing in my devotion to you. I love you too much for that, and my love for you will be as lasting as my life.

*Él.* Ah! Valère; every one talks in the same strain. All men are alike in words, and it is only their actions which show them to be different.

*Val.* Since actions alone prove what we are, wait at least to judge of my heart by them, and do not seek for charges against me in the unjust fears of a tormenting anticipation. Do not kill me, I beg of you, by the sharp blows of cruel suspicion, but give me time to convince you, by thousands of proofs, of the sincerity of my love.

*Él.* Alas! How easily one lets oneself be persuaded by those whom one loves! Yes, Valère, I look upon your heart as incapable of deceiving me. I believe that you love me with a true love, and that you will always be constant to me. I cannot doubt this; but all that I fear is the blame that may fall on me.

*Val.* But why this anxiety?

*Él.* I should have nothing to fear if all the world regarded you with the same eyes that I do, for I find in your person good cause for all I do for you. My heart has your merit to plead in its defence, supported by that gratitude with which heaven has bound me to you. I call to mind every moment the astonishing danger which first brought us together, and that surprising generosity which made you risk your life to save mine from the fury of the waves; that tender care which you bestowed so lavishly on me after you had drawn me out of the water; the constant homage of that ardent love which neither time nor difficulties could discourage, and which, making you neglect both kindred and country, detains you here, keeps your rank in disguise for my sake, and, in order to be near me, has induced you to take employment as my father's servant. All this has, no doubt, a wonderful effect on me, and is sufficient in my eyes to justify the engagement which I prevailed on myself to consent to; but it is not enough perhaps to justify it to others, and I am not sure that they would enter into my sentiments.

*Val.* Of all the things you have mentioned, it is my love alone that can deserve anything from you; and as to your scruples, your father himself takes only too much care to justify you to the

world: his extreme avarice and the austere manner with which he treats his children would authorise even stronger action. Forgive me, dearest Élise, for talking in this way before you—you know that on this subject one cannot say any good; but if, as I hope, I can find my relations again, I shall have no great difficulty in gaining your father to our side. I am impatiently expecting news of them, and if they do not arrive soon I shall go and seek them myself.

*Él.* Ah, Valère, do not go away, I beg of you: think only how to yet into favour with my father.

*Val.* You see how I go about it, and how artfully I had to manage in order to get into his service; under what a mask of sympathy and likeness of sentiments I disguise myself in order to please him, and what a part I play with him every day to gain his esteem. I am making wonderful progress, and I find that to get on well with men there is no better way than to adapt yourself to their inclinations, to give in to their maxims, to praise their foibles, and to applaud all they do. There is no need to be afraid of overdoing this complaisance, and the way one plays on them may be ever so plain: for the cunningest men are easily taken in by flattery, and there is nothing so absurd that they cannot be induced to swallow if it is seasoned with praise. Sincerity suffers a little in this trade; but when we have need of men we must adapt ourselves to them, and since we cannot gain them over otherwise, the fault is not on the side of the flatterers, but of those who wish to be flattered.

*Él.* But why do you not try and get my brother's help, in case the servant-maid should betray our secret?

*Val.* It is not possible to deal with them both at once; the tempers of the father and son are so opposite that a double confidence is impracticable. But you can manage your brother, and use the friendship which exists between you to attach him to our interest. Here he comes; I withdraw. Take this opportunity of speaking to him: but do not disclose to him more of our business than you think advisable.

*Él.* I do not know whether I shall have courage enough to confide in him.

## SCENE II.

CLÉANTE, ÉLISE.

*Cléante.* I am very glad to find you alone, sister, as I was very anxious to see you to tell you a secret.

*Élise.* And I am quite ready to listen to you, brother. What is it that you have to say to me?

*Clé.* A great deal, sister, which may be summed up in one word—I am in love.

*Él.* You, in love?

*Clé.* Yes, in love: but before saying any more, I know that I am dependent on a father, and that the name of son subjects me to his will; and that we ought not to engage ourselves without the consent of those we owe our life to, that heaven has put our vows under their control, and that we ought only to give them under their guidance. They, not being under the influence of foolish passion, are much less likely to be deceived than we are, and can see much better what is suitable for us; so that we ought to trust their clear-sighted prudence rather than the blindness of our passion; also that the heat of youth very often draws us upon dangerous precipices. I say all this to you, sister, that you may not give yourself the trouble to say it to me; for my love will not listen to anything, and I beg you not to offer me any remonstrance.

*Él.* Have you engaged yourself, brother, to the girl you love?

*Clé.* No, but I am determined to do so, and I beg you once more not to advance any reasons to dissuade me.

*Él.* Am I, brother, so strange a character?

*Clé.* No, sister, but you are not in love; you are ignorant of the strange and gentle power which love exercises over the heart, and I am afraid of your wisdom.

*Él.* Ah, brother, don't talk of my wisdom. There is no one who does not lack it once in his life: and if I lay open my heart to you, I shall very likely appear in your eyes much less sensible than yourself.

*Clé.* Ah, would to heaven that your heart, like mine——

*Él.* Let us settle your business first: tell me with whom you are in love.

*Clé.* A young girl who has been staying lately in this neighbourhood, and who seems to have the faculty of making all who see her fall in love with her. Nature, my dear sister, has formed nothing more lovely. I was in transports from the moment I set eyes upon her. Her name is Mariane, and she lives under the care of a good motherly woman who is in very bad health, and for whom this charming girl shows an affection almost beyond belief. She waits on her, feels for her, comforts her with a tenderness that would touch your heart. She goes about every-

thing she does with the most delightful air possible, and a thousand graces shine in all her actions; a most winning sweetness, a most engaging good-nature, an adorable modesty—ah, sister, I wish you could have seen her!

*Él.* I see a good deal of her, brother, in what you tell me, and to understand what she is, it is enough for me that you love her.

*Clé.* I have discovered secretly that they are not in easy circumstances, and that with the most careful management their slender income will scarcely meet their modest requirements. Imagine, sister, what a delight it would be to raise the fortune of a person one loves, and to contribute with delicacy towards the modest needs of a virtuous family; and then think what a grief it must be to me, that through the avarice of my father I am incapable of tasting this joy, and of giving my dear one any proof of my love.

*Él.* Yes, brother, I can well imagine what your vexation must be.

*Clé.* Ah, sister, it is greater than any one can believe. Can anything be more cruel than the rigorous parsimony exercised over us; than the barrenness in which we languish. What good will it do us to have a fortune, when we have passed the age to enjoy it? I am forced to get into debt on all sides merely for the necessaries of life. You and I are obliged to ask the help of the tradesmen in order to dress ourselves respectably. In short, I wanted to speak to you that you might help me to sound my father on this matter, and if I find that he opposes me I am determined to go elsewhere with this charming creature, and make the best of the luck Providence may send us. I am trying to borrow money everywhere to enable me to carry out my plan; and if your affairs, sister, at all resemble mine, and our father sets himself to oppose our wishes, we will both leave him, and free ourselves from that tyranny to which his insupportable avarice has so long subjected us.

*Él.* It is true that every day he gives us more and more reason to regret the loss of our mother, and——

*Clé.* I hear his voice. Let us go aside a little, and finish our mutual confidence; and then we will join our forces to attack the ruggedness of his temper.

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## SCENE III.

HARPAGON, LA FLÈCHE.

*Harpagon.* Be off this moment, and don't answer me. Be off, you rascal! out of my house, you gallows-bird!

*La Flèche.* I never saw anything so villainous as this cursed old fellow; I believe he's got the very devil in him.

*Har.* What are you muttering about there?

*La Fl.* Why do you drive me out?

*Har.* The idea of your asking my reasons, you scoundrel! Get out of my way at once before I beat your brains out!

*La Fl.* What have I done to you?

*Har.* You've done this, that I've made up my mind you shall go.

*La Fl.* Master, your son, has ordered me to wait for him.

*Har.* Be off, and wait for him in the street, and don't stick in my house planted upright like a post, to watch everything that is going on and to profit by everything. I don't choose to have a constant spy on all my affairs, a traitor whose cursed eyes besiege all my actions, devour what I have, and ferret about in every corner to see if there's anything to pilfer.

*La Fl.* How the deuce could any one rob you? Are you the sort of man to be robbed, when you keep everything under lock and key, and stand sentinel day and night?

*Har.* I will lock up what I think proper, and stand sentinel as I please. A nice lot of spies who notice all I do! (*Aside softly.*) I tremble lest he has suspected anything about my money. (*Aloud.*) Aren't you the sort of man to spread reports that I have got money hidden away in my house?

*La Fl.* Have you got money hid?

*Har.* No, you rascal, I don't say so. (*Aside.*) I'm enraged. (*Aloud.*) I only ask whether you are not spiteful enough to go about and say that I have.

*La Fl.* What does it matter to us, whether you have or not? It's all the same to us.

*Har.* (*raising his hand as if to box his ears*). So you want to argue, do you? I'll give you an argument in your ears. Once more I tell you, be off.

*La Fl.* Very well, I'm going.

*Har.* Stop. Aren't you carrying anything away with you?

*La Fl.* What I should I carry away from you?

*Har.* Come here that I may see. Show me your hands.

*La Fl.* There.

*Har.* Now the others.

*La Fl.* The others?

*Har.* Yes.

*La Fl.* There they are.

*Har.* (*pointing to La Flèche's breeches*). Have you nothing stowed away in there?

*La Fl.* Look for yourself.

*Har.* (*feeling the knees of his breeches*). These wide breeches are proper receivers of stolen goods; I wish some one had been hanged for them.

*La Fl.* How richly does a man like this deserve what he is afraid of. How pleased I should be to rob him.

*Har.* What's that?

*La Fl.* Eh?

*Har.* What were you saying about robbing?

*La Fl.* I say that you are feeling pretty well all round to see if I have robbed you.

*Har.* (*feeling in La Fleche's pockets.*) That's what I mean to do.

*La Fl.* Plague take avarice and misers!

*Har.* Eh? What do you say?

*La Fl.* What do I say?

*Har.* Yes. What do you say about avarice and misers?

*La Fl.* I say plague on them.

*Har.* Whom are you speaking of?

*La Fl.* Of misers.

*Har.* Who are these misers?

*La Fl.* Villains, stingy wretches.

*Har.* But whom do you mean?

*La Fl.* What are you troubling yourself about?

*Har.* About what I ought.

*La Fl.* Do you think I was talking about you?

*Har.* I think what I think: but I choose you shall tell me to whom you are speaking, when you say that.

*La Fl.* I speak—I speak—to my cap.

*Har.* I should like to speak to your crown.

*La Fl.* Do you want to hinder me from cursing misers?

*Har.* No, but I'll hinder you from chattering and being insolent. Hold your tongue!

*La Fl.* I name no names.

*Har.* A word more, and I'll break your bones.

*La Fl.* Whom the cap fits, let him wear it.

*Har.* Will you hold your tongue?

*La Fl.* Yes, against my will.

*Har.* Ha, ha!

*La Fl.* (*showing him one of his waistcoat pockets*). Stop, here's one pocket more. Now are you satisfied?

*Har.* Come, give it me, without my searching you.

*La Fl.* Give you what?

What you've taken from me.

*La Fl.* I've taken nothing from you.
*Har.* Really?
*La Fl.* Really.
*Har.* Good-bye, then, and all the devils take you!
*La Fl.* (*aside*). So, I'm nicely sent about my business.
*Har.* Anyhow, I leave it on your conscience, at least. (*Exit La Flèche.*) There goes a rascal of a valet, who is a great worry to me. I don't care to have such a good-for-nothing cur about me.

SCENE IV.

ÉLISE, CLÉANTE, HARPAGON.

*Harpagon* (*alone*). It is no small trouble to keep a large sum of money by one; and he is happy who has his cash at good interest, and keeps no more in his own hands than he needs for common expenses. One is not a little puzzled to devise, from top to bottom of the house, a safe hoarding-place; for strong boxes are to me very suspicious sort of places, and I will never trust them. I look upon them as a regular bait for thieves, and they are always the first thing which they attack. In the meantime I am not sure that I did right to bury in the garden those ten thousand crowns which I received yesterday. Ten thousand crowns is a sum sufficiently—— (*Seeing his children whispering together.*) Oh, heavens! I have betrayed myself; my warmth transported me. I believe I spoke out loud when I was reasoning to myself. What is the matter?
*Cléante.* Nothing, father.
*Har.* How long have you been there?
*Élise.* We have only come here this moment.
*Har.* Did you overhear?
*Clé.* What, father?
*Har.* What I——
*Él.* What might it be?
*Har.* What I was just now saying.
*Clé.* No.
*Har.* You did, you did!
*Él.* I beg your pardon, we did not.
*Har.* I see plainly that you did hear some words. I was talking to myself of the difficulty of getting money nowadays, and I was saying how happy he would be who had ten thousand crowns in his house.
*Clé.* We were hesitating to come up to you, for fear we should interrupt you.

*Har.* I am very glad to hear you say that, lest you should take things the wrong way, and fancy I was saying that I had ten thousand crowns.

*Clé.* We don't pry into your affairs.

*Har.* I wish to goodness I had them—the ten thousand crowns!

*Clé.* I don't believe——

*Har.* 'Twould be a fine thing for me.

*Él.* These are things——

*Har.* I should find a use for them.

*Clé.* I am of opinion that——

*Har.* That sum would suit me exactly.

*Él.* You are——

*Har.* And I should not complain, as I do now, that the times are hard.

*Clé.* Bless me, father, you have no reason to complain. Every one knows that you have plenty of money.

*Har.* What! I have plenty of money! Whoever says it is a liar: there is nothing more false, and they are rascals who spread all these reports.

*Él.* Don't put yourself into a passion.

*Har.* It is strange that my own children should betray me, and turn my enemies.

*Clé.* Does telling you that you have money make one your enemy?

*Har.* Yes; such kind of talk, and your spending, will some day cause my throat to be cut in my own house, in the idea that I am stuffed with gold.

*Clé.* What great expense am I at?

*Har.* What! can anything be more scandalous than the expensive get-up in which you walk about the town? I was finding fault with your sister yesterday, but this is ten times worse. It cries to heaven for punishment; and to take you from head to foot, one might find enough to purchase a good annuity with. I've told you, my son, twenty times over, that all your ways displease me greatly. You ape being a nobleman, and you must certainly rob me to go dressed as you are.

*Clé.* How rob you?

*Har.* How should I know? How can you get the means of keeping up the style you affect?

*Clé.* Well, father, it is by play; and as I am very lucky, I put all the money I win upon my back.

*Har.* More shame for you. If you have good luck at play,

you should make good use of it, and put the money you win out at good interest, so that you might find it another time. I should like to know, without mentioning the rest, what is the good of all these ribands with which you are so finely decked from head to foot, and whether half a dozen ties [1] would not be enough to fasten your breeches? And what need to lay out money on wigs when you may wear your own hair, which costs you nothing? I'll be bound that what with wigs and what with ribands there go at least twenty pistoles; and twenty pistoles bring in eighteen livres, six sols, eight deniers per annum at 8½ per cent. interest.

*Clé.* Very true.

*Har.* No more of this. Let us talk of other business. (*Aside.*) Mercy on me, I believe they are making signs to one another to pick my pocket. (*Aloud.*) What is the meaning of those signs?

*Él.* We are settling, my brother and I, which of us shall speak first, as we have both something to say to you.

*Har.* And I, too, have something to say to both of you.

*Clé.* It is about marriage, father, that we want to speak with you.

*Har.* It is about marriage that I want to talk with you.

*Él.* Ah! father.

*Har.* What is the meaning of that "ah"? Is it the word, my girl, or the thing that frightens you?

*Clé.* Marriage may be frightful to both of us, in the fashion you may understand it, and we fear our sentiments may not agree with your choice.

*Har.* A little patience. Do not alarm yourselves. I know what is proper for both of you, and you shall neither of you have reason to complain of anything I intend to do. And to begin at the right end; tell me, have you seen a young person of the name of Mariane, who is living not far from here?

*Clé.* Yes, father.

*Har.* And you, child?

*Él.* I have heard speak of her.

*Har.* And how do you like this girl, my son?

*Clé.* She is a charming creature.

*Har.* And how about her looks?

*Clé.* Ingenuous and intelligent.

*Har.* Her air and manner?

*Clé.* Admirable, without any question.

*Har.* Don't you think such a girl well deserves to be thought of?

[1] The fastenings or points formerly used to fasten the upper to the lower garments.

*Clé.* Yes, father.

*Har.* You think that this would be a desirable match?

*Clé.* Most desirable.

*Har.* That she has all the appearance of making an excellent housewife?

*Clé.* No doubt.

*Har.* And that a husband might live comfortably with her?

*Clé.* Certainly.

*Har.* There is a trifling difficulty. I am afraid she has not so much money as one might desire.

*Clé.* Oh, sir, money is not to be considered, when it is a question of marrying an honourable person.

*Har.* Pardon me, pardon me! But there is this to be said, that if the fortune is not large it may be made up in other ways.

*Clé.* That may well be.

*Har.* In short, I am very glad to find that you fall in with my views. For her charming manner and sweetness of temper have gained my heart, and I am resolved to marry her provided I find that she has some little fortune.

*Clé.* Oh, heavens!

*Har.* What now?

*Clé.* You are resolved, you say——

*Har.* To marry Mariane.

*Clé.* Who, you? You?

*Har.* Yes, I, I, I. What is the meaning of all this?

*Clé.* A dizziness has come over me all at once, and I will retire for awhile.

*Har.* Oh, that's nothing. Go into the kitchen and drink a glass of cold water. (*Exit Cléante.*) These are young sparks, who have no more heart than chickens. This, daughter, is what I have resolved on for myself. As for your brother, I've found out a certain widow for him, who was mentioned to me this morning; and for you, I'll give you to Seigneur Anselme.

*Él.* To Seigneur Anselme?

*Har.* A staid, prudent, and wise man, who is not above fifty years old, and is said to be very rich.

*Él.* (*curtsying*). I don't want to marry, father, if you please.

*Har.* (*mimicking her*). But I want you, my little daughter, my darling, to marry, if you please.

*Él.* (*again curtsying*). I beg your pardon, father.

*Har.* (*again mimicking her*). I beg yours, daughter.

*Él.* I am Seigneur Anselme's most humble servant (*again curtsying*), but, with your leave, I will not marry him.

*Har.* I am your most humble servant; but (*again mimicking her*). with your leave, you shall marry him this very night.

*Él.* This very night?

*Har.* This very night.

*Él.* (*again curtsying*). This can't be, father.

*Har.* (*again mimicking*). This shall be, daughter.

*Él.* No.

*Har.* Yes.

*Él.* No, I tell you.

*Har.* Yes, I tell you.

*Él.* It is a thing you will never force me to.

*Har.* It is a thing I will force you to.

*Él.* I will sooner kill myself than marry such a husband.

*Har.* You will not kill yourself; and you shall marry him. But what audacity! Did any one ever hear a daughter speak so to her father?

*Él.* But did any one ever see a father marry his daughter in such a fashion?

*Har.* It is a match to which there can be no objection; and I'll be bound that everybody will approve of my choice.

*Él.* And I'll wager that no reasonable person can approve of it.

*Har.* (*perceiving Valère at a distance*). Here comes Valère. Will you agree to his deciding the question between us?

*Él.* Yes, I agree.

*Har.* But will you be bound by his decision?

*Él.* Yes, I'll stand by whatever he says.

*Har.* That's settled then.

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SCENE V.

VALÈRE, HARPAGON, ÉLISE.

*Harpagon.* Come here, Valère. We have chosen you to decide which is right—my daughter or I?

*Valère.* Oh, you, sir, unquestionably.

*Har.* But do you know what we were talking about?

*Val.* No; but you cannot be wrong—you are all sense.

*Har.* Well, then, I have a mind to give my daughter this evening a husband who is equally rich and wise; and the hussy tells me to my face that she scorns to take him. What do you say to that?

*Val.* What do I say to it?

*Har.* Yes.

*Val.* I—I-

*Har.* What?

*Val.* I say that in the main I am of your opinion, and you cannot fail to be in the right. But at the same time she is not absolutely in the wrong—and——

*Har.* How so? Monsieur Anselme is an excellent match. He is a gentleman of good family, good-tempered, staid, discreet, in good circumstances, and has no child of his former marriage. Could she have a better chance?

*Val.* That's true. But she might say that this is hurrying matters too much, and that she should at least have time to see if her inclination could fall in with——

*Har.* It is a chance which we must seize by the forelock. I find an advantage here which I should not find elsewhere, for he is willing to take her without a dowry.

*Val.* Without a dowry?

*Har.* Yes.

*Val.* Ah, then I can say no more. (*Turning to Élise.*) You see here an utterly convincing reason, to which you must yield.

*Har.* This saves me a great deal.

*Val.* Certainly that admits of no contradiction. It is true that your daughter may represent to you that marriage is a more important matter than people are apt to think; that it means to be happy or unhappy all her life; and that an engagement which must last till death should never be made without great precaution.

*Har.* Without any dowry!

*Val.* You are right. That decides all; that's taken for granted. There are people who would tell you that on such occasions a daughter's inclination ought doubtless to be regarded; and that great disparity of age, temper, and sentiments makes a marriage subject to vexatious accidents.

*Har.* Without any dowry!

*Val.* Ah! there's no replying to that. We are well aware of it. Who the deuce can go against it? Not but what there are many fathers who would rather study the satisfaction they can give their children than the money they can bestow on them; who would never sacrifice them to interest, but would study in marriage that sweet conformity which continually maintains the honour, tranquillity, and joy of it; and that——

*Har.* Without any dowry!

*Val.* It is true. That stops every mouth. *Without a dowry!* How can one withstand such an argument!

*Har.* (*looking towards the garden*). Bless me! I think I hear a dog barking: it may be some one who has a design on my money. Don't go away, I shall be back directly.

*Élise.* Are you jesting, Valère, to talk to him as you do?

*Val.* It is not to exasperate him, and thus to gain my end the better. To attack his sentiments directly, would be the way to spoil all. There are some people who can be taken only in a round-about way; tempers which will stand no resistance; restive natures that fire up against the truth, that always set themselves against the straight path of reason, whom you can never bring to the point you desire, except by turning them about. Seem to consent to what he wishes, and you will gain your end the better, and——

*Él.* But this marriage, Valère!

*Val.* We'll find out some way to break it off.

*Él.* But what can we find if it's to be carried out this evening?

*Val.* You must ask for time, and feign some disorder.

*El.* But they will find it is only a pretence if they call in the physician.

*Val.* You're jesting, surely. Do they know anything? Pooh! pooh! You may have any ailment you like, as far as they are concerned: they'll find out some reason to account for it.

*Har.* (*returning at the back of the stage*). Thank heaven, it's nothing!

*Val.* (*without seeing Harpagon*). In short, our last resource is in flight, which will save us from everything; and if your love, fair Élise, is capable of firmness——(*seeing Harpagon*). Yes, it is fitting that a daughter should be obedient to her father. She must not mind the appearance and figure of a husband, and when the argument of *Without a dowry* comes up, she ought to be ready to take anything that may be given her.

*Har.* Good. That was very well put!

*Val.* Sir, I ask your pardon if I am a little warm, and take the liberty of talking to her in the way I do.

*Har.* On the contrary, I am delighted, and I beg that you will take an absolute control over her. Yes (*to Élise*), it is in vain for you to run away. I give him the same authority over you that heaven has given to me, and mean that you do everything he directs.

*Val.* (*to Élise*). After that, dare you resist my remonstrances? (*To Harpagon.*) I will follow her and continue the lesson I have been giving her.

*Har.* Do so; I shall feel greatly obliged to you.

*Val.* It is necessary to keep a strict hand over her.

*Har.* That is true. We must——

*Val.* Give yourself no trouble; I can see my way quite clearly.

*Har.* Very good. I am going to take a short turn in the garden, and shall soon be back.

*Val.* (*speaking to Élise, going out by the door she has gone out at*). Yes; money is the most valuable thing in the world, and you ought to thank heaven for the worthy father it has bestowed on you. He knows what life is. When a person offers to take off a daughter without a dowry, one ought to look no further. Everything is included in that; and "without a dowry" supplies the place of beauty, youth, pedigree, honour, wisdom, and uprightness.

*Har.* Well said, my boy! Spoken like an oracle! Happy is the man who has a servant of this sort.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

CLÉANTE, LA FLÈCHE.

*Cléante.* Well, you rascal, where on earth have you been? Did not I order you——

*La Flèche.* Yes, sir, and I came here to wait for you without stirring; but your father, the most surly of men, drove me away in spite of myself, and I ran the risk of being thrashed.

*Clé.* How is our affair getting on? Things are more pressing than ever; since I left you I have discovered that my father is my rival.

*La Fl.* Your father in love?

*Clé.* Yes, and I had all the difficulty in the world to conceal from him the trouble this news has caused me.

*La Fl.* He meddle with love affairs! What the deuce can he be thinking of? Is he going to play the world a joke? And was love made for people of his build?

*Clé.* It must have been as a punishment for my sins that this passion got into his head.

*La Fl.* But why did you make a mystery to him of your love?

*Clé.* To give him less suspicion, and to reserve myself in case of need for the best way of breaking off the match. But what answer did they give you?

*La Fl.* Indeed, sir, borrowers are in a bad way, and one must put up with strange things when one has, like yourself, to go through the hands of the money-lenders.

*Clé.* Cannot the affair be managed, then?

*La Fl.* Pardon me. Our Maître Simon, the broker, who has been recommended to us as an active, energetic fellow, tells me that he has left no stone unturned to serve you, and that your looks alone have gained his heart.

*Clé.* Shall I have the fifteen thousand francs, then, that I have asked for?

*La Fl.* Yes, but upon some trifling conditions which you must accept if you wish to complete the transaction.

*Clé.* Did you get to speak with the man who will lend the money?

*La Fl.* No, truly; the business is not done after that fashion. He takes even more pains to conceal himself than you do, and there are much greater mysteries than you imagine. He would not have his name mentioned, and he is to be brought to an interview with you to-day in a house lent for the purpose, that he may be informed, from your own mouth, of your family and your means; and I feel sure that the mention of your father's name will make everything quite smooth.

*Clé.* And especially my mother's being dead, as no one can take her money from me.

*La Fl.* Here are some points which he dictated to our broker to be shown to you, before anything can be done.

*On the supposition that the lender finds all the securities good, and that the borrower is of age, of a family whose estate is ample, solid, and well-secured, clear and free from all encumbrances; a good and exact bond shall be executed before a notary, the most honourable man that can be found, and who for that purpose must be chosen by the lender, to whom it is of the greatest importance that the instrument be rightly drawn up.*

*Clé.* There is nothing to be said against this.

*La Fl. The lender, not wishing to burden his conscience, will lend his money at no more than five and a half per cent. interest.*

*Clé.* Five and a half per cent.! Upon my word this is an honest man! There is no reason to complain of this.

*La Fl.* That's true.

*But as the lender aforesaid has not by him the sum in question, and in order to do the borrower a favour is obliged himself to borrow of another at the rate of twenty per cent., it is agreed that the said borrower shall pay that interest, without prejudice to the rest, seeing that it is only to oblige him that the said lender engages to borrow this.*

*Clé.* The deuce! What a Jew; what a Turk! It is above five and twenty per cent.

*La Fl.* Quite true. That's what I said. You had better consider about it.

*Clé.* But what would you have me consider? I want money, and I must agree to his terms.

*La Fl.* The very answer I made him.

*Clé.* Is there anything more?

*La Fl.* Only one small article.

*Of the fifteen thousand francs required, the lender will not be able to pay in cash more than twelve thousand; and as to the thousand crowns remaining, the borrower must take them out in clothes, furniture, and trinkets: as by the accompanying inventory, and which the lender has honestly put at the lowest possible price.*

*Clé.* What is the meaning of all this?

*La Fl.* Listen to the inventory.

*Imprimis.—One four-post bedstead, with Hungary point lace, properly sewn on olive-coloured cloth; with six chairs, and a counterpane to match, all in good condition, and lined with reversible taffeta, red and blue.*

*Item.—One tent bedstead, covered with a good Aumale serge of dead-rose colour, with silk fringes.*

*Clé.* What would he have me do with this?

*La Fl.* Wait a moment.

*Item.—One set of tapestry hangings, being the loves of Gombaut and Macée.*

*Item.—One large walnut table, with twelve turned legs, drawing out at each end, with six stools under it.*

*Clé.* What on earth am I to do with——

*La Fl.* Have a little patience.

*Item.—Three large muskets, inlaid with mother of pearl, and the rests belonging to them.*

*Item.—One brick furnace, with two retorts and three receivers, very useful for those who understand distillation.*

*Clé.* I shall go mad!

*La Fl.* Gently.

*Item.—A Bologna lute, with a full set of strings, a few only wanting.*

*Item.—One nine-hole board, one draught board, with the game of goose, recovered from the Greeks, very suitable for passing away the time when one has nothing to do.*

*Item.—One lizard-skin, three feet and a half long, stuffed with hay; a pretty curiosity to hang from the ceiling of a room.*

*The total above-mentioned being honestly worth four thousand*

*five hundred livres, is reduced by the lender's moderation to the value of one thousand crowns.*

*Clé.* Plague take him with his moderation, scoundrel and cut-throat as he is! Was there ever such extortion heard of? And not satisfied with the ruinous interest he demands, he must force me to take the beggarly old lumber he has heaped together, for three thousand livres. I sha'n't get two hundred crowns out of the lot, and yet I must bring myself to agree to his terms, for he is in a position to make me accept anything. The villain has me at his mercy.

*La Fl.* Without offence, sir, I see that you are following exactly the same road which Panurge took to his ruin—getting money advanced, buying dear, selling cheap, and eating your wheat in the blade.

*Clé.* What would you have me do? See what young fellows are reduced to by the cursed avarice of their fathers: can one be astonished after this if their children wish them dead?

*La Fl.* I must confess that yours would enrage the calmest man in the world against his stinginess. Thank heaven, I have no special inclination for being hung; and among my comrades whom I see meddling in many little affairs, I'm clever enough to save my stakes, and to keep out of all affairs which tend, however distantly, towards the gallows: but, to speak the truth, this man would tempt me by his actions to rob him, and I should think that in stealing from him I was doing a meritorious action.

*Clé.* Give me that inventory a little while, that I may look over it again.

## SCENE II.

MAÎTRE SIMON, HARPAGON, CLÉANTE, LA FLÈCHE.

*Maître Simon.* Yes, sir, it is a young man who is in want of money. His affairs oblige him to seek for it, and he will make no difficulty about your terms.

*Harpagon.* But, Maître Simon, do you think that there is no risk run in this case? And do you know the name, the means, and the family of him of whom you speak?

*Mtre. Si.* No, I cannot give you full information on that point, as it was only by chance that I was directed to him; but you will be made acquainted with everything by himself, and his man assured me that you would be satisfied when you came to know him. All that I can tell you is that his family is very rich, and that he has no mother, and further that he will undertake, if you

make a point of it, that his father will be dead before eight months are over.

*Har.* That is something, indeed. Charity, Maître Simon, obliges us to oblige people when it is in our power.

*Mtre. Si.* Of course.

*La Flèche.* What is the meaning of this? Our Maître Simon talking to your father!

*Cléante.* Can some one have told him who I am? and are you going to betray me?

*Mtre. Si.* (*to Cléante and La Flèche*). Ah, you are in a great hurry! Who told you that this was the house? (*To Harpagon.*) At any rate, sir, it was not I who gave them your name and address. But in my opinion there is no great harm done; they are persons of discretion, and you can enter into mutual explanations.

*Har.* What!!

*Mtre. Si.* (*indicating Cleante*). This is the gentleman about whom I was speaking to you, who wants to borrow fifteen thousand livres.

*Har.* How, sirrah! is it you who are abandoning yourself to such disgraceful proceedings?

*Clé.* How, father, do you descend to such base actions?

(*Maître Simon disappears, and La Flèche hides himself.*)

*Har.* Is it you who would ruin yourself by such shameful borrowing?

*Clé.* Is it you who would enrich yourself by such illegal usury?

*Har.* How dare you, after this, show yourself to me?

*Clé.* How dare you, after this, show yourself to the world?

*Har.* Tell me, are you not ashamed to come to such debauchery; to run headlong into frightful expenses, and scandalously squander the property your parents have got together for you by the sweat of their brows?

*Clé.* Do not you blush at dishonouring your position by such transactions — sacrificing your honour and reputation to the insatiable desire of heaping crown upon crown, and outdoing in point of interest the most shameless extortions ever invented by the most exorbitant usurers?

*Har.* Out of my sight, you rascal, out of my sight!

*Clé.* Which, think you, is the greatest criminal? He who buys money he is really in want of, or he who steals money for which he has no use?

*Har.* Be off, I say, and do not torment my ears—— (*Exit Cléante.*) (*Harpagon alone.*) I am not altogether sorry for this

adventure; it will be a warning to me to keep an eye, more than ever, upon all his actions.

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SCENE III.

FROSINE, HARPAGON.

*Frosine.* Sir——

*Harpagon.* Stay a moment; I will come back and talk to you presently. (*Aside.*) It is desirable that I should take a look at my money.

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SCENE IV.

LA FLÈCHE, FROSINE.

*La Flèche* (*not seeing Frosine*). This adventure is extremely droll. He must certainly have a shopful of goods somewhere, for we have no knowledge of a single article mentioned in the inventory.

*Frosine* (*seeing him*). Ah, is it you, my poor La Flèche? What brings this meeting about?

*La Fl.* Ah, ha! Is that you, Frosine? What are you doing here?

*Fros.* What I do everywhere else: mix myself up in affairs, make myself useful to people, and turn what small talent I may have to the best advantage. You know that in this world we must live by cleverness, and that to people like myself heaven has given no other income but intrigue and meddling.

*La Fl.* Have you any business with the master of this house?

*Fros.* Yes. I've a little affair in hand for him, for which I expect some return.

*La Fl.* From him? Ah, you'll be very clever if you can get anything from that quarter. I may tell you that money is wonderfully scarce here.

*Fros.* But there are certain services which have a wonderful influence.

*La Fl.* I am your humble servant: but as yet you don't know Monsieur Harpagon. He is of all human beings the least human; of all mortals he is the hardest and most close-fisted. There is no service which can urge his gratitude so far as to make him open his purse. Of praise, esteem, kindness in words and friendship, as much as you please, but of money not a sou. There is nothing more dry and withered than his favours and caresses; and "give" is a word to which he has taken so strong a dislike that he never says *I give you* good-day, but *I lend you* good-day.

*Fros.* Goodness! But I possess the art of fleecing men. I've the secret of introducing myself into their affections; of tickling their hearts, to find on which side they are the most accessible.

*La Fl.* That's useless here. I defy you to soften the man we are talking of, on the side of money. He is a Turk on that head, but so Turkish as to make everybody despair. You may burst him before you can move him. In a word, he loves money more than reputation, honour, and virtue; and the sight of a person who has any demand upon him throws him into convulsions; it wounds him mortally, pierces him to the heart, tears out his very entrails, and if——But here he is coming back. I must be off. [*Exit La Flèche.*

## SCENE V.

HARPAGON, FROSINE.

*Harpagon* (*aside*). Everything is quite right. (*Aloud.*) Ah! What is it, Frosine?

*Frosine.* Good heavens! How well you look. You're the picture of health.

*Har.* Who, I?

*Fros.* Never did I see you look so fresh and bright.

*Har.* You don't mean it?

*Fros.* Indeed, you were never so young in your life as you are now; I see fellows of five and twenty who are older than you.

*Har.* For all that, Frosine, I'm turned sixty.

*Fros.* Well, what's that? It is the flower of one's age, and you are now entering on the prime of life.

*Har.* That may be; but twenty years less would do me no harm, I think.

*Fros.* You're joking. You have no need of them, for you're made of stuff to last to a hundred.

*Har.* Do you think so?

*Fros.* Certainly, you have all the marks of it. Wait a moment. Yes, there is certainly just between your two eyes a token of long life.

*Har.* Are you a judge of that?

*Fros.* Certainly. Now show me your hand. Goodness! what a line of life is there!

*Har.* What do you mean?

*Fros.* Don't you see how far that line goes?

*Har.* Well, what does that signify?

*Fros.* On my conscience, I gave you a hundred years, but I do believe you'll see a hundred and twenty.

*Har.* Is it possible?

*Fros.* You must be knocked on the head, I tell you. You'll live to bury your children, and your children's children.

*Har.* So much the better. How is our affair going on?

*Fros.* Need you ask? Does any one see me mix myself up in anything that I do not succeed in? And, above all, I've a wonderful talent for match-making. There are not two people in the world that I can't bring together in less than no time; I believe that if I took it into my head I could marry the Grand Turk to the Republic of Venice. But there was not, after all, such great difficulty in this affair. As I am intimate with them, I've had long conversations with them both about you. I told the mother the project you formed for Mariane, after having seen her pass along the street, and sitting at her window.

*Har.* What answer did she make?

*Fros.* She was delighted with the proposal: and when I told her that you very much wished that her daughter should be present at the signing of your daughter's marriage contract this evening, she readily consented, and for this purpose entrusted her to my care.

*Har.* I am obliged, Frosine, to give a supper to Monsieur Anselme, and I should be glad if she would join the party.

*Fros.* You are right. After dinner she will pay your daughter a visit; then she wishes to take a turn in the Fair, and can then return to supper.

*Har.* Very well; they can go together in my carriage, which I will lend them.

*Fros.* That will suit her exactly.

*Har.* But, Frosine, have you talked with the mother about the marriage-portion she can give her daughter? Have you told her that she must do something herself in the matter, that she must make an effort and even make some sacrifice on such an occasion as this? For, after all, no one would marry a girl unless she brought something with her.

*Fros.* What! Why she's a girl that will bring you in twelve thousand livres per annum.

*Har.* Twelve thousand livres per annum?

*Fros.* Yes. First, she has been nursed and reared in a very scanty way of living. She has been used to a diet of salad, milk, cheese, and apples, and so there will be no need on her account of an expensive style of cooking, no exquisite soups, nor constant pearled-barley, nor delicacies such as another woman must have; and this is no trifling matter, but will be worth three thousand

livres a year, at least. Again, she does not care for anything beyond simple decent plainness in apparel, and does not like magnificent dresses, nor expensive jewels, nor grand furniture, which young wives generally run after so eagerly, and this alone is worth more than four thousand livres a year. Then she has a great dislike to gambling, which is so common among ladies nowadays. I know one in our neighbourhood who has lost twenty thousand francs this year. But let us reckon only the quarter of that, five thousand francs, then four thousand francs for jewels and dress, that makes nine thousand francs, and a thousand crowns that we reckon for difference in food—so there you see you have your twelve thousand francs a year thoroughly accounted for.

*Har.* Well, that's not amiss: but this reckoning has nothing tangible in it.

*Fros.* Pardon me: is it nothing tangible to bring you in marriage great moderation, the inheritance of a great love of simplicity of dress, and a great hatred of play?

*Har.* It is only jesting to make up her portion out of the expenses she will *not* put me to. I cannot give a receipt for what I have never received. I must handle something.

*Fros.* Good heavens! You'll get enough. They have told me of a certain country where they have property, of which you will be the master.

*Har.* We must see that. But, Frosine, there is another thing which gives me uneasiness. The girl is young, as you know, and young people generally only care for those of their own age, and only desire their companionship. I am afraid that a man of my time of life will not suit her taste, and this may produce some domestic troubles, which I shall not care for.

*Fros.* Ah, how little do you know her! That is a special characteristic in her that I wanted to point out to you. She has a particular dislike to all young men, and only cares for old ones.

*Har.* She does?

*Fros.* Yes, indeed. I wish you could have heard her talk on this point. She cannot bear the sight of a young man; but she is never more delighted, she says, than when she can meet with a fine old man with a venerable beard. The older they are, the more she likes them, and I warn you not to try and make yourself out younger than you are. She wishes for a husband who is sixty at least; and less than four months ago, when she was engaged to be married, she broke off the match, because she found out that her lover was only fifty-six years old, and did not use spectacles in signing the marriage contract.

*Har.* That was the only reason?

*Fros.* Nothing else. She says that fifty-six years will not satisfy her: and that above all she adores faces that wear spectacles.

*Har.* You tell me something quite new to me.

*Fros.* Oh, she carries it farther than you would suppose. In her own room she has some pictures and prints. But what would you suppose them to be? None of your Adonises, Cephaluses, Parises, and Apollos. No. Handsome portraits of Saturn, of King Priam, of old Nestor, and good Father Anchises on his son's shoulders.

*Har.* That is admirable! That is what I never could have dreamt of, and I am very pleased to know that such is her taste. Indeed, if I had been a woman I never should have cared for young fellows.

*Fros.* I quite believe it. Nice sort of rubbish, indeed, to be in love with! Pretty boys with their bibs on! Young fops who want to be admired for their delicate complexion! I should like to know what relish there is in one of them.

*Har.* For my part I can't understand it, and I can't imagine how it is that there are women who are so fond of them.

*Fros.* They must be rank fools. To think that youth is so lovable! Have people got common sense? Are these young swells really men? And is it possible to care for such creatures as these?

*Har.* That's what I say every day. Look at them with their mincing tones, their little moustache turned up like a cat's whiskers, their leg-of-mutton breeches, and their open waistcoats!

*Fros.* They are well put together, aren't they, when compared to any one like yourself! There's something like a man! There's something worth looking at! That's the build and the dress to inspire love!

*Har.* What then, do you find me passable?

*Fros.* Do I? Why, you are enchanting, and you ought to have your picture drawn. Turn this way a little, if you please: it is impossible to be better. Let me see you walk. Here is a well-proportioned frame, free and easy without the least infirmity!

*Har.* I have no serious ones, thank heaven. There is only my cough which seizes me now and then.

*Fros.* Oh, that is nothing at all. Your cough is really not unbecoming, as you cough so gracefully.

*Har.* Now tell me a little. Has not Mariane seen me yet? Has not she remarked me as I passed?

*Fros.* No. But we had a good deal of conversation about your person; and I did not fail to set forth your merits, and to impress upon her how desirable it would be for her to have such a husband as you.

*Har.* You did well, and I thank you for it.

*Fros.* But, sir, I have a small request to make to you. I have a lawsuit, which I am in danger of losing for want of a little money—(*Harpagon looks grave*)—and you could easily gain me this suit, if you had any kind feeling towards me——You cannot think what pleasure she will have in seeing you. (*He brightens up again.*) How you will please her! What an admirable effect that old-fashioned ruff of yours will have on her fancy! But above all she will be charmed with your breeches fastened on to your doublet with corded tags. That will make her absolutely dote upon you. A lover with tags will be a marvellous delight to her.

*Har.* In truth, you enchant me with your conversation.

*Fros.* Really, sir, this lawsuit is of the greatest importance to me. (*Harpagon looks grave again.*) I shall be ruined if I lose it, and some slight assistance from you would retrieve my affairs——I wish you could have seen how delighted she was when she heard me talk about you. (*Harpagon looks bright again.*) Joy sparkled in her eyes at the recital of your good qualities; and I left her most impatient to have this match fully concluded.

*Har.* You have done me the greatest possible service, Frosine, and I assure you that I am extremely obliged to you.

*Fros.* I beg of you, sir, to grant me the small assistance I ask of you. (*Harpagon looks serious again.*) It will set me up again, and I shall ever feel obliged to you.

*Har.* Good-bye. I must go and finish my letters.

*Fros.* I do assure you, sir, that you never could relieve me in a greater necessity.

*Har.* I will give orders that my carriage shall be ready to take you to the fair.

*Fros.* I really would not importune you, if I were not forced to do so.

*Har.* And I will take care that you have supper early, so that it may not disagree with you.

*Fros.* Do not refuse me the favour I ask you. You cannot imagine, sir, the pleasure that——

*Har.* I must be off. I am called. Good-bye till the evening.

*Fros.* (*alone*). May fever take you, you covetous cur! The niggard was proof against all my attacks. But I haven't done with

the business yet: as I have the other side, from which in any case I am sure of a reward.

## ACT III. SCENE I.

HARPAGON, CLÉANTE, ÉLISE, VALÈRE, DAME CLAUDE *with a broom*, MAÎTRE JACQUES, BRINDAVOINE, LA MERLUCHE.

*Harpagon.* Here, come here all of you, that I may give you my orders for this evening, and arrange each one's work. Now, Dame Claude, to begin with you. Good, you are already armed. You must give everything a thorough cleaning; but be very careful not to rub the furniture too hard, for fear of wearing it out. Further, I give you during supper-time the care of the bottles; and if one is missing or if anything is broken, I shall look to you for it, and stop it out of your wages.

*Maître Jacques* (*aside*). A very politic punishment.

*Har.* Now go. (*Exit Dame Claude.*) You, Brindavoine, and you, La Merluche, are to rinse the glasses and serve the wine—but only when people are thirsty, and not like some impertinent footmen, who tease people, and put it into their heads to drink when they would not think of it. Wait till they have asked more than once, and be sure to mix plenty of water with it.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*aside*). Yes, for unmixed wine gets into the head.

*La Merluche.* Shall we take off our smocks, sir?

*Har.* Yes, when you see the guests coming; and be very careful not to spoil your clothes.

*Brindavoine.* But, you know, sir, that one of the fore-flaps of my doublet is covered with a great stain of lamp-oil.

*La Mer.* And I, sir, have my breeches all in holes behind, so that I am quite ashamed of myself.

*Har.* Then you should turn that side carefully to the wall, and only show your front to the company. And you, when you are serving at table, always hold your hat in this fashion. (*Shows him how to hold it so as to hide the oil stain.*) And you, daughter, have an eye on what is taken away, and see that there is no waste. That is very becoming to young women. Meantime, prepare to receive my intended properly, as she is coming to pay you a visit, and attend her to the fair. Do you hear what I say to you?

*Élise.* Yes, father.

*Har.* And you, my fop of a son, whom I was good enough to forgive for that recent affair, don't you go and take it into your head to make sour faces at her.

*Cléante.* I make sour faces, father! What for?

*Har.* Come, come, we know the way of children whose fathers marry again, and how they are accustomed to look on what is called a step-mother. But if you wish me to lose all remembrance of your late freak, I recommend you, above all things, to welcome that young lady with a pleasant countenance, and, in short, to give her the best reception that you can.

*Clé.* To tell you the truth, father, I cannot promise to be well pleased that she should become my step-mother. I should lie if I told you so; but as to receiving her well and pleasantly, I can promise to obey you faithfully in that respect.

*Har.* Take care you do, at any rate.

*Clé.* You shall see, sir, that you have not the least reason to complain of that.

*Har.* You will do wisely. Valère, I want your help in this matter.—Here, Maître Jacques, come here, I have kept you to the last.

*Mtre. Jac.* Is it your coachman, sir, or your cook, that you wish to speak to? For I am both.

*Har.* To both of them.

*Mtre. Jac.* But to which first?

*Har.* To the cook.

*Mtre. Jac.* Wait then, if you please. (*Takes off his coachman's great-coat and appears dressed as a cook.*)

*Har.* What the deuce is that ceremony for?

*Mtre. Jac.* You've only to speak.

*Har.* I've engaged, Maitre Jacques, to give a supper to-night.

*Mtre. Jac.* Most wonderful!

*Har.* Tell me, then, can you give us good cheer?

*Mtre. Jac.* Yes, if you'll give me plenty of money.

*Har.* What the deuce! always "money." I think they have nothing else to say but "Money, money, money!" Not a word else in their mouth but "money." Always talking of money! Their argument always at hand, money!

*Valère* (*to Maitre Jacques*). I never heard a more ridiculous answer. What a wonder, to make good cheer with plenty of money! Why, it's the easiest thing in the world—any poor creature could do that; but to act like a clever man, you must make good cheer with little money.

*Mtre. Jac.* Good cheer with little money?

*Val.* Yes.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*to Valère*). Indeed, Mr. Steward, you will oblige me by letting me into the secret, and then take my place as cook. You seem to aim at being factotum here.

*Har.* Silence. What must we have?

*Mtre. Jac.* There's Mr. Steward, sir, who will make you good cheer with little money.

*Har.* Enough; I will have you answer me.

*Mtre. Jac.* How many of you will there be at table?

*Har.* We shall be eight or ten; but you must reckon them as eight. When there is enough for eight, there is always enough for ten.

*Val.* That's understood.

*Mtre. Jac.* Well, then, we must have four soups and five small dishes.

*Har.* Why, the devil! that's enough to feed a whole town.

*Mtre. Jac.* Roast meat——

*Har.* (*putting his hand on Jacques' mouth*). You traitor, you want to eat up all I'm worth!

*Mtre. Jac.* Side dishes——

*Har.* Again? (*Putting his hand once more on his mouth.*)

*Val.* (*to Jacques*). Do you want to make them all burst, and do you think your master has invited people to kill them by stuffing them? Go and read some of the rules of health, and ask the doctors whether there is anything so hurtful to men as eating to excess.

*Har.* He is quite right.

*Val.* Learn, Maître Jacques, you and the like of you, that a table overloaded with food is a cut-throat; that to show ourselves true friends to those whom we invite, frugality should reign through the whole repast, and that, according to the saying of one of the ancients, "We must eat to live, not live to eat."

*Har.* Ah, that was excellently said. Come here; let me embrace you for that saying. It is one of the finest sentences I ever heard in my life. "We must live to eat, and not eat to——" No, that's not it. What was it you said?

*Val.* That "we must eat to live, and not live to eat."

*Har.* Yes. (*To Jacques.*) Do you hear that? (*To Valère.*) What great man said that?

*Val.* I don't remember his name just now.

*Har.* Recollect to write out those words for me. I will have them engraved in gold on the chimney-piece of my dining-room.

*Val.* I will not fail. And as to your supper, leave that to me. I will arrange everything as it ought to be.

*Har.* Do so, then.

*Mtre. Jac.* So much the better. I shall have less trouble.

*Har.* (*to Valère*). We only need such things as people can't

eat much of, and which satisfy them at once; such as a good fat haricot, with a pie well garnished with chestnuts.

*Val.* Leave it to me.

*Har.* Now, Maître Jacques, you must go and clean my carriage.

*Mtre. Jac.* Stop. You are now addressing the coachman. (*He puts on his coachman's great-coat.*) You were saying——

*Har.* That you must clean the carriage and get the horses ready to go to the fair with——

*Mtre. Jac.* Your horses, sir? Why, they're not in a condition to go anywhere. I will not say that they are lying on their litter—that would be incorrect, seeing the poor beasts have none; but you make them keep such vigorous fasts, that they are only the ideas, the phantoms, or shadows of horses.

*Har.* They are very ill! They do nothing.

*Mtre. Jac.* And because they do nothing, sir, must they eat nothing? It would be much better for them, poor beasts, to have plenty to do and plenty to eat. It goes to my heart to see them grown so thin, for indeed I have an affection for my horses, and when I see them suffer, it seems to be myself; not a day passes but I take the food out of my own mouth to give to them; and it is a cruel nature, sir, that has no pity on one's neighbour.

*Har.* It will be no great labour just to go to the fair.

*Mtre. Jac.* No, sir, I haven't the heart to drive them; it would go against my conscience to give them a cut with the whip in the condition in which they now are. How would you have them drag the carriage when they can't drag themselves along?

*Val.* Sir, I will get our neighbour, le Picard, to undertake to drive them; besides, he will be needed to help to get the supper ready.

*Mtre. Jac.* With all my heart. I would much rather that they should die under the hand of another than under mine.

*Val.* Maître Jacques is very considerate.

*Mtre. Jac.* Monsieur the Steward is quite indispensable.

*Har.* Peace.

*Mtre. Jac.* Sir, I cannot endure flatterers, and I see that all he does, his constant looking after the wine and the bread, the wood, the salt, and the candles, are only done to curry favour with you, and make his court to you. This makes me mad; and I am grieved to hear daily what people say of you—for indeed I have a great regard for you in spite of myself, and next to my horses you are the person I care for most.

*Har.* Might I ask of you, Maître Jacques, what people say of me?

*Mtre. Jac.* Yes, sir, if I were sure it would not anger you.

*Har.* No, not in the least.

*Mtre. Jac.* Excuse me, sir, but I know very well it would put you into a passion.

*Har.* Not at all; on the contrary, it will oblige me; and I shall be glad to hear what the world says of me.

*Mtre. Jac.* Well, sir, since you will have it, I tell you frankly that every one makes game of you; that they hurl a thousand jokes at us about you; that they are never more delighted than when they have caught you at a disadvantage, and make stories without end of your miserly ways. One says that you have almanacs printed on purpose, in which you double the number of the Ember weeks and the vigils, so as to take advantage of the fasts which you make your folks keep. Another declares that you always have a quarrel ready to pick with your servants about new year's time, or when they are going to leave you, so that you need give them nothing. Then one tells a story that once on a time you had a neighbour's cat prosecuted for having eaten the remains of a leg of mutton. Another says that one night you were caught by your coachman, my predecessor, stealing the horses' oats, and that he gave you any number of blows with a cudgel, of which you chose to say nothing. In short, if you wish me to speak out, I must tell you that we can go nowhere without hearing people show you up. You are the town-talk and the laughing-stock of the world; and one never hears you spoken of but as the miser, curmudgeon, niggard, and extortioner.

*Har.* (*beating him*). You're a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and an insolent fellow!

*Mtre. Jac.* Very well; did I not guess how it would be—only you would not believe me? I told you plainly that I should anger you by telling you the truth.

*Har.* Learn, then, how to speak.

## SCENE II.

MAÎTRE JACQUES, VALÈRE.

*Valère* (*laughing*). So far as I can see, Maitre Jacques, you've got a poor reward for your frankness.

*Maître Jacques.* Mr. Upstart, who play the person of consequence, this is no business of yours; laugh at your own thrashing when you get it, and don't come here to laugh at mine.

*Val.* Ah! Monsieur Maître Jacques, don't put yourself in a passion, I beg of you.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*aside*). He's coming down a peg. I'll put on a bold face, and if he's fool enough to believe me, I'll give him a bit of a dressing. (*Aloud.*) You know very well, Mr. Laugher, that I do not laugh myself, and that if you provoke me I'll make you laugh the other side of your mouth. (*Maître Jacques pushes Valère to the far end of the stage, threatening him.*)

*Val.* Gently.

*Mtre. Jac.* How gently? Suppose I've a mind to?

*Val.* Pray, sir!

*Mtre. Jac.* You're an impertinent fellow.

*Val.* Monsieur Maître Jacques!

*Mtre. Jac.* There's no such person as Monsieur Maître Jacques at all. If I take a stick to you, I'll give you a good licking.

*Val.* What! a stick! (*Valère pushes him back as far as he had been pushed himself.*)

*Mtre. Jac.* Ah, I'm not speaking of that.

*Val.* Do you know, Mr. Coxcomb, that I'm the man to give you a licking?

*Mtre. Jac.* I don't doubt it.

*Val.* And that, after all, you're nothing but a snob of a cook?

*Mtre. Jac.* I know it very well.

*Val.* And that you don't know me yet?

*Mtre. Jac.* Pardon me.

*Val.* Oh, you'll give me a good licking, will you?

*Mtre. Jac.* I only spoke in jest.

*Val.* And I've no relish for your jests. (*Giving him some blows with a stick.*) Learn that you are a wretched jester.

[*Exit Valère.*

*Mtre. Jac.* (*alone*). Plague on sincerity! it's a poor kind of trade. For the future I'll give it up, and no longer speak the truth. I say nothing about my master, as he has some right to beat me; but as for this Mr. Steward, I'll be revenged on him if I can.

## SCENE III.

FROSINE, MARIANE, MAÎTRE JACQUES.

*Frosine.* Do you know, Maître Jacques, if your master is within?

*Maître Jacques.* Yes, indeed, I know it only too well.

*Fros.* Tell him, if you please, that we are here.

## SCENE IV.

MARIANE, FROSINE.

*Mariane.* Ah, Frosine, what a strange state I am in; and if I must say what I feel, I am terribly apprehensive about this interview.

*Frosine.* Why so? What is it that disquiets you?

*Mar.* Alas! do you ask me? Can't you imagine the alarm of a person on the point of seeing the rack on which she is to be fixed?

*Fros.* I see plainly that if you would die pleasantly, Harpagon is not the rack that you would willingly embrace; and I know by your countenance that the young fellow you were speaking to me about is still in your thoughts.

*Mar.* Yes, Frosine, it is a thing which I do not pretend to deny; and the respectful visits which he paid at our house have made, I confess, some impression on my mind.

*Fros.* But have you learnt who he is?

*Mar.* No, I don't know who he is, but I know that he has an air which inspires love; and that if I could make my own choice, I would take him sooner than another; and that he contributes not a little to raise in me a horrible dread of the husband you would give me.

*Fros.* Ah, yes, these young fellows are agreeable enough and play their part very well, but most of them are as poor as rats, and it would be much better for you to take an old man who will make you a good settlement. I grant you that the senses are not so well satisfied in the case that I speak of, and that there are certain disagreeables to be put up with in such a husband; but it will not last long; and believe me, his death will soon put you in a condition of taking some one more to your liking who will make amends for all.

*Mar.* Still, Frosine, it is a strange affair when, in order to be happy, we must wish or wait for some one's death; and death will not always carry out the projects we make.

*Fros.* Surely you are joking? You are only to marry him on condition of his leaving you a widow very soon. This ought to be one of the articles of the marriage contract. It would be positively scandalous if he does not die within three months. But here he comes in his own proper person.

*Mar.* Good heavens, Frosine, what a countenance!

## SCENE V.

HARPAGON, FROSINE, MARIANE.

*Harpagon.* Do not be offended, fair one, if I come to you with my spectacles on. I know that your charms strike the eye sufficiently, are visible enough of themselves, and that there is no need of glasses to discover them; yet with glasses we observe the stars, and I maintain and uphold that you are not only a star, but the most beautiful in all the country of the stars.—Frosine, she does not answer a word, nor does she show, as it seems to me, the slightest pleasure in seeing me.

*Fros.* That is because as yet she is quite taken aback. And besides, young girls are always shy in showing at first sight what they have in their thoughts.

*Har.* You are right. (*To Mariane.*) See, pretty darling, here is my daughter come to wait on you.

## SCENE VI.

ÉLISE, HARPAGON, MARIANE, FROSINE.

*Mariane.* I am very remiss, madame, in not having paid this visit before.

*Élise.* You have done that, madame, which I ought to have done, and it was my place to have been beforehand with you.

*Harpagon.* You see how tall she is: but ill weeds always grow apace.

*Mar.* (*aside to Frosine*). What an odious fellow!

*Har.* (*to Frosine*). What does my pretty one say?

*Frosine.* That she thinks you charming.

*Har.* You do me too much honour, you adorable darling!

*Mar.* (*aside*). What an animal!

*Har.* I am more than obliged to you for such sentiments.

*Mar.* (*aside*). I can hold out no longer.

*Har.* Here is my son, too, who is come to pay his respects to you.

*Mar.* (*aside to Frosine*). Ah! Frosine, what an unexpected meeting! This is the very person I spoke to you about.

*Fros.* (*aside to Mariane*). This is a wonderful adventure!

*Har.* I see you are surprised to see that I have such big children; but I shall soon get rid of them both.

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## SCENE VII.

CLÉANTE, HARPAGON, ÉLISE, MARIANE, FROSINE.

*Cléante* (*to Mariane*). To tell you the truth, madame, this is

an adventure which I did not expect; and my father surprised me not a little when he told me of his design.

*Mariane* (*to Cléante*). I can say the same. It is an unforeseen meeting, which has surprised me as much as you; and I was not prepared for such an adventure.

*Clé.* It is true, madame, that my father could not have made a better choice, and that the honour of seeing you is a real pleasure to me; but for all that I will not assure you that I rejoice at the idea of your becoming my step-mother. The compliment, I own, is too much for me, and the title is one, if you please, which I do not wish for you. This conversation may seem uncourteous in the eyes of some people, but I am sure you are a person who will take it as you should do. This is a marriage, madame, which you will easily understand I much dislike; and you cannot be ignorant, knowing what I am, how much it clashes with my interest; and in short, I have no doubt you are willing that I should tell you, with my father's permission, that if it depended upon me, this match should not take place.

*Har.* What an impertinent kind of compliment! What a nice confession to make!

*Mar.* And for myself, in reply, I can tell you that things are on the same footing; and that if you would dislike to see me your step-mother, I should no less dislike to see you my step-son. Don't think, I beg of you, that the giving you this uneasiness is any of my seeking. I should be very sorry to occasion you any vexation, and if I were not compelled by an absolute power, I would not, I give you my word, consent to a match which annoys you.

*Har.* She is quite right. Answer a fool according to his folly. I ask your pardon, my beauty, for the impertinence of my son. He is a young puppy who does not yet know the consequences of his words.

*Mar.* I can assure you that what he has said to me has by no means offended me. On the contrary, he has given me pleasure by declaring his real sentiments. I like a confession of this sort from him, and if he had spoken in any other manner I should have esteemed him much less.

*Har.* It is very good of you to be willing to excuse his faults in this way. Time will make him wiser, and you will see that he will change his ideas.

*Clé.* No, father, I am not capable of changing them, and I most earnestly desire the lady to believe it.

*Har.* What outrageous language! Why, he persists all the more!

*Clé.* Would you have me belie my heart?

*Har.* What! again? I think you had better change the conversation.

*Clé.* Well, since you wish me to speak in another style, allow me, madame, to put myself into my father's place, and protest that I have never seen anything in the world so charming as yourself; that I can conceive no happiness equal to that of pleasing you; and that the title of your husband is a glory and a felicity which I should prefer to the destiny of the greatest princes upon earth. Yes, madame, the happiness of possessing you is, in my eyes, the fairest of all fortunes; it is what I would fix all my ambition upon. There is nothing I should not be capable of doing for so valuable a conquest, and the most powerful obstacles——

*Har.* Gently, my son, if you please.

*Clé.* I am paying the lady a compliment on your behalf.

*Har.* Thank you. I have a tongue with which I can express myself quite plainly, without the help of an interpreter like you. —Here, bring some chairs.

*Fros.* No, it will be better for us to go at once to the fair, so that we can return all the sooner, and have all the rest of the time to talk to you.

*Har.* (*to Brindavoine*). Put the horses to the carriage, then. I beg you will excuse me, fair one, if I did not think of offering you some light refreshment before you started.

*Clé.* But I have seen to that, father, and have told them to bring some dishes of China oranges, citrons, and sweetmeats, which I sent for on your account.

*Har.* (*aside to Valère*). Valère!

*Val.* (*aside to Harpagon*). He's lost his senses.

*Clé.* Do you think, father, that that is not enough. The lady will be kind enough to excuse it.

*Mar.* That was not by any means necessary.

*Clé.* Madame, did you ever see a finer brilliant than the one which my father is wearing?

*Mar.* Indeed, it sparkles beautifully.

*Clé.* (*taking it off his father's finger and giving it to Mariane*). You should look at it a little closer.

*Mar.* No doubt it is a very fine one, and full of lustre.

*Clé.* (*steps before Mariane, who would return it*). No, madame, it could not be in more beautiful hands. It is a present my father makes you.

*Har.* I?

*Clé.* Is it not true, father, that you wish the lady to keep it for your sake?

*Har.* (*aside to his son*). What!

*Clé.* (*to Mariane*). A pretty question, indeed!—He is making signs for you to accept it.

*Mar.* I really cannot.

*Clé.* You must be joking. He would not think of taking it back.

*Har.* (*aside*). I am going mad!

*Mar.* It would be——

*Clé.* (*always hindering Mariane from returning the ring*). No, I tell you, it would affront him.

*Mar.* Pray——

*Clé.* By no means.

*Har.* (*aside*). Plague take——

*Clé.* You see he is perfectly shocked at your refusal.

*Har.* (*aside to his son*). Oh! you traitor.

*Clé.* You see he's quite out of patience.

*Har.* (*aside to his son, threatening him*). What a villain you are!

*Clé.* It is not my fault, father: I do all I can to induce her to keep it; but she is resolute.

*Har.* (*aside to his son, in a rage*). You scoundrel!

*Clé.* You are the cause, madame, of my father quarrelling with me.

*Har.* (*aside to his son, with the same look*). You rascal!

*Clé.* You'll make him have a fit. For goodness' sake, madame, do not stand out any longer!

*Fro.* Good gracious! What a fuss about nothing. Keep the ring, since the gentleman wishes it.

*Mar.* As I do not wish to vex you, I will keep it for the present, and shall take another opportunity to return it.

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## SCENE VIII.

HARPAGON, MARIANE, FROSINE, CLÉANTE, BRINDAVOINE, ÉLISE.

*Brindavoine.* Sir, here's a man who wants to speak with you.

*Harpagon.* Tell him I am busy, and bid him come again another time.

*Brin.* He says he has some money for you.

*Har.* I beg your pardon. I shall be back directly.

## SCENE IX.

HARPAGON, MARIANE, CLÉANTE, ÉLISE, FROSINE, LA MERLUCHE.

*La Merluche* (*comes running, and throws Harpagon down*). Sir——

*Har.* Oh! I'm killed!

*Clé.* What's the matter, father? Have you hurt yourself?

*Har.* The rascal has certainly been bribed by my debtors to break my neck.

*Val.* There's no harm done.

*La Mer.* Sir, I beg your pardon. I thought I was doing right to come in haste.

*Har.* What have you come here for, you wretch?

*La Mer.* To tell you that both your horses are without their shoes.

*Har.* Take them to the blacksmith, then, at once.

*Clé.* While we are waiting till they are shod, I will do the honours of the house, father, in your place, and show the lady the way into the garden, where I will have the collation taken.

*Har.* Valère, keep an eye upon all this, and take care to save as much as you can, that we may send it back again to the tradespeople.

*Val.* Don't be afraid; I'll see to it.

*Har.* (*aside*). Impertinent son! Have you a mind to ruin me?

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

CLÉANTE, MARIANE, ÉLISE, FROSINE.

*Cléante.* Let us come this way; we shall be much better here. There is not a single suspicious person near us, and we can speak freely.

*Élise.* Yes, madame, my brother has disclosed to me his love for you. I know the troubles and vexations caused by such cross-purposes; and I can assure you that I interest myself in your cause with the greatest tenderness.

*Mariane.* It is a sweet consolation to gain the interest of any one like yourself; and I entreat you, madame, ever to cherish this generous friendship for me, which can do so much towards alleviating the severities of fortune.

*Frosine.* In truth you are both of you unfortunate creatures, not to have let me into your affairs before all this. I should then,

without doubt, have warded off this perplexing business, and should not have carried matters so far as they have gone.

*Clé.* What would you have me do? It is my ill-fortune that has brought this about. Tell me, my fair Mariane, what have you resolved upon?

*Mar.* Alas! Am I in a position to resolve upon anything? And, dependent as I am, can I form anything but wishes?

*Clé.* What! no support for me in your heart but bare wishes? No helpful pity? No relieving goodness? No active affection?

*Mar.* What can I say to you? Put yourself in my place, and think what I can do. Advise and order for me, I confide it all to you; and I am sure you are too sensible to require anything of me which honour and propriety will not admit.

*Clé.* To what do you reduce me, when you would restrict me to what the vexatious rules of a vigorous honour and scrupulous propriety would allow?

*Mar.* But what would you have me do? Though I could overcome a good deal of the punctiliousness which our sex is forced to observe, yet I have a regard for my mother. She has always brought me up with the greatest tenderness, and I cannot bring myself to do anything that would cause her uneasiness. Act, and settle your business with her. Employ all your powers to gain her over. I give you full leave to say and do what you will; and if it only rests on my declaring myself in your favour, I readily consent to making an avowal to her of what I feel for you.

*Clé.* Frosine, good Frosine, cannot you help us?

*Fros.* In truth, you need not ask it. You know that my natural disposition is a kindly one. Heaven has not given me a heart of stone. I have too much feeling not to render small services to those whom I see loving each other earnestly and honourably. Now what can we do in this case?

*Clé.* Think a little, I beg of you.

*Mar.* Throw some light on the matter.

*El.* Find out some plan of undoing what you have done.

*Fros.* It is difficult enough. (*To Mariane.*) As to your mother, she is not unreasonable, and one might possibly gain her over, and make her resolve to transfer to the son the gift she designs for the father. But the mischief that I find is that your father is your father.

*Clé.* That's certain.

*Fros.* I mean that he'll bear malice, if he learns that he is refused; and he won't be in a humour to give his consent to

your marriage. By rights the refusal should come from himself, and we should endeavour to put him out of conceit with your person.

*Clé.* You're right.

*Fros.* Yes, I'm right. I know that very well. That's what ought to be done; but the thing is to find the means. Stay, suppose we could find a woman rather elderly, with some of my talent, who could act a part well enough to personate a lady of rank, with the help of a retinue got together in haste, and some fanciful name of a marchioness or viscountess, say from Lower Brittany: I should be clever enough to make your father believe that she was very rich, having, besides houses, a hundred thousand crowns ready money; that she was deeply in love with him, and wished to be married to him, so much so as to make over all she had to him by marriage contract; and I don't doubt but he would lend an ear to the proposal. In short, I am well aware, though he loves you much, he loves his money a little more; and when, dazzled by this allurement, he had once consented to what concerns you, it would not matter much afterwards if he were disabused of the idea when he came to look closely into the wealth of our marchioness.

*Clé.* All this is very well conceived.

*Fros.* Leave me to carry it out. By the way, I have just thought of a friend of mine, the very one to do our business.

*Clé.* Depend on my gratitude, Frosine, if you succeed in this affair; but, my charming Mariane, let us begin, I beg of you, by gaining over your mother; and a great deal has to be done before we can break off this marriage. I beg of you to employ your utmost efforts to bring this about. Make use of all the power which her fondness for you gives you. Display without reserve all those graces of eloquence, those all-powerful charms, which heaven has placed in your eyes and on your tongue; and forget not, if you please, any of those tender expressions, those soft entreaties, and those moving caresses to which I am persuaded one can refuse nothing.

*Mar.* I will do all I can in it, and overlook nothing.

## SCENE II.

HARPAGON, CLÉANTE, MARIANE, ÉLISE, FROSINE.

*Harpagon.* Oh, ho! my son kisses the hand of his intended step-mother, and his future step-mother does not decline it. Can there be anything in this?

*Élise.* Here comes my father.

*Har.* The carriage is quite ready. You may set out when you please.

*Cléante.* Since you are not going, father, I will escort them myself.

*Har.* No, stay. They can go very well by themselves, and I

## SCENE III.

HARPAGON, CLÉANTE.

*Harpagon.* Well, setting aside the question of a step-mother, what do you think of this person?

*Cléante.* What do I think of her?

*Har.* Yes, of her air, her make, her beauty, her wit?

*Clé.* So, so.

*Har.* But speak out.

*Clé.* To be frank with you, I did not find her what I once thought her. Her air is that of a regular coquette, her make quite awkward, her beauty very indifferent, and her mind extremely commonplace. Don't believe that I say this, father, to disgust you with her; for, taking one step-mother with another, I should like her as well as any one.

*Har.* And yet just now you told her——

*Clé.* I did say some pleasant words to her in your name, but that was to gratify you.

*Har.* So, then, you have not any liking for her?

*Clé.* I? Oh, no, not at all.

*Har.* I am sorry for that—for this quite upsets a thought which came into my head. When I saw her I began to reflect on my age, and I thought to myself that people would find fault with me, seeing me marry a young girl. This consideration made me give up the design, but as I have demanded her in marriage, and am engaged to her by promise, I would have given her to you, had you not taken such an aversion to her.

*Clé.* Given her to me?

*Har.* Yes, to you.

*Clé.* In marriage?

*Har.* Yes, in marriage.

*Clé.* Look you, it is true she is not much to my taste, but to oblige you, father, I'll make up my mind to marry her, if you will.

*Har.* If I will? I am more reasonable than you think for. I have no wish to force your inclination.

*Clé.* Excuse me: I will make this effort for your sake.

*Har.* No, no; marriage can never be happy where there is no inclination.

*Clé.* It is a thing, father, which may come afterwards; and they say that love is often the result of marriage.

*Har.* No, the matter ought not to be risked on the man's side, and there are vexatious consequences to which I will take care not to expose you. Had you the least inclination for her, all in good time I would have arranged for you to marry her. But as this is not the case, I shall carry out my first design and marry her myself.

*Clé.* Well, father, since matters are so, I will open my heart to you, and let you into this secret of ours. The truth is I've been in love with her ever since I saw her out walking one day. My design was to have asked her of you for a wife, and nothing has kept me back but the declaration of your sentiments and the fear of displeasing you.

*Har.* Have you visited her?

*Clé.* Yes, father.

*Har.* Very often?

*Clé.* Well, yes, for the time.

*Har.* Did they receive you well?

*Clé.* Very well; but without knowing who I was: and that was the occasion of Mariane's surprise just now.

*Har.* Did you declare your affection, and the design that you had of marrying her?

*Clé.* Certainly; and I had even made some overtures to her mother.

*Har.* Did she listen to your proposals for her daughter?

*Clé.* Yes, very civilly.

*Har.* And did the daughter return your love?

*Clé.* If I may trust to appearances, I persuade myself that she has a liking for me.

*Har.* I am very glad to have learnt this secret, as it is exactly what I wanted to know. Now, my son, shall I tell you what you have to do? You must think, if you please, of giving up your love; of ceasing all pursuit of a person whom I intend for myself, and of marrying before long the person whom I have chosen for you.

*Clé.* So, father, this is the way you intend to play me off! Well, then, since matters have come to this point, I tell you that I will not give up the love I have for Mariane; and that there is no extremity to which I will not go in order to dispute your

conquest; and that if you have the consent of her mother on your side, I have perhaps other forces which will fight on mine.

*Har.* What, you rascal, have you the audacity to poach on my preserves?

*Clé.* It is you who trespass on mine; I have the prior title.

*Har.* Am I not your father? and do not you owe me respect?

*Clé.* These are not points on which children should defer to their parents, and love is no respecter of persons.

*Har.* I'll make you respect me by some good blows of a stick.

*Clé.* All your threatenings are of no account.

*Har.* Will you give up Mariane?

*Clé.* Not on any account whatever.

*Har.* Here, bring me a stick directly.

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## SCENE IV.

MAÎTRE JACQUES, HARPAGON, CLÉANTE.

*Maître Jacques.* Hold, hold, gentlemen! What is all this? What can you be thinking of?

*Cléante.* I laugh at all this.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*to Cléante*). Ah, sir, gently.

*Harpagon.* The idea of talking to me in that impudent fashion.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*to Harpagon*). Oh, sir, for heaven's sake!

*Clé.* I sha'n't give way an inch.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*to Cléante*). What! do you speak so to your father?

*Har.* Let me do as I choose.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*to Harpagon*). What! to your own son? Pray leave off, for my sake.

*Har.* I will make you judge, Maître Jacques, in this matter, to show you how much I am in the right.

*Mtre. Jac.* Agreed. (*To Cléante.*) Go a little further off.

*Har.* I'm in love with a girl whom I intend to marry; and this rascal has the insolence to love her too, and to persist in spite of my orders.

*Mtre. Jac.* Ah! He's in the wrong.

*Har.* Is it not a frightful thing for a son to enter into competition with his father; and ought he not in duty to refrain from interfering with my inclinations?

*Mtre. Jac.* You're in the right. Let me talk to him, and do you stay here. (*Goes to Cléante at the end of the stage.*)

*Clé.* Well, yes; since he chooses you for judge, I don't refuse it; it's all the same to me who it is, and I am willing to refer myself to you, Maître Jacques, concerning our difference.

*Mtre. Jac.* You do me a great honour.

*Clé.* I am in love with a young lady who receives my addresses, and graciously accepts the offer of my heart; and my father takes it into his head to interfere with our love by the demand which he has made.

*Mtre. Jac.* He is certainly in the wrong.

*Clé.* Is he not ashamed at his age to think of marrying? Is it suitable for him to become amorous again? Ought he not to leave that to the young fellows?

*Mtre. Jac.* You're in the right. He is jesting. Let me say two words to him. (*He returns to Harpagon.*) Well, your son is not so unreasonable as you say, but is willing to listen to reason. He says he knows the respect he owes you; that he was only hurried away in the first heat of passion; that he will by no means refuse to submit to anything you please, provided you would only treat him better than you do, and give him in marriage to some one with whom he has reason to be satisfied.

*Har.* Oh, tell him, Maître Jacques, that on that consideration he may expect anything from me, and that, Mariane excepted, I give him the liberty of choosing whom he likes.

*Mtre. Jac.* Let me alone for that. (*Goes to Cléante.*) Well, your father is not so unreasonable as you would make him out to be. He declared to me that it was your fierceness which put him into such a passion, and that your manner put him upon having her; and that he will be very ready to grant all you want, provided you go about it with gentleness, and pay him the deference, respect, and submission which a son owes to his father.

*Clé.* Ah! Maître Jacques, you may assure him that if he will only grant me Mariane, he will always find me the most submissive of men; and that I shall never do anything but according to his pleasure.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*going back to the father*). It's done. He consents to what you say.

*Har.* That's the happiest thing in the world.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*to the son*). It is all settled; he is satisfied with your promises.

*Clé.* Heaven be praised!

*Mtre. Jac.* Gentlemen, you have only to talk the matter over together; you are now of the same mind; and yet just now you were going to quarrel for want of a mutual understanding.

*Clé.* My good Maître Jacques, I shall be indebted to you for the whole of my life.

*Mtre. Jac.* Pray don't mention it, sir.

*Har.* You have done me a service, Maître Jacques, and that deserves a reward. (*Harpagan feels in his pocket, Maître Jacques holds out his hand, but Harpagon only takes out his handkerchief.*) Go ; I can assure you I shall not forget it.

*Mtre. Jac.* Sir, I kiss your hand.

## SCENE V.

### CLÉANTE, HARPAGON.

*Cléante.* I ask your pardon, father, for the anger I displayed.

*Harpagon.* Oh, that is nothing.

*Clé.* I assure you I regret it extremely.

*Har.* And I am greatly rejoiced to find you so reasonable.

*Clé.* How good of you to forget my fault so quickly.

*Har.* One soon forgets the faults of children when they return to their duty.

*Clé.* So you retain no resentment for all my outbreaks?

*Har.* Why, you leave me no choice by the submission and respect you show me.

*Clé.* I promise you, father, that so long as I live I shall retain in my heart the remembrance of your goodness.

*Har.* And I promise you, that there is nothing you may not obtain from me.

*Clé.* Ah! father, I ask nothing more of you; it is giving me enough to give me Mariane.

*Har.* What!

*Clé.* I say, father, that I am more than satisfied with you, as I find everything included in the favour of your giving me Mariane.

*Har.* Who talks of giving you Mariane?

*Clé.* Why, you, father.

*Har.* I?

*Clé.* Certainly.

*Har.* What? Why, you promised to give her up!

*Clé.* I renounce her?

*Har.* Yes.

*Clé.* Not at all.

*Har.* Haven't you given up your pretensions to her?

*Clé.* On the contrary, I am more determined than ever.

*Har.* What, you rascal, again!

*Clé.* Nothing can alter me.

*Har.* Only let me get at you, you villain!

*Clé.* Do what you please.

*Har.* I forbid you to see me again.

*Clé.* The sooner the better.
*Har.* I give you up.
*Clé.* Do so.
*Har.* I renounce you as my son.
*Clé.* Be it so.
*Har.* I disinherit you.
*Clé.* As you please.
*Har.* I give you my curse.
*Clé.* I have nothing to do with your gifts.

## SCENE VI.

LA FLÈCHE, CLÉANTE.

*La Flèche* (*coming out of the garden with a cash-box*). Ah! sir, I have just found you at the right moment. Follow me, quick!
*Cléante.* What's the matter?
*La Fl.* Follow me, I tell you; we're all right.
*Clé.* How?
*La Fl.* Here's your affair.
*Clé.* What?
*La Fl.* I've had my eye on it all the day.
*Clé.* What is it?
*La Fl.* Your father's treasure, which I've collared.
*Clé.* How did you do it?
*La Fl.* You shall know all. But let us be off. I hear him calling out.

## SCENE VII.

HARPAGON—*from the garden, crying* "*Thieves!*" *without his hat.*

*Harpagon.* Thieves, thieves! murder! assassination! justice! Oh, just heaven! I am ruined, I am murdered; they have cut my throat, they have stolen my money! Who can it be? What's become of him? Where is he? Where is he hiding himself? What shall I do to find him? Which way shall I run?—which way shall I not run? Isn't he here?—isn't he there? Who's there? Stand! Give me back my money! Rascal—(*Catches himself by the arm.*) Ah, 'tis myself. My mind is disturbed; and I don't know where I am, who I am, or what I do. Alas! My poor money, my poor money, my dear friend! they've bereaved me of you; and since you are carried off, I've lost my support, my consolation, my joy. All is at an end with me, and I have no more to do in the world. Without my money it is impossible

to live. It is all over with me, I can do no more. I am dead, and buried. Is there no one who will bring me to life again, by restoring my dear money, or informing me who has taken it? Eh? What do you say? It is no one. Whoever it may be that has given the blow, they must have carefully chosen their time, just when I was talking with my rascal of a son. I'll go out and demand justice, and order all my family to be put to the torture—my maids, my footmen, my son, my daughter, and myself too. What a crowd of people have come together! I can cast my eyes on no one who does not seem suspicious; every one seems to be my thief. Ah! What are they talking about? Of the man that robbed me? What is that noise over there? Is my thief over there? For heaven's sake, if you have any news of my thief I beg you to tell me! Is not he hid there among you? They all look at me and begin to laugh. You see, no doubt they are concerned in the robbery. Here, quick! magistrates, police officers, provosts, judges, racks, gibbets, and executioners! I'll have everybody hanged; and if I don't find my money I'll hang myself afterwards!

## ACT V. SCENE I.

HARPAGON, *Magistrate and his Clerk.*

*Magistrate.* Let me alone. Thank heaven, I know my business. This is not my first day at thief-taking; and I wish I had as many sacks of gold crowns as I have hanged persons.

*Harpagon.* All magistrates have an interest in taking this affair in hand; and if they do not find out my money for me, I'll have justice on justice.

*Mag.* And so on. We will make every inquiry possible. You say that in this cash-box there was——

*Har.* Ten thousand crowns, good money.

*Mag.* Ten thousand crowns!

*Har.* (*weeping*). Yes, ten thousand crowns.

*Mag.* It is a serious robbery.

*Har.* There is no punishment great enough for the enormity of the crime; and if it remain unpunished, the most sacred things are no longer safe.

*Mag.* In what coin was it?

*Har.* In good louis-d'ors, and pistoles of full weight.

*Mag.* Whom do you suspect of this robbery?

*Har.* Everybody. I would have you take into custody the whole city and suburbs.

*Mag.* If you will believe me, you must not frighten people too much; but endeavour to find some proof, so as to proceed afterwards with greater severity to recover the money they have taken from you.

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## SCENE II.

MAÎTRE JACQUES, HARPAGON, *the Magistrate, his Clerk.*

*Maître Jacques* (*at the back of the stage, turning back to the door he entered by*). I shall be back presently. Let his throat be cut immediately. Let them singe his feet, put him into boiling water, and hang him up to the ceiling.

*Harpagon.* Who? He who robbed me?

*Mtre. Jac.* I am speaking about a sucking-pig, which your steward has just sent me, and I want to have it dressed according to my fancy.

*Har.* That's not the question. (*Turns to the Magistrate.*) But here is a gentleman you must talk to on another matter.

*Mag.* Don't put yourself out. I am not a man to get you into trouble, and everything shall be carried out quietly.

*Mtre. Jac.* Is this gentleman going to sup with you?

*Mag.* My good friend, you must hide nothing from your master.

*Mtre. Jac.* Indeed, sir, I will show him all I can do; and I will treat you in the best manner possible.

*Har.* That's not the business.

*Mtre. Jac.* If I don't make you as good cheer as I would, it is the fault of Mr. Steward, who has clipped my wings with the scissors of his economy.

*Har.* Rascal, we have something else to think about than supper. Tell me some news of the money they have stolen from me.

*Mtre. Jac.* What, have they stolen your money?

*Har.* Yes, you villain, and I'll have you hanged, if you don't give it back to me.

*Mag.* (*to Harpagon*). Pray, now, don't treat him ill. I see by his looks that he's an honest fellow, and that without being sent to jail he will find out all you want to know. Yes, my friend, if you will confess the matter, no harm shall come to you, and you shall be suitably rewarded by your master. His money has been stolen from him to-day, and you must certainly know something of the affair.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*aside*). Here's the very thing I wanted, to revenge myself on our steward. Since he came into the house, he's been

the favourite: no advice is listened to but his, and those blows he gave me still stick in my gizzard.

*Har.* What are you thinking about?

*Mag.* Let him alone. He's going to satisfy you, and I told you rightly he's an honest fellow.

*Mtre. Jac.* Sir, if you wish me to speak of things as they are, I believe that your dear Mr. Steward has done the job.

*Har.* What, Valère?

*Mtre. Jac.* Yes.

*Har.* He who appears to me so trustworthy?

*Mtre. Jac.* The very same. I believe it is he who has robbed you.

*Har.* Why do you think so?

*Mtre. Jac.* Why? *Har.* Yes.

*Mtre. Jac.* I believe it—because I believe it.

*Mag.* But you must state what proofs you have.

*Har.* Have you seen any one hanging round the place where I had put my money?

*Mtre. Jac.* Yes, certainly. Where was your money?

*Har.* In the garden.

*Mtre. Jac.* Exactly; I saw him hanging about the garden. And what was the money in?

*Har.* In a casket.

*Mtre. Jac.* The very thing. I saw him with a casket.

*Har.* And how was this casket made? I shall easily see if it was mine.

*Mtre. Jac.* How was it made? *Har.* Yes.

*Mtre. Jac.* It was made—it was made like a casket.

*Mag.* So it may be supposed. But describe it a little, that we may be able to judge.

*Mtre. Jac.* It is a large casket.

*Har.* The one stolen from me is a small one.

*Mtre. Jac.* Why, yes, it is small if you take it in that way, but I call it large for what it contains.

*Mag.* And what colour is it?

*Mtre. Jac.* What colour? *Mag.* Yes.

*Mtre. Jac.* It is of a colour—yes, of a certain colour—can't you help me to say?

*Har.* Eh?

*Mtre. Jac.* Isn't it red? *Har.* No, gray.

*Mtre. Jac.* Why yes, gray-red, that's what I would have said.

*Har.* There can be no doubt. It is that certainly. Take his deposition, sir, take it down. Good heavens! Whom can one

trust? One must never swear by anything after this, and I'm almost inclined to believe that I might be the man to rob myself.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*to Harpagon*). Here he is come back, sir. But don't go and tell him that it is I who have discovered this.

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## SCENE III.

VALÈRE, HARPAGON, *Magistrate, Clerk,* MAÎTRE JACQUES.

*Harpagon.* Here, come and confess the blackest action, the most horrible attempt that ever was.

*Valère.* What do you mean, sir?

*Har.* What, traitor, do not you blush at your own crime?

*Val.* What crime are you speaking of?

*Har.* What crime am I speaking of, you scoundrel—as if you did not know what I mean! It is in vain for you to pretend to disguise it. The whole affair is discovered, and I have just now been told of it all. How could you abuse my kindness, and introduce yourself into my house on purpose to betray me, and play me a trick of this sort?

*Val.* Since all has been known to you, sir, I will not try to palliate or deny anything.

*Mtre. Jacques.* Oh, ho! could I have guessed it without knowing?

*Val.* It was my intention to have spoken to you about it, and I wished to wait for a favourable opportunity. But as it is, I beg you not to put yourself out, but to hear my reasons.

*Har.* Fine reasons you can give me, you infamous thief!

*Val.* Really, sir, I have not deserved such names. It is true, I have committed an offence against you: but after all, my fault is pardonable.

*Har.* What! Pardonable? A planned trap, an assassination of this kind!

*Val.* For goodness' sake don't put yourself into a passion. When you have heard me, you will see that the harm done is not so great as you make it.

*Har.* The harm done not so great as I make it! What, my very body and blood? What next, you rascal?

*Val.* Your blood, sir, has not fallen into bad hands. I'm in a rank not to injure it, and there is nothing in all this for which I cannot make full reparation.

*Har.* So I intend you shall, and that you restore me what you have torn from me.

*Val.* Your honour, sir, shall be fully satisfied.

*Har.* There's no question of honour in this matter. But tell me, what induced you to act as you have done?

*Val.* Alas! Do you ask me?

*Har.* Yes, indeed, I do ask you.

*Val.* A god who carries with him excuses for all he causes to be done—Love.

*Har.* Love! *Val.* Yes.

*Har.* In truth, a fine sort of love! Love of my louis-d'ors.

*Val.* No, sir, it is not your riches that have tempted me; it is not that which has dazzled me; and I protest that I will never make any claim on you, if only you will leave me in possession of what I have.

*Har.* I'll not do it. Deuce take me if I do! But what audacity, to wish to keep what he has robbed me of!

*Val.* Do you call it a robbery?

*Har.* Do I call it a robbery? A treasure such as this!

*Val.* Truly it is a treasure, and doubtless the most precious that you have; but to let me have it will not be losing it. On my knees, I ask for this treasure full of charms, and to do right, you ought to give it me.

*Har.* I will do nothing of the kind. What is the meaning of all this?

*Val.* We have pledged our mutual faith, and sworn never to forsake each other.

*Har.* The oath is admirable, and the promise droll.

*Val.* We are engaged to be each other's eternally.

*Har.* I shall hinder you, I assure you.

*Val.* Nothing but death can separate us.

*Har.* You seem deucedly enamoured of my money!

*Val.* I have told you already, sir, that it was not self-interest which led me to act as I have done. My heart has not been moved by such springs as you imagine, and a more noble motive has inspired this resolution.

*Har.* You see that it is out of Christian charity he would have my money; but I will give good orders, and justice will see me righted, you impudent hang-dog!

*Val.* You may treat me as you like, and I am ready to suffer all the violence you please, but I beg of you to believe that if there is any harm done, you must accuse me of it, as your daughter is in no way to blame.

*Har.* I quite believe that. It would be strange indeed if my daughter had been an accomplice in such a crime. But I choose to have my treasure again; so confess whither you have carried it.

*Val.* I? I have not taken it away. It is still in your house.

*Har.* (*aside*). O my dear casket! (*Aloud.*) Not gone out of my house? [1]

*Val.* No, sir.

*Har.* Ah! Tell me a little. Have you been touching it?

*Val.* I! Ah, there you wrong us both. The flame with which I burn is too pure, too full of respect to admit of any familiarity.

*Har.* Burn for my casket! He speaks of it as a lover would of his sweetheart.

*Val.* Dame Claude, sir, knows the whole truth, and she can bear witness to you——

*Har.* What! my maid an accomplice in the affair?

*Val.* Yes, sir, she was witness of our engagement; and it was after she knew that my suit was an honourable one, that she assisted me in persuading your daughter to plight me her troth, and to receive mine.

*Har.* (*aside*). Eh? Does the fear of justice make him rave? (*To Valère.*) Why are you mixing up my daughter in the matter?

*Val.* I say, sir, that I had all the difficulty in the world to bring her modesty to consent to what my love desired.

*Har.* Whose modesty?

*Val.* Your daughter's, sir; and it is only since yesterday, that she could prevail upon herself to resolve that we should mutually sign a promise of marriage.

*Har.* My daughter has signed a promise to marry you?

*Val.* Yes, sir, as on my part I have signed one to her.

*Har.* Oh heavens! Another disgrace!

*Mtre. Jac.* (*to the Magistrate*). Take it down, sir, take it down.

*Har.* What a complication of misfortunes! What an excess of despair! Come, sir, do the duty of your office, and draw me up an indictment against him as a felon and suborner.

*Mtre. Jac.* As a felon and suborner.

*Val.* These names do not belong to me; and when you know who I am——

## SCENE IV.

ÉLISE, MARIANE, FROSINE, HARPAGON, VALÈRE, MAÎTRE JACQUES, *Magistrate and Clerk.*

*Harpagon.* Ah, graceless child! Unworthy daughter of such a father as myself! Is it thus you put in practice the lessons I've

[1] This passage is shortened, since it is not possible to express in English the double entendre produced by the use of the feminine pronoun to indicate both *cassette* and *fille*.

taught you. Do you suffer yourself to be led away by an infamous thief, and engage yourself to him without my consent? But I'll be even with you both. (*To Élise.*) Four strong walls shall answer for your good conduct, (*to Valère*) and a good gallows, impudent rascal, shall do me justice for your audacity.

*Val.* It will not be your passion that will judge the affair; and, at any rate, I shall be heard before I am condemned.

*Har.* I was wrong to speak of the gallows; you shall be broken alive on the wheel.

*Élise* (*kneeling to her father*). Oh, father, do show some more kindly feeling, and do not drive matters to the utmost extremity of paternal power! Do not allow yourself to be carried away by the first movements of passion, but give yourself time to consider what you will do. Take the trouble to look more carefully at the person with whom you are offended. He is quite different from what you judge him to be; and you will find it less strange that I should have given myself to him, when I tell you that, but for him, you would have lost me for ever. Yes, father, it was he who saved me when I was so nearly drowned, and it is to him that you owe the life of that very daughter who——

*Har.* All that goes for nothing, and it would have been much better for me if he had let you be drowned, rather than act as he has done.

*Él.* Father, I beg you, by your paternal love, to grant me——

*Har.* No, no, I will hear nothing. Justice must take its course.

*Mtre. Jac.* (*aside*). Ha, ha! You'll pay me now for those blows of the stick.

*Frosine* (*aside*). This is a very perplexing affair!

## SCENE V.

ANSELME, HARPAGON, ÉLISE, MARIANE, FROSINE, MAÎTRE JACQUES, *Magistrate and Clerk.*

*Anselme.* What's the matter, Monsieur Harpagon? You seem to be very much upset.

*Harpagon.* Ah, Monsieur Anselme, you see in me one of the most unfortunate of men; and there is nothing but trouble and disorder about the contract you have come to sign. I am wounded in my fortune and in my honour. There stands a traitor and a villain who has violated all the most sacred ties; who has crept into my family under the guise of a servant, to rob me of my money, and to gain the affections of my daughter.

*Valère.* Who wants your money, that you're talking such gibberish about?

*Har.* Yes, they've made each other a promise of marriage. This affront concerns you, Monsieur Anselme, and you ought to take part against him, and prosecute him to the utmost, at your own expense, to revenge yourself on him for his insolence.

*An.* It is no plan of mine to force any one to marry me, or to aspire to a heart which has already bestowed itself on another; but as to your interests, I am ready to take them up as my own.

*Har.* Here, sir, is a very honest magistrate, who tells me that he will omit nothing that concerns the duty of his office. (*To the Magistrate, pointing to Valère.*) Charge him, sir, as you ought, and make the matter very criminal.

*Val.* I don't see what crime you can make out of the love that I have for your daughter; and as to the punishment which you think I deserve on account of our engagement, when you know who I am——

*Har.* Oh, I laugh at all such tales; and the world is full nowadays of these pretended noblemen, impostors who take advantage of their obscurity to trick themselves out unblushingly with the first illustrious name that comes into their head.

*Val.* Know, then, that I am too honourable to take on me anything that does not belong to me, and that all Naples can bear witness to my position.

*An.* Gently. Take care what you're going to say. You are running more risk than perhaps you are aware of. You speak before a person to whom all Naples is known, and who can easily see through your story.

*Val.* (*putting his hat on with a jaunty air*). I'm not a man to be afraid of anything. If you know Naples so well, you must know who Don Thomas d'Alburci was.

*An.* Doubtless I know him, few people better than myself.

*Har.* I don't care either for Don Thomas or Don Martin. (*Seeing two candles burning, he blows one out.*)

*An.* Pray let him speak, and let us see what he'll say of him.

*Val.* I would say that he is my father.

*An.* He?

*Val.* Yes.

*An.* Go; you are jesting: find some other story that may succeed better for you, and don't pretend to save yourself under this imposture.

*Val.* Try to speak more carefully! It is no imposture; and I am advancing nothing which it will not be easy for me to prove.

*An.* What! you dare to call yourself the son of Don Thomas d'Alburci?

*Val.* Yes, I do; and I am ready to maintain this truth against any person whatsoever.

*An.* This is wonderful assurance. Know, then, to your confusion, that sixteen years ago at least, the person you mention was lost at sea with his wife and children, whom he was endeavouring to save from the cruel persecutions which accompanied the troubles in Naples, and occasioned the banishment of so many noble families.

*Val.* Yes; but know to your confusion, that his son, seven years of age, was saved, with a servant, from that shipwreck by a Spanish vessel; and that the son so saved is the person who is now speaking to you. Know, too, that the captain of this vessel, being touched by my misfortune, took a liking to me, and brought me up as his own son, and that I have devoted myself to arms ever since I was capable of bearing them. I have come to know of late that my father is not dead as I had been led to believe, and, passing this way in search of him, an adventure, specially arranged by Providence, was the cause of my seeing this charming Élise, the sight of whom made me a slave to her beauty. The violence of my love and the harshness of her father made me resolve to enter this household, and to send some one else in search of my parents.

*An.* But what proof, beyond your own words, can assure us that this is not a fable that you have built on the truth?

*Val.* The Spanish captain; a ruby seal which belonged to my father; an agate bracelet, which my mother put upon my arm, and old Pedro, the servant who was saved with me from the shipwreck.

*Mariane.* I myself can answer for the truth of what you have said; for every word you have spoken proves to me that you certainly are my brother.

*Val.* What! you my sister?

*Mar.* Yes. My heart was touched from the moment you began to speak; and our mother will be overjoyed to see you, for she has often related to me the misfortunes of our family. Providence did not allow us to perish in that melancholy shipwreck; but it only saved our lives at the cost of our liberty, for they were Corsairs who took my mother and myself from the wreck of our vessel. After ten years of slavery, a lucky accident gave us our liberty, and we returned to Naples, where we found all our estate sold; nor could we get any tidings of our father. Then we took

a passage to Genoa, whither my mother went in order to collect what was left of a family property that had been dissipated; and from thence, flying from the injustice of relations, we came into these parts, where she has ever since been spending a melancholy existence.

*An.* Oh, Heaven! how great is thy power, and what miracles thou dost work! Embrace me, my children, and join your transports to those of your father!

*Val.* What, are you our father?

*Mar.* Is it you whom my mother has so much lamented?

*An.* Yes, my daughter; yes, my son; I am Don Thomas d'Alburci, whom heaven saved from the waves with all the money which he had with him; and who, having thought you all dead for more than sixteen years, was preparing, after long journeyings, to seek the consolation of a new family by marrying some gentle and discreet person. The small security which I saw for my life in returning to Naples, made me give up the idea; and, having found means to sell what I had, I have settled here under the name of Anselme, wishing to drive away all the vexations of that other name under which I had suffered so many reverses.

*Har.* (*to Anselme*). Is that your son.

*An.* Yes.

*Har.* Then I hold you liable to pay me the ten thousand crowns which he has stolen from me.

*An.* He has stolen from you? *Har.* The very same.

*Val.* Who told you that? *Har.* Maitre Jacques.

*Val.* (*to Maitre Jacques*). Was it you who told him so?

*Mtre. Jac.* You see that I say nothing.

*Har.* Yes; monsieur the Magistrate has taken his deposition.

*Val.* Can you think me capable of so base an action?

*Har.* Capable, or not capable, I want my money back.

## SCENE VI.

CLÉANTE, VALÈRE, MARIANE, ÉLISE, FROSINE, HARPAGON, ANSELME, MAÎTRE JACQUES, LA FLÈCHE, *Magistrate and Clerk.*

*Cléante.* Don't torment yourself, father, and don't accuse any one. I've had news of your affair, and I come here to tell you that if you will only make up your mind to let me marry Mariane, your money shall be restored to you.

*Har.* Where is it?

*Cl.* Give yourself no sort of trouble. It is in a place which

I am answerable for; and all depends on myself alone. It is for you to say what you decide on. You have your choice, either to give me Mariane, or to lose your casket.

*Har.* Has nothing been taken out of it?

*Clé.* Nothing at all. Consider whether you will agree to this marriage, and add your consent to that of her mother, who leaves her free to choose between us two.

*Mar.* But you don't consider that this consent alone is not sufficient, and that besides a brother, as you see, heaven has restored to me a father from whom you have to obtain me.

*An.* Providence, my children, has not restored me to you in order to oppose your desires. Monsieur Harpagon, you know very well that the choice of a young person will fall upon the son sooner than upon the father. Come, don't oblige people to say what is not necessary to hear, but consent, as I do, to this double marriage.

*Har.* To take counsel, I must see my casket.

*Clé.* You shall see it safe and sound.

*Har.* I have no money to give my children in marriage.

*An.* Well, I have some for them, so that need not disquiet you.

*Har.* Will you undertake the cost of both marriages?

*An.* Yes. Now are you satisfied?

*Har.* Yes, if you will order me a new suit of clothes for the wedding.

*An.* Agreed. Come now, let us enjoy the delights of this happy day!

*Mag.* Stop, gentlemen; gently, if you please. Who is to pay me for my writing?

*Har.* We have nothing to do with that.

*Mag.* Indeed, but I don't intend to do it for nothing.

*Har.* For payment I'll give you that fellow to be hung.

*Mtre. Jac.* Alas! What must one do then? They beat me for speaking the truth; now they would hang me for telling a lie.

*An.* Monsieur Harpagon, you must pardon this fellow's imposture.

*Har.* Then you must pay the magistrate.

*An.* Done! Let's go quickly and share our joy with your mother.

*Har.* And I will go and see my dear casket.

# THE HYPOCHONDRIAC

## (*LE MALADE IMAGINAIRE*).

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ARGAN, *the hypochondriac.*
BÉLINE, *Argan's second wife.*
ANGÉLIQUE, *Argan's daughter.*
LOUISON, *Argan's little daughter; Angélique's sister.*
BÉRALDE, *Argan's brother.*
CLÉANTE, *Angélique's lover.*
MONS. DIAFOIRUS, *a physician.*
THOMAS DIAFOIRUS, *son of Mons. Diafoirus.*
MONS. PURGON, *a physician.*
MONS. FLEURANT, *an apothecary.*
MONS. BONNEFOY, *a notary.*
TOINETTE, *Argan's servant.*

SCENE—PARIS.

### ACT I. SCENE I.

ARGAN, *in his room, seated before a table, is casting up his apothecary's bills with counters.*

*Argan.* Three and two are five, and five make ten, and ten are twenty. Three and two make five. *Item, on the twenty-fourth, a little insinuative, preparative, and emollient clyster, to mollify, moisten, and refresh his worship's stomach.* What pleases me in Monsieur Fleurant, my apothecary, is, that his bills are always extremely civil. *His worship's stomach, thirty sous.* Yes, but, Monsieur Fleurant, it isn't enough to be civil: you ought to be reasonable too, and not fleece your patients. Thirty sous for a clyster. Your most obedient! I've told you of this already. You have charged me in your other bills only twenty sous, and that, in the language of an apothecary, is as much as to say, ten sous;—there they are, ten sous. *Item, the same day, a good detergent clyster, composed of double heal all, rhubarb, honey of roses, &c., according to the prescription, thirty sous.* With your leave, ten sous. *Item, the same day at night, a soporific and somniferous julep for the liver, to make his honour sleep, thirty-five sous.* I don't complain of that, for it made me sleep well. Ten, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen sous and a half. *Item, on the twenty-fifth, a good purgative and strengthening medicine, composed of fresh cassia, with*

*Levantine senna, &c., according to the prescription of Monsieur Purgon, to drive out his honour's bile, four livres.* Why, Monsieur Fleurant, surely you are joking! You must allow your patients to live. Monsieur Purgon did not prescribe you that you were to charge four livres; put down, put down three livres, if you please —fifty sous. *Item, the said day, an anodyne and astringent potion to make his honour sleep, thirty sous.* Good—fifteen sous. *Item, on the twenty-sixth, a carminative clyster, thirty sous.* Ten sous, Monsieur Fleurant. *Item, his honour's clyster, repeated at night as before, thirty sous.* Ten sous, Monsieur Fleurant. *Item, on the twenty-seventh, a good aperient medicine, to drive out all his honour's disorders, three livres.* Good, fifty sous. I'm glad you're reasonable. *Item, the twenty-eighth, a dose of clarified, dulcified whey, to sweeten, lenify, temper, and refresh his honour's blood, twenty sous.* Good—ten sous. *Item, a cordial preservative potion, composed of twelve grains of bezoar, syrup of lemons, pomegranates, &c., according to prescription, five livres.* Oh, Monsieur Fleurant, gently, if you please. If you use all people after this fashion, one cannot be ill any longer. Content yourself with four livres—sixty sous. Three and two make five, and five make ten, and ten make twenty. Sixty livres, four sous, and a half. So that in this month I have taken one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight purges; and one, two, three, four, five six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve clysters; and last month twelve purges, and twenty clysters: no wonder I'm not so well this month as last. I shall tell Monsieur Purgon of this, that he may put it right. Here, take away all these things. (*No one answering him.*) It's no use speaking, there's nobody there. I'm always left alone; there's no way of keeping them here. (*He rings a bell.*) They don't hear; my bell's not loud enough. (*Rings.*) No. (*Rings again.*) They are deaf. Toinette! (*Making as much noise as he can with his bell.*) Just as if I did not ring at all. Slut! Hussy! (*Finding he still rings in vain.*) I shall go mad! Dring, dring, dring! Deuce take the animal! Is it possible they should leave a poor sick man like this! Dring, dring, dring! Oh, it's pitiful! Dring, dring, dring! Oh, heavens, they'll leave me to die here! Dring, dring!

## SCENE II.

ARGAN, TOINETTE.

*Toinette* (*entering*). Here I am.

*Argan.* Oh, you hussy! you wretch!

*Toi.* (*pretending to have hurt her head*). The deuce take your impatience! You hurry one so much that I've knocked my head against the window shutter.

*Ar.* (*angrily*). Oh, you wretch!

*Toi.* (*interrupting him*). Oh!

*Ar.* It's a—— *Toi.* Oh!

*Ar.* It's an hour —— *Toi.* Oh!

*Ar.* You have left me. *Toi.* Oh!

*Ar.* Hold your tongue, you slut, that I may scold you.

*Toi.* I like that, after what I've done to myself.

*Ar.* You've made me bawl my throat sore, you hussy!

*Toi.* And you've made me break my head; one's as good as another—so we're quits, with your leave.

*Ar.* How now, you jade——

*Toi.* If you scold, I'll cry.

*Ar.* So leave me, you wretch——

*Toi.* (*still interrupting him*). Oh!

*Ar.* You impudent creature, would you——

*Toi.* Oh!

*Ar.* What, must I not have the pleasure of scolding you either?

*Toi.* Have your fill of scolding, with all my heart.

*Ar.* You prevent me, you hussy, by interrupting me at every turn.

*Toi.* If you have the pleasure of scolding, I, for my part, must have the pleasure of crying. Give every one his own—that's only reasonable. Eh?

*Ar.* Well, then, we'll let this drop. Take away this thing, you minx, take it away. Be sure and get some broth ready for me by the time I have to take my next dose.

*Toi.* This Monsieur Fleurant and Monsieur Purgon amuse themselves finely with your body; they have a rare milch-cow in you. I should like to ask them what ailment you have, that you must take so much physic.

*Ar.* Hold your tongue, you ignorant creature; it is not for you to control the decrees of the faculty. Bring my daughter Angélique to me. I have something to say to her.

*Toi.* Here she comes of her own accord. She has guessed your wish.

## SCENE III.

ANGÉLIQUE, TOINETTE, ARGAN.

*Argan.* Come here, Angélique; you have come just at the right time. I want to speak to you.

*Angélique.* I'm ready to listen to you, sir.

*Ar.* Stop. (*To Toinette.*) Give me my stick. I'll come back again in a moment.

*Toinette.* Go quick, sir, go. Monsieur Fleurant finds us plenty to do.

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SCENE IV.

ANGÉLIQUE, TOINETTE.

*Angélique.* Toinette. *Toinette.* Well.

*An.* Look at me a little.

*Toi.* Well, I am looking. *An.* Toinette,

*Toi.* Well, what do you want with Toinette?

*An.* Can't you guess what I want to speak about?

*Toi.* I'm pretty sure it's about our young lover, for all our conversation for the last six days has turned on him, and you're not well unless you're talking of him every minute.

*An.* If you know that, why are you not the first, then, to talk of him to me, and spare me the trouble of bringing up the subject?

*Toi.* You don't give me time; you think so much about the matter, that it's difficult to be beforehand with you.

*An.* I must own to you that I am never weary of talking of him to you, and that my heart eagerly takes advantage of every moment to open itself. But tell me, Toinette, do you condemn the feelings I entertain for him?

*Toi.* By no means.

*An.* Am I wrong to give way to these soft impressions?

*Toi.* I don't say that.

*An.* And would you have me insensible to the tender protestations of his ardent passion?

*Toi.* Heaven forbid!

*An.* Tell me, don't you see, as I do, something in this of Providence, some working of destiny in the unexpected adventure that caused our acquaintance?

*Toi.* Yes.

*An.* Don't you think that his engaging in my defence, without knowing me, was very gallant?

*Toi.* Yes.

*An.* And that it was impossible to behave more generously?

*Toi.* Agreed.

*An.* And that he did this with the best possible grace?

*Toi.* Oh, yes.

*An.* And don't you think, Toinette, that he's a very made man?

*Toi.* Certainly.

*An.* And that he has a most distinguished air?

*Toi.* No doubt of that.

*An.* And that there is something noble in his conversation as well as in his actions?

*Toi.* That's certain.

*An.* And that nothing was ever heard more affectionate than all he says to me?

*Toi.* Quite true.

*An.* And that there's nothing more vexatious than the restraint in which I'm kept, which hinder all interchange of the soft transports of that mutual fire with which heaven inspires us?

*Toi.* You're right.

*An.* But, dear Toinette, do you think he loves me as much as he says he does?

*Toi.* Well—these things are sometimes not absolutely to be depended upon. The caricature of love is very like the reality, and I have seen those who could act the part very well.

*An.* Oh, Toinette, what are you saying? Is it, alas, possible when he talks in such a way that he should not really be telling the truth?

*Toi.* Anyhow, that point will soon be cleared up; and his resolution to ask you in marriage, of which he informed you yesterday, is a ready way for you to learn whether he spoke the truth or not. That will be a certain proof.

*An.* Ah! Toinette, if this man deceives me, I'll never believe another as long as I live.

*Toi.* Here's your father come back.

## SCENE V.

ARGAN, ANGÉLIQUE, TOINETTE.

*Argan* (*sitting down*). Now, daughter, I'm going to tell you a piece of news which perhaps you little expect. You've been asked of me in marriage. What's this? You're laughing. Ah! that word marriage is pleasant enough. There's nothing makes young girls so merry. Ah! nature, nature! I can see, my child, that I have no occasion to ask you whether you are willing to be married.

*Angélique.* It is my duty, sir, to do whatever you shall be pleased to order me.

*Ar.* I am glad to have so dutiful a daughter. The matter, then, is settled, and I have promised you.

*An.* It is for me, sir, blindly to follow your wishes.

*Ar.* My wife, your step-mother, desired that I should make a nun of you, and your little sister Louison too, and has always persisted in it.

*Toinette* (*aside*). Ah, the sly beast had her reasons for it.

*Ar.* She was not willing to consent to this match, but I've carried my point, and pledged my word to it.

*An.* Ah! sir, how much obliged to you I am for all your goodness!

*Toi.* Indeed, I take this well on your part. It is the most sensible thing you ever did in your life.

*Ar.* I have not seen the person yet, but they tell me I shall be very well pleased with him, and so will you be, too.

*An.* Certainly, sir.

*Ar.* What, have you seen him?

*An.* Since your consent authorises me to open my heart to you, I will not conceal from you that we accidentally became known to one another about six days ago, and that the request made to you is the result of an attachment we formed for one another at first sight.

*Ar.* I was not told of that, but I am very glad of it, and it is all the better that things should be so arranged. They say that he's a fine young fellow, of very good appearance.

*An.* That's quite true, sir.

*Ar.* And well made.

*An.* Without doubt.

*Ar.* Agreeable in person.

*An.* Certainly.

*Ar.* Good-looking.

*An.* Extremely so.

*Ar.* Sensible, and of good family.

*An.* Quite so.

*Ar.* Very honourable.

*An.* The most honourable man in the world.

*Ar.* Speaks Latin and Greek well.

*An.* Ah, that I don't know anything about.

*Ar.* And will be admitted Doctor of Medicine in three days' time.

*An.* He, sir?

*Ar.* Yes; hasn't he told you so?

*An.* No, indeed. Who told you?

*Ar.* Monsieur Purgon.

*An.* Does Monsieur Purgon know him?

*Ar.* What a question! How can he help knowing him when he's his nephew?

*An.* Cléante, Monsieur Purgon's nephew!

*Ar.* Who's Cléante? We are speaking of the person who has asked you in marriage.

*An.* Well, yes.

*Ar.* Very well, and that's the nephew of Monsieur Purgon, who is the son of his brother-in-law, Monsieur Diafoirus, the doctor; and this son's name is Thomas Diafoirus, not Cléante: and this morning Monsieur Purgon, Monsieur Diafoirus, Monsieur Fleurant, and I settled the matter, and to-morrow my intended son-in-law is to be brought to me by his father. What's the matter? You look quite amazed.

*An.* It is because I find, sir, that you have been speaking of one person, and I meant another.

*Toi.* What, sir! how can you entertain such an absurd idea? And with all your wealth, would you marry your daughter to a doctor?

*Ar.* Yes, I would. What business is it of yours, you impudent creature?

*Toi.* Come now, gently, sir. You rush at once into abuse. Can't we reason together without your flying off into a passion? Let us talk the matter over coolly. Pray, what is your reason for such a marriage?

*Ar.* My reason is, that finding myself ill and infirm as I am, I should like to have my son-in-law, and his relations, all physicians, in order that I might have good help against my complaint, and have in my family means of getting those remedies which I need, and have close at hand both consultations and prescriptions.

*Toi.* Very well; that's giving a reason, and there's a pleasure in answering one another calmly. But, sir, put your hand on your heart, and tell me are you really ill?

*Ar.* What, you hussy, am I ill! Am I ill, you impudent creature!

*Toi.* Well, yes, sir, you are ill; let's have no quarrel about that. Yes, you are very ill, more so than you think. I agree to that, so that's settled. But your daughter is to marry a husband for herself, and not being ill, it is not necessary to give her a doctor.

*Ar.* It is for my sake that I give her this doctor, and a good-hearted girl ought to be delighted to marry for the benefit of her father's health.

*Toi.* Sir, will you allow me as a friend to give you a piece of advice?

*Ar.* What is it?

*Toi.* Not to think of this match.

*Ar.* And for what reason?

*Toi.* For this reason, that your daughter will not consent to it.

*Ar.* She won't consent to it?

*Toi.* No.

*Ar.* My daughter?

*Toi.* Yes, your daughter. She'll tell you that she'll have nothing to do with Monsieur Diafoirus, nor with his son Thomas Diafoirus, nor with all the Diafoiruses in the world.

*Ar.* But I have something to do with them. Besides, this match is more advantageous than may be imagined. Monsieur Diafoirus has only this son to inherit all that he has, and, moreover, Monsieur Purgon, who has neither wife nor child, gives up all his estate because of this marriage, and Monsieur Purgon is a man who has eight thousand livres a year.

*Toi.* He must have killed many people to have become so rich.

*Ar.* Eight thousand livres a year is something without reckoning his father's estate.

*Toi.* All this, sir, is fair and fine; but I still return to my point. Between ourselves, I advise you to choose another husband for her, as she's not cut out to be Madame Diafoirus.

*Ar.* But I'll have it so.

*Toi.* Oh, fie! Don't say that.

*Ar.* Why shouldn't I say that?

*Toi.* People will say you don't know what you're talking about.

*Ar.* People may say what they like, but I'll have her carry out the promise I have given.

*Toi.* No, I'm sure she won't.

*Ar.* Then I'll force her to it.

*Toi.* She'll not do it, I tell you.

*Ar.* She shall do it, or I'll put her into a convent.

*Toi.* You. *Ar.* Yes, I. *Toi.* Good!

*Ar.* What do you mean by good?

*Toi.* You will not put her into a convent.

*Ar.* I shall not put her into a convent?

*Toi.* No. *Ar.* No? *Toi.* No.

*Ar.* Dear me! this is a good joke! Sha'n't I put my daughter into a convent, if I choose?

*Toi.* No, I tell you.

*Ar.* Who shall hinder me?

*Toi.* Yourself. *Ar.* Myself?

*Toi.* Yes, you would not have the heart.

*Ar.* I shall. *Toi.* You are joking. *Ar.* I am not.

*Toi.* Fatherly affection will hinder you.

*Ar.* It won't hinder me.

*Toi.* A tear or two, her arms thrown round your neck, a *darling Papa* pronounced tenderly, will be enough to move you.

*Ar.* All that will do nothing.

*Toi.* Yes, yes.

*Ar.* I tell you I won't give way the least.

*Toi.* Nonsense!

*Ar.* You must not say nonsense.

*Toi.* Good heavens! But I know you. You're good-natured at bottom.

*Ar.* (*angrily*). I'm not good-natured, I'm ill-natured when I please.

*Toi.* Gently, sir. You forget that you're an invalid.

*Ar.* I command her absolutely to prepare to take the husband that I speak of.

*Toi.* And I absolutely forbid her to do so.

*Ar.* What are we coming to next? What audacity for a slut of a servant to talk like this before her master!

*Toi.* When a master does not know what he is doing, a sensible servant has the right to teach him better.

*Ar.* (*running after Toinette*). Oh, you insolent creature, I should like to knock you down!

*Toi.* (*avoiding him and putting a chair between them*). It is my duty to oppose anything that would disgrace you.

*Ar.* (*running after her round the chair with his stick in his hand*). Come here, come here, that I may teach you how to speak.

*Toi.* (*escaping on the side opposite to where Argan is*). I interest myself as I ought, to prevent you from doing a foolish thing.

*Ar.* Slut!

*Toi.* No, I'll never consent to this match.

*Ar.* You hussy!

*Toi.* I'll not have her marry your Thomas Diafoirus.

*Ar.* You animal!

*Toi.* And she'll obey me sooner than you.

*Ar.* Angélique, won't you lay hold of that slut for me?

*Angélique.* Pray, sir, don't make yourself ill.

*Ar.* If you don't lay hold of her for me, I will give you my curse.

*Toi.* (*going out*). And I'll disinherit her, if she does obey you.

*Ar.* (*throwing himself into his chair*). Oh, oh! I can bear it no longer. This is enough to kill me.

SCENE VI.

BÉLINE, ARGAN; *afterwards* TOINETTE.

*Argan.* Ah, wife, come here.

*Béline.* What's the matter, my poor husband?

*Ar.* Come here to my assistance.

*Bél.* What is it then, my dear child?

*Ar.* My love! *Bél.* My soul!

*Ar.* They have been putting me in a passion.

*Bél.* Alas! my poor little love. How was it, my darling?

*Ar.* Your slut Toinette has grown more insolent than ever.

*Bél.* Don't put yourself in a passion then.

*Ar.* She has driven me mad, my sweet one.

*Bél.* Gently, my boy.

*Ar.* She has been opposing me, a whole hour, about things I'm resolved to do.

*Bél.* There, there, gently.

*Ar.* And had the impudence to tell me that I'm not an invalid.

*Bél.* She's insolent.

*Ar.* You know, my heart, how the case really is.

*Bél.* Yes, my heart, she's wrong.

*Ar.* My love, that slut will kill me.

*Bél.* Alas! alas!

*Ar.* She is the cause of all my biliousness.

*Bél.* Don't fret yourself so much.

*Ar.* And I don't know how many times I have told you to dismiss her.

*Bél.* Alas, child, there are no servants, men or women, who have not their faults. We are sometimes forced to put up with their bad qualities for the sake of their good ones. The girl is clever, careful, diligent, and above all honest; and you know how needful it is at the present time to take great precautions as to the servants we engage. Here, Toinette!

*Enter* TOINETTE.

*Toinette.* Madame.

*Bél.* Why have you put my husband in such a rage?

*Toi.* (*in a mild tone*). I, madame? Alas, I don't know what you mean? I only think how I can best please my master in everything.

*Ar.* Oh, you deceiver!

*Toi.* He told us that he intended to give his daughter in marriage to the son of Mons. Diafoirus; I answered him that I

thought the match was very advantageous for her, but he would do better to put her in a convent.

*Bél.* There's no great harm in that, and I think she's right.

*Ar.* What, my love, do you believe her? She's a wicked wretch. She said a hundred insolent things to me.

*Bél.* Yes, I quite believe you, my dear. Come, compose yourself. Now listen, Toinette, if ever you vex my husband again, I'll turn you out of the house. So give me his fur-cloak and his pillows, that I may make him comfortable in his chair. Here you are huddled up anyhow. Pull your night-cap well over your ears; there's nothing gives people cold so readily as letting the air in at their ears.

*Ar.* Ah, my wife, how I thank you for the care you take of me!

*Bél.* (*arranging the pillows, which she puts round him*). Raise yourself up that I may put this under you. Let us put this so as to keep you up, and this on the other side. Let us place this behind your back, and that to support your head.

*Toi.* (*thumping a pillow roughly on his head*). And this to keep you from the evening damp.

*Ar.* (*rising in a rage and throwing all the pillows after Toinette as she runs away*). Oh, you hussy, did you want to stifle me?

*Bél.* Oh dear, dear! what's the matter now?

*Ar.* (*throwing himself into his chair*). Oh, oh, oh! I can bear it no longer.

*Bél.* Why fly into such a passion? She meant to do well.

*Ar.* You don't know, my love, the malice of that baggage. She has driven me quite beside myself, and I shall need more than eight doses of physic and a dozen clysters to set all to rights again.

*Bél.* There, there, my dearie, quiet yourself a little.

*Ar.* My life, you are all my comfort!

*Bél.* Poor little fellow!

*Ar.* That I may endeavour, my heart, to requite the love that you bear me, as I told you, I'll make my will.

*Bél.* Oh, my darling, don't talk of that now, I beg of you—I can't bear the thought of it; the very word "will" makes me shudder with grief.

*Ar.* I desired you to speak of it to your notary.

*Bél.* He's there within: I brought him with me.

*Ar.* Let him come here then, my love.

*Bél.* Alas, my dearest, when one loves a husband well, one is scarce in a condition to think of these things.

## Scene VII.

Monsieur de Bonnefoy, Béline, Argan.

*Argan.* Come here, Monsieur de Bonnefoy, come here. Take a chair, if you please. My wife has told me, sir, that you are an honest man, and quite one of her friends, and I have desired her to speak about my will.

*Béline.* Alas, I'm not capable of speaking about such things.

*M. de Bonnefoy.* She has explained your intentions to me, sir, and what you wish to do for her, and I have come to tell you on that subject that you cannot give your wife anything by will.

*Ar.* But why so?

*Bon.* Custom is against it. If you were in a country of statute law, it might be done; but in Paris, and in countries for the most part governed by custom, it cannot be done—any such disposal of property would be null and void. All the benefit that a man and woman, united in marriage, can give each to the other must be by mutual gift during life; moreover there must be no children, either of the two married parties, or of one of them, at the decease of the first who dies.

*Ar.* Then it is a very disagreeable custom, that a husband cannot leave anything to a wife by whom he is tenderly beloved, and who takes so much care of him. I should like to take counsel's opinion to see what I can do.

*Bon.* You should not apply to barristers, for they are generally very strict in these cases, and conceive it to be a great crime to dispose of anything contrary to law. They are people who make difficulties, and know little of the by-ways of conscience. There are other persons who may be consulted, who will suit you much better, who have expedients for lightly passing over the law, and to make that right which is not allowed, who know how to smooth over the difficulties of an affair, and to find means of eluding the custom by some indirect advantage. Without that, where should we be always? There must be some means of getting over things; otherwise we should do nothing, and I would not give a sou for our business.

*Ar.* My wife told me, sir, that you were a skilful and honest man. What then can I do, if you please, to give her my estate, and to leave it away from my children?

*Bon.* What can you do? You must secretly choose an intimate friend of your wife's to whom you may bequeath in due form by will all that you can, and this friend will afterwards give up all to her. You may further sign a great many bonds, not open to

suspicion, payable to several creditors, who will lend their names to your wife, and put into her hands a declaration that what they had done in it was only to serve her. You may likewise in your lifetime put into her hands ready money, or bills which you can make payable to bearer.

*Bél.* Ah, you must not torment yourself with all these things. If I should lose you, my boy, I'd stay no longer in the world.

*Ar.* My dear heart!

*Bél.* Yes, my love, if I'm unfortunate enough to lose you——

*Ar.* My dear wife!

*Bél.* Life will be no longer anything to me.

*Ar.* My love!

*Bél.* And I'll follow you, to let you see the tenderness I have for you.

*Ar.* Dearest, you break my heart; be comforted, I beg of you.

*Bon.* (*to Béline*). These tears are unreasonable. Things have not yet come to that pass.

*Bél.* Ah, sir, you don't know what it is to have a husband whom one loves dearly.

*Ar.* All my regret if I die, my darling, is not to have a child by you.

*Bon.* That may yet come.

*Ar.* I must make my will now, my love, in the manner this gentleman says; but, by way of precaution, I wish to place in your hands twenty thousand livres in gold, which I have in the wainscot of my bedroom, and two notes payable to bearer, which are due to me, one from Mons. Damon, and the other from Mons. Gérante.

*Bél.* No, no, I'll have none of it. Ah—how much do you say that there is in your bedroom?

*Ar.* Twenty thousand livres, my love.

*Bél.* Don't speak to me of money, I beg of you. Ah—how much are the two notes for?

*Ar.* My life! one is for four thousand livres, and the other for six.

*Bél.* All the wealth of the world, my dear, is nothing to me in comparison with you.

*Bon.* (*to Argan*). Do you wish us to proceed to make the will?

*Ar.* Yes, sir; but we shall be better in my private room. My love, pray lead me.

*Bél.* Come, my poor little man!

SCENE VIII.

ANGÉLIQUE, TOINETTE.

*Toinette.* They've got a notary there, and I heard them talking about a will. Your step-mother is very wide-awake, and it is certainly some contrivance against your interest to which she is urging your father.

*Angélique.* Let him dispose of his estate as he pleases, provided he does not dispose of my heart. You see, Toinette, what strong measures they mean to take against me. I beg of you not to abandon me in the extremity in which I find myself.

*Toi.* I abandon you! I'd die sooner. Your step-mother tries in vain to take me into her confidence, and to bring me into her interest. I never had any liking for her, and always took your side. Leave it to me to do everything to serve you; but to do so more effectually, I'll change my tactics, conceal the zeal I have for you, and pretend to enter into the sentiments of your father and step-mother.

*An.* Try, I implore you, to give Cléante notice of the marriage they have settled on for me.

*Toi.* I've no one to employ for that but the old usurer, Polichinello, my lover, and it will cost me some kind words to have him do it; but these I will willingly give for you. To-day it is too late, but very early to-morrow I'll send for him, and he'll be delighted to——

*Bél.* (*in the house*). Toinette!

*Toi.* (*to Angélique*). I'm called. Good night. Rely on me.

ACT II. SCENE I.

(*In Argan's Room.*)

TOINETTE, CLÉANTE.

*Toinette* (*not knowing Cléante*). What do you want, sir?

*Cléante.* What do I want?

*Toi.* Ah, ha! It is surprising to see you. What do you come here for?

*Clé.* To know my destiny, to speak to the charming Angélique, to consult the sentiments of her heart, and to ask her what resolution she has formed with regard to that fatal marriage I have been told of.

*Toi.* Yes, but Angélique cannot be spoken with in this off-hand manner. There must be secret arrangements to manage

this. You have been told how strict a watch is kept over her. They do not allow her to go out or to speak to any one, and it was only the curiosity of an old aunt which gave us the opportunity to go to that play where your love was first born, and we have been extremely careful not to speak of that adventure.

*Clé.* And so I have come here, not as Cléante, and under the appearance of her lover, but as a friend of her music-master, who has given me leave to say that I have come in his place.

*Toi.* Here's her father. Retire a little, and I will tell him that you are here.

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## SCENE II.

ARGAN, TOINETTE; *afterwards* CLÉANTE.

*Argan* (*thinking himself alone, and not seeing Toinette*). Mons. Purgon told me that I should walk twelve times to and fro in my room every morning, but I forgot to ask him whether it should be longways or broadways.

*Toinette.* Sir, here is some one ——

*Ar.* Speak low, you hussy. You have just upset all my brains, and you never reflect that you should not speak loudly to sick people.

*Toi.* I want to tell you, sir——

*Ar.* Speak low, I say.

*Toi.* Sir—— (*she pretends to speak*).

*Ar.* What?

*Toi.* I tell you that—— (*she still pretends to speak*).

*Ar.* What is it you're saying?

*Toi.* (*aloud*). I say there's a man wants to speak to you.

*Ar.* Let him come. (*Toinette beckons to Cléante to come near.*)

*Cléante.* Sir——

*Toi.* (*to Cléante*). Don't speak so loud, for fear of shaking my master's brains.

*Clé.* Sir, I am extremely glad to see you up, and to find that you are better.

*Toi.* (*pretending to be in a passion*). What do you mean by better? It is not true. My master is always ailing.

*Clé.* I had heard that the gentleman was better, and he looks well.

*Toi.* What do you mean by your "looks well"? He looks very ill, and they are insolent people who told you he was better. He never was so ill in his life.

*Ar.* She's quite right.

*Toi.* He walks, sleeps, eats, and drinks like other people, but that does not hinder him from being ill.

*Ar.* That's true.

*Clé.* Sir, I am heartily sorry for it. I come from your daughter's music-master. He was obliged to go into the country for a few days; and as I am one of his intimate friends, he sent me in his place, to go on with her lessons, for fear that if they were discontinued she might forget what she had already learnt.

*Ar.* Very well. (*To Toinette.*) Call Angélique.

*Toi.* I think, sir, it would be better to show the gentleman to her room.

*Ar.* No; bid her come here.

*Toi.* He can't teach her her lesson as he should do, if they are not by themselves.

*Ar.* Yes, he can.

*Toi.* Sir, it will only stun you, or split your brains, and you must have nothing to disturb you in the condition in which you are.

*Ar.* No, no, I love music, and I shall be glad to—— Ah, here she comes. (*To Toinette.*) Go and see if my wife is dressed.

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SCENE III.

ARGAN, ANGÉLIQUE, CLEANTE.

*Argan.* Come, daughter, your music-master is gone into the country, and here's a person whom he has sent to teach you in his place.

*Angélique* (*recognising Cléante*). Oh, heavens!

*Ar.* What's the matter? Whence comes this surprise?

*An.* It is——

*Ar.* What? Who disturbs you in this manner?

*An.* It is a surprising occurrence that has happened.

*Ar.* What is it?

*An.* I dreamt last night that I was in the greatest possible distress, and that a person exactly like this gentleman offered himself to me, of whom I asked help, and he presently freed me from the trouble I was in; and my surprise was very great to see unexpectedly, upon coming in here, what was in my mind all night.

*Clé.* It is no small happiness to have a place in your thoughts, whether sleeping or waking; and my good fortune would undoubtedly be very great if you were in any trouble from which you should judge me worthy to deliver you; and there is nothing

## SCENE IV.

ARGAN, ANGÉLIQUE, CLÉANTE, TOINETTE.

*Toinette* (*to Argan*). Indeed, sir, I'm on your side now, and unsay all that I said yesterday. Here are Mons. Diafoirus the father, and Mons. Diafoirus the son, come to visit you. What a capital son-in-law you will have! You will see one of the best-made young fellows in the world, and the wittiest too. He only spoke two words, but I was delighted with him, and your daughter will be charmed with him.

*Argan* (*to Cléante, who pretends to wish to go*). Don't go, sir; I am about to give my daughter in marriage, and the gentleman who is come is her intended husband, whom she has not yet seen.

*Clé.* You do me a great honour, sir, by allowing me to be present at so agreeable an interview.

*Ar.* He is the son of an eminent physician, and the marriage will come off in four days.

*Clé.* Excellent.

*Ar.* Please to inform her music-master of it, so that he may be present at the wedding.

*Clé.* I will not fail to do so.

*Ar.* I invite you also to it.

*Clé.* You do me a great honour.

*Ar.* Come, place yourselves in order; here they are.

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## SCENE V.

MONS. DIAFOIRUS, THOMAS DIAFOIRUS, ARGAN, ANGÉLIQUE, CLÉANTE, *Servants.*

*Argan* (*putting his hand to his cap without taking it off*). Mons. Purgon, sir, has forbidden me to be uncovered. You are of the faculty, you know the consequences.

*M. Diafoirus.* In all our visits we desire to bring relief to our patients, and not to give them any inconvenience.

(*Argan and Mons. Diafoirus speak at the same time.*)

*Ar.* I receive, sir—
*Dia.* We come here, sir—
*Ar.* With a great deal of joy—
*Dia.* My son, Thomas, and I—
*Ar.* The honour you do me—
*Dia.* To declare to you, sir—
*Ar.* And I could have wished—
*Dia.* How delighted we are—
*Ar.* To have been able to go to you—
*Dia.* At the favour you do us—
*Ar.* To assure you of it.
*Dia.* In so kindly receiving us—

*Ar.* But you know, sir—
*Ar.* What it is to be a poor invalid—
*Ar.* Who can do no more—
*Ar.* Than tell you here—
*Ar.* That he will seek all opportunities—
*Ar.* To prove to you, sir—
*Ar.* That he is entirely at you service.

*Dia.* To the honour, sir—
*Dia.* Of your alliance—
*Dia.* And to assure you—
*Dia.* That in affairs relating to our profession—
*Dia.* As also in all others—
*Dia.* We shall ever be ready, sir—

*Dia.* To testify our zeal for you. (*To his son.*) Come, Thomas, advance; pay your respects.

*Thomas Diafoirus* (*to M. Diafoirus*). Should not I begin with the father?

*M. Dia.* Yes.

*Tho. Dia.* (*to Argan*). Sir, I come to salute, acknowledge, cherish, and revere in you a second father; but a second father to whom I make bold to say I am more indebted than to my first. The first gave me being, but you have chosen me. He received me of necessity, but you have accepted me by favour. What I have from him proceeds from the body, what I owe to you proceeds from your will; and as mental faculties are superior to corporeal ones, by so much the more am I indebted to you, and by so much do I hold more valuable this future filiation, for which I come this day to offer you beforehand the most humble and respectful homage.

*Toinette.* Prosperity to the colleges which turn out such clever persons!

*Tho. Dia.* (*to M. Dia.*) Was that well done, father?

*M. Dia.* Optimè.

*Ar.* (*to Angélique*). Come, salute the gentleman.

*Tho. Dia.* (*to M. Dia.*). Shall I kiss her, father?

*M. Dia.* Yes, yes.

*Tho. Dia.* (*to Angélique*). Madame, heaven has justly granted you the name of mother-in-law, since one——

*Ar.* (*to Tho. Dia.*) It is not my wife, but my daughter that you are talking to.

*Tho. Dia.* Where is she, then?

*Ar.* She's coming.

*Tho. Dia.* Shall I wait, father, till she comes?

*M. Dia.* Continue your compliments to the young lady.

*Tho. Dia.* Madame, just as the statue of Memnon gave a harmonious sound, when illumined by the rays of the sun, so in

like manner do I feel myself animated with a sweet transport at the appearance of the sun of your beauty. And as naturalists remark that the sunflower turns without ceasing to the star of day, so shall my heart, henceforth and for ever, turn towards the resplendent stars of your eyes, as to its only pole. Permit me then, madame, now to offer at the altar of your charms that heart which breathes for, longs for no other glory than to be till death, madame, your most humble, most obedient, and most faithful servant and husband.

*Toi.* See what it is to study! How one learns to make fine speeches!

*Ar.* (*to Cléante*). Ah! What do you think of that?

*Clé.* I think the gentleman does wonders, and if he is as good a doctor as he is an orator, it would be a great pleasure to be one of his patients.

*Toi.* Certainly. It will be a wonderful thing if he can make as good cures as he does speeches.

*Ar.* Here, make haste and bring my chair, and chairs for everybody. (*Footmen bring chairs.*) Daughter, sit there. (*To Mons. Diafoirus.*) You see, sir, that everybody admires your son, and I think you are very happy in having a son such as he is.

*M. Dia.* Sir, it is not because I am his father that I can say I have reason to be satisfied with him, and that all who see him speak of him as a youth who has no harm in him. He never had a very lively imagination, nor that sparkling wit which one observes in some others; but that I always looked upon as a happy omen for his judgment—a quality most essential in our art. When he was a little boy, he was never what you might term roguish or waggish. He was always mild, quiet, peaceable and taciturn, never uttering a word, and never playing at those little games one calls childish. They had great difficulty in teaching him to read, and he was nine years old before he knew his letters. Good, I said to myself; trees slow of growth bear the best fruit. One writes on marble with much more difficulty than on the sand; but things are much longer preserved there, and that slowness of apprehension and heaviness of imagination are a mark of future sound judgment. When I sent him to college, he found it hard work; but he bore up bravely against all difficulties, and his tutors always praised his assiduity and steady work. In short, by mere force of hammering at it, he has nobly gained his degree; and I can say without vanity, that from the time he became a student, there has been no candidate who has made more sensation in all the disputations of the medical school. He has made

a name for himself there, and not an act passes but he argues to the very last point on the contrary side. He is firm in a dispute, strong as a Turk in his principles, and follows up an argument to the farthest recesses of logic. But what pleases me in him above everything, is that he is blindly attached to the opinions of our ancestors, and that he would never take in nor listen to the reasons and experiments in favour of the pretended discoveries of our age, concerning the circulation of the blood, and other theories of the same sort.

*Tho. Dia.* (*taking a long essay from his pocket, which he presents to Angélique*). I have supported a thesis against the circulation of the blood, which, with your permission, monsieur (*bowing to Argan*), I make bold to present to mademoiselle as my homage to her of the first-fruits of my talents.

*An.* Sir, it is a useless piece of goods to me, as I know nothing about matters of that sort.

*Toi.* (*taking the thesis*). Give it me: give it me. It's worth having for the picture on it. It will do to ornament our bedroom.

*Tho. Dia.* And, with your permission also, monsieur, I invite you to come one of these days and see a dissection on which I am to lecture.

*Toi.* That will be a pleasant amusement! There are some gentlemen who offer their sweethearts a play, but to offer a dissection is much more gallant.

*M. Dia.* As for the rest, in all that regards marriage, I can assure you that he is all that you could desire.

*Ar.* Is it not your intention, sir, to push his interest at Court, and get him a physician's place there?

*M. Dia.* To speak frankly to you, practice among great people has never pleased me, and I have always found it better to make our connection with the public. The general public are very accommodating. You are accountable to no one for your actions, and provided one follows the rules of the art, there is no need to trouble about the event, whatever it may be. But what is vexatious among your great people is, that when they happen to be ill, they absolutely expect their physician to cure them.

*Toi.* That's a good joke! and it's absurd to expect that you gentlemen should cure them! You don't attend them for that purpose; you only go to take your fees, and prescribe remedies: it's their business to get better if they can.

*M. Dia.* That's true. We're only obliged to treat people according to regular form.

*Ar.* (*to Cléante*). Sir, pray let my daughter sing before the company.

*Clé.* I waited for your orders, sir, and propose to amuse the company by singing, with the young lady, a scene of a little opera lately composed. (*To Angélique, giving her a paper.*) There's your part.

*An.* I?

*Cle.* (*aside to Angélique*). Pray don't refuse, but permit me to let you into the design of the scene we're going to sing. (*Aloud.*) I have no voice for singing, but it's sufficient in this case to make myself understood; you will kindly excuse me because of the necessity I am under to make the young lady sing.

*Ar.* Are the words pretty?

*Clé.* This is properly an *extempore* opera, and what you are to hear sung is only rhythmical prose—a kind of irregular verse, such as feeling and necessity might suggest to two persons who say things out of their own head, and speak off-hand.

*Ar.* Very well. Let us hear.

*Clé.* The subject of the scene is this. A shepherd was watching a play that was just beginning, when his attention was interrupted by a noise on one side of him. He turns to look, and sees a brutish clown, who, with insolent words, was abusing a shepherdess. At once he took up the cause of the sex to which all men owe homage; and having chastised the churl for his insolence, he comes to the shepherdess, and sees a young creature who, from the most lovely eyes he had ever seen, was shedding tears, which he thought the most beautiful in the world. Alas! he says to himself, could any one be capable of insulting so charming a creature? What inhuman, what barbarous person would not be touched by such tears? He was anxious to stop those tears which he thought so beautiful; and the lovely shepherdess took care at the same time to thank him for the slight service he had done, but in a manner so charming and so tender that the shepherd could not resist it; every word, every look was a flaming dart which he felt pierce his heart. "Is there anything," said he, "that can possibly deserve the charming words of such gratitude? And what would not one do, what service, what dangers would not one be delighted to go through, to attract but for one moment the moving tenderness of so grateful a mind?" The whole entertainment passes without his paying any attention to it; but he complains that it is too short, because at its close he will be separated from his adorable shepherdess; and from this first view, from this first moment, he took home with him all the

force of an attachment of many years. He at once suffers all the pangs of absence, and is tormented that he cannot any longer see what he saw for so short a time. He does all that he can to regain that sight, the dear thought of which he carries in his mind night and day, but the great restraint under which his shepherdess is kept deprives him of all opportunity. The vehemence of his devotion to her makes him resolve to demand in marriage the adorable beauty, without whom he can no longer live, and he obtains her consent to this, by a letter which he had the cleverness to convey to her. But at the same time he is told that the father of the fair one has decided on marrying her to another; and all things are ready for celebrating the ceremony. Judge what a cruel stroke this is for the heart of the melancholy shepherd. See him overwhelmed with mortal sorrow: he cannot support the horrible idea of seeing all that he loves in the arms of another, and his passion being desperate, makes him introduce himself into the house of his shepherdess to learn her sentiments, and know what destiny he is to resolve on. He there finds preparations for all he fears; he there sees the unworthy rival whom the caprice of a father sets in opposition to the tenderness of his love. He sees this ridiculous rival, near the lovely shepherdess, triumphing as if the conquest were sure, and the sight fills him with anger, which he has the greatest difficulty in mastering. He casts a mournful look on her whom he adores, and both his respect for her and the presence of her father prevent him from saying anything to her, except by his eyes. But at length he breaks through all restraint, and the transport of his love leads him to express himself thus—(*he sings*).

*Fair Phyllis, 'tis too much to bear;*
*Break cruel silence, and your thoughts declare.*
*Tell me at once my destiny,*
*Shall I live, or must I die?*

*An.* (*sings*)—

*With sad, dejected looks, O Thyrsis, see*
*Poor Phyllis dreads th' ill-fated wedding-day;*
*Sighing, she lifts her eyes to heaven and thee;*
*What needs she more to say?*

*Ar.* So, so. I didn't know my daughter was so clever as to sing at sight, without hesitating.

*Clé.* *Alas, my Phyllis fair,*
*Can the enamoured Thyrsis be so blest,*
*Your favour in the least to share,*
*And find a place within that lovely breast?*

*An.* *In this extreme if I confess my love,*
*Not modesty itself can disapprove:*
*Yes, Thyrsis, thee I love.*
*Clé.* *O! sound enchanting to the ear!*
*Did I dream, or did I hear?*
*Repeat it, Phyllis, and all doubt remove.*
*An.* *Yes, Thyrsis, thee I love.*
*Clé.* *Once more, my Phyllis.*
*An.* *Thee I love.*
*Clé.* *A thousand times repeat, nor weary prove.*
*An.* *I love, I love, yes, Thyrsis, thee I love.*
*Clé.* *Ye monarchs of the earth, ye powers divine,*
*Can you compare your happiness to mine?*
*But, Phyllis, there's a thought*
*Does my transporting joy abate:*
*A rival——*
*An.* *I more than death the monster hate,*
*And if his presence tortures you,*
*It does no less to Phyllis too.*
*Clé.* *If with the match a father's pow'r*
*Would force you to comply.*
*An.* *I'd rather, rather die than give consent,*
*Much rather, rather die.*

*Ar.* And what says the father to all this?

*Clé.* He says nothing.

*Ar.* That same father was a blockhead of a father to allow all these foolish things without saying anything.

*Clé.* (*wishing to continue singing*). *Ah! my love——*

*Ar.* No, no! that's enough of it. This play is of a pernicious kind. The shepherd Thyrsis is an impertinent fellow, and the shepherdess Phyllis an impudent hussy to speak in this way before a father. (*To Angélique.*) Show me the paper. Ah, ha! Where are the words, then, that you spoke? There's nothing written here but the music.

*Clé.* What, don't you know, sir, that they've found out lately how to write the words in the very notes themselves?

*Ar.* Vey well. I'm your obedient servant, sir. Good day. We could very well have spared your impertinent opera.

*Clé.* I thought to divert you.

*Ar.* Impertinence never diverts. Ah! here's my wife.

## SCENE VI.

BÉLINE, ARGAN, ANGÉLIQUE, MONSIEUR DIAFOIRUS, THOMAS DIAFOIRUS, TOINETTE.

*Argan.* My love, here's Monsieur Diafoirus' son.

*Thomas Diafoirus.* Madame, it is with justice that heaven has granted you the name of mother-in-law, since one sees in your face——

*Béline.* Sir, I am delighted that I came here just at the right time that I might have the pleasure of seeing you.

*Tho. Dia.* Since one sees in your face—Since one sees in your face—Madame, you interrupted me in the middle of my sentence, and that has disturbed my memory.

*Mons. Diafoirus.* Reserve that, Thomas, for another time.

*Ar.* I wish you had been here just now, dearest.

*Toinette.* Ah, madame, you lost a great deal by not being here at *the second father*, and *the statue of Memnon*, and *the flower called heliotrope*.

*Ar.* Come, daughter, join hands with this gentleman and plight him your troth as your husband.

*Angélique.* Father!

*Ar.* Eh? Father! What's the meaning of this?

*An.* I beg of you not to hurry things too fast. Give us time at least to know one another, and to develop that inclination for one another which is so necessary for a perfect union.

*Tho. Dia.* As for me, madame, mine is grown already. I have no need to wait any longer.

*An.* If you are so forward, sir, it is not the same with me, and I confess to you that your merit has not yet made sufficient impression on my mind.

*Ar.* Ah, well, well; there will be plenty of time for that when you are married.

*An.* Oh! father, pray give me time. Marriage is a chain which should never be imposed on a heart by force, and if the gentleman is a man of honour he would never accept a person who must be his by constraint.

*Tho. Dia.* *Nego consequentiam*, madame. I may be a man of honour, and yet be willing to receive you from the hands of your father.

*An.* To resort to compulsion is a bad way of making one's self beloved by any one.

*Tho. Dia.* We read, madame, that the custom of the ancients was to carry off by force from their father's house the girls they

were going to marry, that it might not seem to be by their consent that they flew into the arms of a man.

*An.* The ancients, sir, are the ancients, and we are the moderns. Such fanciful ways are not necessary in our age, and when a marriage pleases us we know how to approach it, without any one dragging us. Have patience; if you love me, sir, you ought to desire what I wish.

*Tho. Dia.* Yes, madame, as far as the interests of my love are concerned, exclusively.

*An.* But the great mark of love is to submit to the will of her one loves.

*Tho. Dia. Distinguo*, madame; in what regards not the possession of her, *concedo;* but in what regards that, *nego.*

*Toi.* It is in vain to reason. The gentleman has just come brand-new from college; and he will always give you an answer. Why should you resist so much and refuse the honour of being attached to the body of the faculty?

*Bél.* Perhaps she has some other inclination in her head.

*An.* If I had, madame, it would be such as reason and honour might allow.

*Ar.* Well, I'm acting a pleasant part here!

*Bél.* If I were in your place, my dear, I wouldn't force her to marry at all. I know very well what I would do.

*An.* I know, madame, what you mean, and the kindness you have for me; but perhaps your counsels may not be lucky enough to be put into execution.

*Bél.* That's because very well-beloved and very good children like you, scorn to be submissive and obedient to the will of their fathers. That was a virtue formerly.

*An.* The duty of a daughter, madame, has bounds, and neither reason nor law extend to all sorts of things.

*Bél.* That is to say, you are very willing to marry, but you wish to choose a husband after your own fancy.

*An.* If my father will not give me a husband to my liking, I shall beg and entreat of him not to force me to marry one I can't love.

*Ar.* Gentlemen, I beg your pardon for all this.

*An.* Every one has his own end to gain in marrying. For my part, as I would not marry a husband except really to love him, and as I intend to be entirely attached to him for life, I confess to you that I use some precaution in the matter. There are some persons who take husbands only to set themselves free from the restraint of their parents, and to gain the opportunity of doing

whatever they please. There are others, madame, who make marriage a bargain of self-interest; who only marry to get a good jointure, to enrich themselves through the death of their husbands, and who without scruple take one husband after another in order to lay hands on the spoils. These people indeed do not stand on ceremony, and have little regard for the person they marry.

*Bél.* I find you very argumentative to day, and I should like to know what you mean by that.

*An.* I, madame? What should I mean but what I say?

*Bél.* You're such a simpleton, my dear, that one cannot put up with you any longer.

*An.* I have no doubt, madame, you would like to force me to give you some impertinent answer, but I tell you beforehand you shall not have that advantage.

*Bél.* Your insolence is not to be equalled.

*An.* No, madame, your talking is in vain.

*Bél.* You have a ridiculous pride, and an impertinent presumption which makes every one scorn you.

*An.* All this will do no good, madame; I shall be discreet in spite of you; and to take away from you all hope of succeeding in what you are trying to do, I shall get out of your sight.

*Ar.* (*to Angélique as she goes out*). Now listen to me. There's no medium course in this case. You make your choice to marry in four days' time either this gentleman, or a convent. (*To Béline.*) Don't give yourself any uneasiness; I'll bring her into good order.

*Bél.* I'm sorry to leave you, my boy, but I've some business in the city, which can't be dispensed with. I shall come back presently.

*Ar.* Go, love, and call upon your lawyer, so that he may get on with you know what.

*Bél.* Good-bye, dearest.

*Ar.* Good-bye, darling. [*Exit Béline.*

*Ar.* There's a woman that loves me, you wouldn't believe how much.

*M. Dia.* We shall now take our leave of you, sir.

*Ar.* Pray, sir, tell me how I am.

*M. Dia.* (*feeling his pulse*). Here, Thomas, take the gentleman's other arm, to see whether you can form a good judgment of his pulse. *Quid dicis?*

*Tho. Dia.* *Dico*, that the pulse is the pulse of a man who is not well.

*M. Dia.* Good.

*Tho. Dia.* That it is hardish, not to say hard.

*M. Dia.* Very well.

*Tho. Dia.* Recoiling.

*M. Dia.* *Bene.*

*Tho. Dia.* Even a little bounding.

*M. Dia.* *Optime.*

*Tho. Dia.* Which shows disorder in the *Parenchyma splenicum*, that is to say, the spleen.

*M. Dia.* Very well.

*Ar.* No, Monsieur Purgon says it is my liver which is out of order.

*M. Dia.* Why yes, he who says *Parenchyma*, means both one and the other, on account of the close sympathy that exists between them by means of the *vas breve*, the *Pylorus*, and sometimes the *Meatus cholidici*. He orders you, doubtless, to eat roast meat?

*Ar.* No, nothing but boiled.

*M. Dia.* Ah, yes, roast, boiled, the same thing. He orders you very prudently, and you cannot be in better hands.

*Ar.* Sir, how many grains of salt ought one to take with an egg?

*M. Dia.* Six, eight, ten, by even numbers; but medicines by odd ones.

*Ar.* Hoping to see you again, sir.

## SCENE VII.

BÉLINE, ARGAN.

*Béline.* I am come, my boy, before going out, to tell you something which you must be on your guard against. As I passed by the door of Angélique's room, I saw a young fellow with her, who ran away as soon as he saw me.

*Argan.* A young fellow with my daughter?

*Bél.* Yes. Your little daughter Louison was with them; she can tell you all about it.

*Ar.* Send her here, dearest, send her here. (*Alone.*) Oh, the bold-faced hussy! I am no longer surprised at her obstinacy.

## SCENE VIII.

ARGAN, LOUISON.

*Louison.* What do you want with me, papa? My step-mamma told me that you want me.

*Argan.* Yes, come here. Come nearer. Turn towards me. Look up at me. Well?

*Lou.* What, papa? *Ar.* So?
*Lou.* What? *Ar.* Have you nothing to tell me?
*Lou.* If you like, I'll amuse you by repeating the fable of the Ass's Skin, or that of the Crow and the Fox, which I learnt the other day.
*Ar.* That's not what I want. *Lou.* What then?
*Ar.* Oh, you cunning puss, you know very well what I mean.
*Lou.* I beg your pardon, papa.
*Ar.* Is this the way you obey me?
*Lou.* What do you mean?
*Ar.* Did not I charge you to come and tell me everything you saw.
*Lou.* Yes, papa.
*Ar.* Have you done so?
*Lou.* Yes, papa, I have come to tell you all I have seen.
*Ar.* And have you seen nothing to-day?
*Lou.* No, papa. *Ar.* No?
*Lou.* No, papa. *Ar.* Truly! *Lou.* Truly.
*Ar.* Very well, then I'll make you see something.
*Lou.* (*seeing Argan take a rod*). Oh! papa.
*Ar.* Ah, ha! you little hypocrite, you never told me you saw a man in your sister's room.
*Lou.* (*crying*). Papa!
*Ar.* (*taking her by the arm*). Here's something which will teach you to tell lies.
*Lou.* (*falling down on her knees*). Oh, papa, please forgive me! It was because my sister told me not to tell you; but I'm going to tell you all.
*Ar.* You must first of all have a whipping, because you have told a lie. We will see about the rest afterwards.
*Lou.* Please forgive me, papa! *Ar.* No, no.
*Lou.* Please don't whip me, dear papa!
*Ar.* You shall be whipped.
*Lou.* For heaven's sake, papa, don't whip me!
*Ar.* (*going to whip her*). Come, come.
*Lou.* Oh! papa, you've hurt me. Stop! I'm dead. (*She pretends to be dead.*)
*Ar.* Ah! What's the meaning of this? Louison, Louison! Oh, bless me, Louison! Oh, my child! Oh, wretched me! My poor child's dead. What have I done? Wretch! Oh! villainous rod. A curse on all rods. Oh! my dear child; my poor little Louison!
*Lou.* There, there, papa, don't cry so. I'm not quite dead.

*Ar.* Oh, you artful little thing! Well, well, I forgive you for iis time, if you really tell me all.

*Lou.* Oh, yes, papa.

*Ar.* You must take very good care, however, that you do, for y little finger here, knows all, and will tell me if you are lying.

*Lou.* But, papa, don't tell my sister that I told you.

*Ar.* No, no.

*Lou.* (*after seeing if any body listened*). Why, papa, there came man into my sister's room, when I was there.

*Ar.* Well?

*Lou.* I asked him what he wanted, and he told me he was her iusic-master.

*Ar.* (*aside*). Um, um. So that's the business. (*To Louison.*)

*Lou.* Afterwards my sister came. *Ar.* Well?

*Lou.* She said to him, "Be gone, be gone, be gone, for goodess' sake! Be gone, you will drive me mad!"

*Ar.* Very well; and what then?

*Lou.* He wouldn't go.

*Ar.* What did he say to her?

*Lou.* He said, oh, I don't know how many things.

*Ar.* But what were they?

*Lou.* He told her this, that, and the other, how he loved her learly, and that she was the prettiest creature in the world.

*Ar.* And then?

*Lou.* And then he fell down on his knees to her.

*Ar.* And then?

*Lou.* Then he kissed her hand. *Ar.* And then?

*Lou.* Then mamma came to the door, and he ran away.

*Ar.* Was there nothing else? *Lou.* No, papa.

*Ar.* My little finger, however, mutters something besides. (*Putting his finger to his ear.*) Stay—eh? ha! My little finger :ells me of something you saw, and have not told me about.

*Lou.* Then, papa, your little finger tells fibs.

*Ar.* Take care.

*Lou.* No, papa, don't believe it, it tell fibs, I assure you.

*Ar.* Well, well, we shall see. Go away, and be sure you observe everything. Now go. (*Alone.*) Well, there are no such hings as children now. Oh, what a perplexity of affairs! I have iot even leisure to pay attention to my ailments. In good truth, I can hold out no longer. (*Sinks down into his chair.*)

### SCENE IX.

BÉRALDE, ARGAN.

*Béralde.* Well, brother, what's the matter? How are you?

*Argan.* Ah, brother, very ill.

*Bér.* How's that? What, very ill?

*Ar.* Yes, no one would believe how weak I am.

*Bér.* That's a sad thing indeed.

*Ar.* I haven't even the strength to be able to speak.

*Bér.* I came here, brother, to propose a match for my niece, Angélique.

*Ar.* (*speaking in a great rage, and starting out of his chair*). Brother, don't speak to me about that base slut! She's an idle, impertinent, impudent hussy, and I'll put her in a convent before she's two days older.

*Bér.* Ah! That's very good! I'm very glad your strength is coming back to you a little, and that my visit is doing you good. Well, come, we'll talk of business presently. I am bringing you an entertainment which I met with, which will dissipate your melancholy, and dispose you better for what we have to talk about. They are gipsies, dressed like Moors, who perform dances, together with songs, which I am sure you will be pleased with; and this will be much better for you than one of Monsieur Purgon's prescriptions. Now let us go.

## ACT III. SCENE I.

BÉRALDE, ARGAN, TOINETTE.

*Béralde.* Well, brother, what do you say to this? Is it not well worth a dose of cassia?

*Toinette.* Hm. Good cassia is an excellent thing.

*Bér.* Now, shall we talk a little together?

*Ar.* A little patience, brother; I will come back directly.

*Toi.* Stop, sir, you don't remember that you can't walk without your stick.

*Ar.* You're right.

### SCENE II.

BÉRALDE, TOINETTE.

*Toinette.* Pray, sir, don't abandon the interest of your niece.

*Béralde.* I'll try in every way to obtain for her what she wishes.

*Toi.* We must absolutely prevent this absurd match that he as got in his head; and I've thought to myself that it would be good plan to introduce a physician here of our own choosing, ho would disgust him with his Monsieur Purgon, and cry down is conduct. But as we have no one at hand to do it, I have esolved to play a trick out of my own head.

*Bér.* How?

*Toi.* It's a whimsical fancy. It may be more fortunate, perıaps, than prudent. Let me alone, and do you act your part. Here comes our man.

## SCENE III.

ARGAN, BÉRALDE.

*Béralde.* Will you allow me, brother, to ask you, before everything, not to put yourself into any heat in our conversation?

*Argan.* Agreed.

*Bér.* And that you will answer without any irritation the things I may say to you?

*Ar.* Yes.

*Bér.* And that we may discuss the business we have to talk about with a mind free from all passion?

*Ar.* Good gracious, yes! What a lot of preamble.

*Bér.* How is it, brother, that, having the fortune you have, and having no children but one daughter—for I don't reckon your little one—how comes it, I say, that you talk of putting her into a convent?

*Ar.* Whence comes it, brother, that I am master of my family but to do as I think fit?

*Bér.* Your wife does not fail to advise you thus to get rid of your daughter, and I don't doubt that through a spirit of charity she would be delighted to see them both good nuns.

*Ar.* Oh, that's it, is it? My poor wife is at once brought into play. She does all the mischief, and every one puts it down to her.

*Bér.* No, brother, let's leave that alone. She's a woman who has the best intentions in the world towards your family, and has a wonderful tenderness for you, and shows an inconceivable affection and kindness for your children, that is certain. We'll not talk of that, but return to your daughter. With what idea, brother, would you give her in marriage to the son of a physician?

*Ar.* With the idea, brother, of giving myself such a son-in-law as I want.

*Bér.* That's no concern, brother, of your daughter's; and there's a more suitable match offered her.

*Ar.* Yes, but this, brother, is more suitable to me.

*Bér.* But ought the husband she takes to be for you, or for herself, brother?

*Ar.* It ought, brother, to be both for herself and for me, and I desire to bring into my family people that I have need of.

*Bér.* By the same reason, if your little girl were big enough, you'd marry her to an apothecary.

*Ar.* Why not?

*Bér.* Is it possible you should always be so infatuated with your apothecaries and doctors, and resolve to be ill in spite of mankind and nature?

*Ar.* What do you mean, brother?

*Bér.* I mean, brother, that I don't see any one less sick than yourself, and I would not desire a better constitution than yours. It is a great token that you are well, and have a very strong frame, that with all the pains you have taken you have not been able to ruin your constitution, and that you are not destroyed by all the medicines they have made you take.

*Ar.* But do you know, brother, it is that which preserves me; and Monsieur Purgon says that I should go off if he was only three days without taking care of me.

*Bér.* If you don't take care of yourself, he'll take so much care of you that he'll send you into the other world.

*Ar.* But let us reason a little, brother. Have you no faith, then, in physic?

*Bér.* No, brother; and I don't think it's necessary to salvation to have faith in it.

*Ar.* What! don't you think a thing true which has been established through all the world, and which all ages have revered?

*Bér.* Far from thinking it true, I look upon it, between us, as one of the greatest follies which prevails among men; and to consider the matter philosophically, I don't know a more pleasant piece of foolery. I cannot conceive anything more ridiculous than for one man to undertake to cure another.

*Ar.* Why, won't you allow, brother, that one man——

*Bér.* For this reason, brother, that the springs of our body are hitherto mysteries that men can scarce see into; and because nature has set before our eyes too thick a veil for us to know anything of the matter.

*Ar.* In your opinion, then, the doctors know nothing?

*Bér.* True, brother. They are well up in the most polite

earning; can talk good Latin; know how to name all ailments in Greek, to define and to distinguish them; but as to curing them, that's what they don't know at all.

*Ar.* But still you must agree with me that in this matter doctors know more than other people.

*Bér.* They know, brother, what won't cure any great matter; and all the excellency of their art consists in a pompous nonsense, and a specious babbling, which gives you words instead of reasons, and promises instead of results.

*Ar.* But in short, brother, there are people as wise and learned as yourself, and we see that in sickness all the world has recourse to doctors.

*Bér.* That is a mark of human weakness, and not of the truth of their art.

*Ar.* But doctors must believe in the truth of their art, since they make use of it themselves.

*Bér.* That is because there are some amongst them who are themselves caught in the popular error by which they profit, and there are others who make a profit of it without believing in it themselves. Your Mons. Purgon, for instance, knows no artifice; he is a thorough doctor from head to foot. He believes in his rules, more than in mathematical demonstrations, and would think it a crime even to wish to look into them. He sees nothing obscure in physic, nothing dubious, nothing difficult, and with an impetuous prepossession, obstinate assurance, and stubborn confidence, bleeds and purges at hap-hazard, and hesitates at nothing. You must bear him no grudge for all he does for you; it is with the greatest good faith that he will make an end of you; and he'll do no more in killing you than he has done to his wife and children, and if necessary would do to himself.

*Ar.* That's because you have a spite against him, brother; but in short let us come to facts. What must we do, then, when we are ill.

*Bér.* Nothing, brother.

*Ar.* Nothing?

*Bér.* We must only keep ourselves quiet. Nature herself, if we let her alone, will gently deliver herself from the disorder into which she has fallen. It is our restlessness and our impatience which spoil all, and most men die of their remedies rather than of their maladies.

*Ar.* But you must agree with me, brother, that we can assist nature by certain things.

*Bér.* Good heavens, brother, these are mere notions that we

love to feed ourselves with; and at all times fanciful ideas have crept in among men, and we are apt to believe them because they flatter us, and it were to be wished they were true. When a doctor talks to you of assisting, succouring, supporting nature, of removing from her what is hateful and giving her what is wanting, of re-establishing her and restoring her to a full exercise of her functions; when he talks to you of rectifying the blood, refreshing the bowels and the brain, correcting the spleen, restoring the lungs, fortifying the heart, re-establishing and preserving the natural heat, and of secrets by means of which he can lengthen our life to a great number of years; he is telling you in reality the romance of medicine. But when you come to truth and experience you find nothing of all this, and it is like those pleasant dreams which, when you wake, leave nothing behind, but regret at having believed them.

*Ar.* That's as much to say that all the science in the world is shut up in your head, and you pretend to know more than all the great doctors of our age.

*Bér.* In talk and in action your great doctors are two kinds of people. To hear them talk, they are the most skilful persons in the world; to see them act, they are the most ignorant of men.

*Ar.* So, so, you are a great doctor, I see; and I heartily wish that one of those gentlemen were here to pay off your arguments, and check your prating.

*Bér.* I don't make it my business to attack the faculty, and every one at their peril may believe whatever they please. What I say about it is only between ourselves, and I should like to have been able to set you free from the error you are in, and, to amuse you, would take you to see one of Molière's comedies on this subject.

*Ar.* Your Molière is an impertinent fellow with his comedies, and I think it too much of a joke to bring such worthy persons as physicians on the stage.

*Bér.* It is not physicians that he exposes, but the absurdity of physic.

*Ar.* It's indeed becoming in him to set himself up to criticise the faculty. Here's a fine simpleton, an impertinent fellow, to make a joke of consultations and prescriptions, to attack the entire profession of physicians, and to bring on the stage such venerable persons as those gentlemen.

*Bér.* What would you have him represent there but the different professions of men? Princes and kings are brought on

the stage every day, and they are of as good a family as physicians.

*Ar.* Now by all that's terrible, if I were a doctor, I should be revenged on his impertinence, and if he were ill I would let him die without relief. He should say and do everything in vain. I should not prescribe the slightest bleeding, the smallest clyster, and would say to him, "Perish! perish! it will teach you another time to make a jest of the faculty."

*Bér.* You seem to be in a great passion with him.

*Ar.* Yes, he's a foolish fellow, and if the doctors are wise they'll do as I say.

*Bér.* He'll still be even with your doctors. For he won't ask any help from them.

*Ar.* So much the worse for him, if he does not have recourse to remedies.

*Bér.* He has his reasons for not desiring any; and he thinks it is only proper for vigorous people and those who have strength left them to bear the physic together with the disease; but for his part he has only strength to bear his illness.

*Ar.* Very foolish reasons, those. Stop, brother, don't let us talk any more about that man, for it provokes me, and you'll bring on my complaint again.

*Bér.* With all my heart, brother: and, to change the conversation, I must tell you that for a slight repugnance which your daughter has shown to obey you, you ought not to take this violent course of putting her into a convent, and that in the choice of a son-in-law you should not blindly follow the passion that seizes you, and that you ought in this matter to give way somewhat to the inclination of your child; since it is for all her life, and since all her happiness depends on her marriage.

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## SCENE IV.

MONS. FLEURANT (*with a syringe*), ARGAN, BÉRALDE.

*Argan.* Ah, brother. By your leave.

*Béralde.* Why, what do you want to do?

*Ar.* Only to take this little clyster; it will soon be done.

*Bér.* Why, you must be joking. Can't you be one moment without a clyster or a purge? Send it back till some other time, and take a little rest.

*Ar.* This evening, Monsieur Fleurant, or to-morrow morning.

*M. Fleurant* (*to Béralde*). Why do you presume to oppose

medical prescriptions, and to prevent monsieur from taking my clyster? It is very impertinent of you to be so bold.

*Bér.* Be gone, sir; it is evident that you have not been used to speak straightforwardly.

*M. Fl.* You ought not ridicule physic in this way, and to make me lose my time. I have come here with a good prescription, and I shall go and tell Monsieur Purgon how I've been hindered from executing his orders and performing my duty. But you'll see, you'll see.

*Ar.* Brother, you'll cause some trouble here.

*Bér.* What! A great trouble! not to take a clyster Monsieur Purgon had prescribed. Once more, brother, isn't it possible to find some way of curing you of the disease of the doctor, and do you desire to lie all your life buried in their drugs?

*Ar.* Ah, brother, you talk of it like a man who's in health, but if you were in my place you'd soon change your language. It's easy to talk against physic when one's in good health.

*Bér.* But what's your ailment?

*Ar.* You'll drive me mad. I wish you had my ailment, just to see if you would go on talking as you do. But here's Monsieur Purgon.

## SCENE V.

MONS. PURGON, ARGAN, BÉRALDE, TOINETTE.

*M. Purgon.* I've just heard some very agreeable news, as I was coming in—that you have been laughing at my prescription, and refusing to take the remedy I ordered.

*Argan.* Sir, it is not——

*M. Pur.* This is a great rashness, and a strange rebellion of a patient against his medical attendant.

*Toinette.* Oh! that's dreadful.

*M. Pur.* A clyster that I had taken the trouble to compound myself.

*Ar.* It was not I——

*M. Pur.* I'd invented it, and made it up according to all the rules of art.

*Toi.* He is wrong.

*M. Pur.* And which would have produced a marvellous effect.

*Ar.* My brother——

*M. Pur.* To send it back with contempt!

*Ar.* (*pointing to Béralde*). It's he——

*M. Pur.* It's a monstrous action.

*Toi.* True.

*M. Pur.* A scandalous outrage against the profession.

*Ar.* (*pointing to Béralde*). He is the cause——

*M. Pur.* A crime of high-treason against the faculty which can't be sufficiently punished.

*Toi.* You're quite right.

*M. Pur.* I tell you that I break off all further connection with you.

*Ar.* It's my brother——

*M. Pur.* I'll have nothing more to do with you.

*Toi.* You'll do well.

*M. Pur.* And to end all connection with you, there's the deed of gift which I made in favour of the marriage. (*He tears it up and throws down the pieces in a rage.*)

*Ar.* It's my brother who has done all the mischief.

*M. Pur.* To contemn my clyster.

*Ar.* Let it be brought; I'll take it at once.

*M. Pur.* I would have freed you from your ailment before long.

*Toi.* He doesn't deserve it.

*M. Pur.* I was going to have cleansed your body, and to have purified it from all distempers.

*Ar.* Oh! brother!

*M. Pur.* And I only wanted a dozen purges to have settled with you.

*Toi.* He's not worthy of your care

*M. Pur.* But since you were not willing to be cured by me——

*Ar.* It's not my fault.

*M. Pur.* Since you have forsaken the obedience which a man owes to his doctor——

*Toi.* Ah! that cries for vengeance.

*M. Pur.* Since you have rebelled against all the remedies I have prescribed for you——

*Ar.* Oh, not at all.

*M. Pur.* I must tell you that I abandon you to your wretched constitution, to the discords of your blood, and the acrimony of your humours.

*Toi.* That's very good.

*Ar.* Good heavens!

*M. Pur.* And I wish that within four days you may become incurable.

*Ar.* Oh, mercy!

*M. Pur.* That you'll fall into a Bradypepsia.

*Ar.* Oh, Monsieur Purgon!
*M. Pur.* From a Bradypepsia into a Dyspepsia.
*Ar.* Oh, Monsieur Purgon!
*M. Pur.* From a Dyspepsia into an Apepsia.
*Ar.* Oh, Monsieur Purgon!
*M. Pur.* From an Apepsia into a Lientery.
*Ar.* Oh, Monsieur Purgon!
*M. Pur.* From a Lientery into a Dysentery.
*Ar.* Oh, Monsieur Purgon!
*M. Pur.* From a Dysentery into a Dropsy.
*Ar.* Oh, Monsieur Purgon!
*M. Pur.* And from a Dropsy into a deprivation of life to which your folly will have brought you.

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## SCENE VI.

ARGAN, BÉRALDE.

*Argan.* Good heavens! I'm dead. Brother, you've ruined me!
*Béralde.* Why? What's the matter?
*Ar.* I can hold out no longer. I feel that the faculty is taking its revenge.
*Bér.* Indeed, brother, you're an idiot, and I should be very sorry that you should be seen to be acting as you are doing. Pray feel your own pulse a little, pull yourself together, and don't give way so much to your imagination.
*Ar.* You heard, brother, the strange diseases he threatened me with.
*Bér.* What a simple-minded man you are!
*Ar.* He said that I should become incurable in four days' time.
*Bér.* And what does it matter what he said? Is it an oracle that has spoken to you? To listen to you one would think that Monsieur Purgon held in his hand the thread of your days, and by supreme authority could prolong it, or cut it short as he pleased. Consider that the principles of your life are in yourself, and that the anger of Monsieur Purgon is as incapable of killing you, as his remedies are of keeping you alive. Here's an opportunity, if you'll only use it, of getting rid of the doctors; or, if you were born not to live without them, it is easy to have another, with whom, brother, you may run a little less risk.
*Ar.* Ah, brother, he knew all my constitution, and the way to manage it for the best.
*Bér.* I must tell you I think you are infatuated, and look at everything from a distorted point of view.

## SCENE VII.

ARGAN, BÉRALDE, TOINETTE.

*Toinette* (*to Argan*). Sir, there's a doctor wishes to see you.

*Argan.* What doctor?

*Toi.* A doctor.

*Ar.* I ask you who he is?

*Toi.* I don't know him, but he is as like me as two drops of water, and I could almost fancy he was a little brother born after my father's death.

*Ar.* Let him come in.

*Bér.* Now you've got your wish. One doctor leaves you, another offers himself.

*Ar.* I am very much afraid that you will be the cause of some misfortune.

*Bér.* What, again? are you always harping on that?

*Ar.* You see I have on my mind all these ailments, the nature of which I do not know, and——

## SCENE VIII.

ARGAN, BÉRALDE, TOINETTE (*dressed as a doctor*).

*Toinette.* Allow me, sir, to pay you a visit, and to offer you my humble services, for any bleedings or purgings you may have occasion for.

*Argan.* Sir, I'm very much obliged to you. (*To Béralde.*) Why, it's Toinette herself.

*Toi.* I beg you to excuse me, sir. I forgot to give a message to my servant; I'll return directly. [*Exit.*

*Ar.* Now, wouldn't you say it was Toinette herself?

*Bér.* It's true the likeness is very striking. But this is not the first time we've seen this sort of thing; and history is full of these sports of nature.

*Ar.* For my part I'm astonished at it, and——

## SCENE IX.

ARGAN, BÉRALDE, TOINETTE (*having resumed her working dress so quickly that it is difficult to believe that she has personated the doctor*).

*Toinette.* What do you want, sir?

*Argan.* What?

*Toi.* Didn't you call me?

*Ar.* I? No.

*Toi.* My ears must have tingled then.

*Ar.* Stop a little while, and see how like this doctor is to you.

*Toi.* No, thank you; I've my work to do downstairs, and I've seen quite enough of him. [*Exit.*

*Ar.* If I hadn't seen them both, I should have felt sure they were one and the same.

*Bér.* I have read some surprising things about resemblances, and we have seen some of them in our times which have taken in everybody.

*Ar.* For my part I should have been taken in by this, and should have sworn it was the same person.

## SCENE X.

ARGAN, BÉRALDE, TOINETTE (*dressed as a doctor*).

*Toinette.* Sir, I ask your pardon with all my heart.

*Argan* (*aside to Béralde*). This is wonderful!

*Toi.* Pray, sir, don't take amiss the curiosity I had to see such an illustrious patient as you are! Your reputation, which reaches everywhere, must excuse the liberty I have taken.

*Ar.* Sir, I'm your humble servant.

*Toi.* I see, sir, that you are looking at me very earnestly. How old do you suppose I am?

*Ar.* I think that you may be twenty-six or twenty-seven at the most.

*Toi.* Ha, ha, ha! I'm ninety.

*Ar.* Ninety!

*Toi.* Yes. You see the result of the secrets of my art, which preserve me thus fresh and vigorous.

*Ar.* In truth, you're a fine youthful old fellow for ninety.

*Toi.* I'm a travelling doctor who goes from town to town, from province to province, from kingdom to kingdom, to seek out famous subjects for my ability, to find patients worthy of employing myself on, capable of exercising the great and fine secrets which I have discovered in medicine. I disdain to amuse myself with the small fry of common complaints, of rheumatisms and fluxions, agues, vapours and headaches. I desire to treat important diseases, good continued fevers, with a disordered brain, good typhoid fevers, good plagues, good confirmed dropsies, good pleurisies, with inflammations of the lungs—this is what pleases me, this is what I triumph in; and I wish, sir, that you had all the diseases I just now mentioned, that you were given over by all

the physicians, despaired of, at the point of death, that I might demonstrate to you the excellency of my remedies, and the desire I have to do you service.

*Ar.* I am obliged to you, sir, for the kind wishes you have for me.

*Toi.* Let me feel your pulse. Come now, beat as you should. Aha, I shall make you go as you ought. So, this pulse acts the impertinent; I see you do not know me yet. Who is your doctor?

*Ar.* Monsieur Purgon.

*Toi.* His name is not written in my books as one of our leading doctors. What does he say you are ill of?

*Ar.* He says it's the liver, and others say it's the spleen.

*Toi.* They are all blockheads. It's your lungs that are affected.

*Ar.* Lungs?

*Toi.* Yes; what do you feel?

*Ar.* I feel, from time to time, pains in my head.

*Toi.* Just so, the lungs.

*Ar.* I sometimes seem to have a mist before my eyes.

*Toi.* The lungs.

*Ar.* Sometimes I have a pain at my heart.

*Toi.* The lungs.

*Ar.* Sometimes I feel a weariness in all my limbs.

*Toi.* The lungs.

*Ar.* And sometimes I'm taken with pains in the stomach, as if it were the colic.

*Toi.* The lungs. You have an appetite for what you eat?

*Ar.* Yes, sir.

*Toi.* The lungs. You like to drink a little wine?

*Ar.* Yes, sir.

*Toi.* The lungs. You take a little nap after your meals, and are glad to sleep?

*Ar.* Yes, sir.

*Toi.* The lungs, the lungs, I tell you. What does your doctor order for your food?

*Ar.* Soup.

*Toi.* Ignoramus!

*Ar.* Veal.

*Toi.* Ignoramus!

*Ar.* Broth.

*Toi.* Ignoramus!

*Ar.* New-laid eggs.

*Toi.* Ignoramus!

*Ar.* And a few prunes at night to relax the bowels.

*Toi.* Ignorant.

*Ar.* And above all to drink my wine well diluted.

*Toi.* Ignorantus, ignoranta, ignorantum. You must drink your wine unmixed; and to thicken your blood, which is too thin, you must eat good fat beef, good fat pork, good Dutch cheese, good rice-gruel, and chestnuts and wafercakes to thicken and conglutinate. Your doctor's an ass. I'll send one of my own choice, and will come to see you from time to time, so long as I stay in this town.

*Ar.* You will very much oblige me.

*Toi.* What the deuce do you do with this arm?

*Ar.* What do you mean?

*Toi.* Here's an arm which I would have cut off immediately, if I were you.

*Ar.* And why?

*Toi.* Don't you see that it attracts all the nourishment to itself, and hinders this side from growing.

*Ar.* Yes, but I want my arm.

*Toi.* You've a right eye, too, that I should have taken out if I were in your place.

*Ar.* Have an eye out?

*Toi.* Don't you find it incommodes the other, and robs it of all its nourishment? Believe me, and have it taken out as soon as possible, and you'll see the clearer with the left eye.

*Ar.* There is no hurry in this matter?

*Toi.* Farewell. I'm sorry to leave you so soon, but I must be present at a grand consultation we are to have over a man who died yesterday.

*Ar.* About a man who died yesterday?

*Toi.* Yes, to consider and see what ought to have been done to cure him. I remain your humble servant.

*Ar.* You know that invalids don't see their visitors out. [*Exit.*

*Bér.* Truly, this doctor seems to be a very skilful man.

*Ar.* Yes, but he seems to go ahead rather fast.

*Bér.* All your great doctors do.

*Ar.* To cut off my arm, and pluck out my eye that the other may be better? I'd much rather it should not be quite so well. A pretty operation indeed to make me both blind and lame!

## SCENE XI.

ARGAN, BÉRALDE, TOINETTE (*in ordinary dress*).

*Toinette* (*pretending to speak to some one*). Come, come, I am your humble servant. I am not in a mood to be merry.

*Argan.* What's the matter?

*Toi.* Your doctor, if you please, wanted to feel my pulse.

*Ar.* What do you think of that, for fourscore and ten?

*Béralde.* Now come, brother, since your Monsieur Purgon has quarrelled with you, won't you let me speak about the match you are arranging for my niece.

*Ar.* No, brother; I'll put her in a convent, since she has opposed my will. I see plainly there's something underhand in the affair, and I have found out a certain secret interview which they don't know I have discovered.

*Bér.* Well, brother, allowing for these inclinations, would it be so criminal and offensive to you, if the result were matrimony?

*Ar.* Be that as it may, brother, I'm determined she shall be a nun.

*Bér.* You desire to please a certain person.

*Ar.* I understand you. You are always harping on that string, and my wife seems to stick in your gizzard.

*Bér.* Well, brother, if I must speak plainly, it is your wife that I mean; and I can no more bear to see your infatuation for her than I can endure to witness your infatuation for your doctors, and to see you run headlong into every snare that is laid for you.

*Toi.* Pray, sir, don't talk about madame; she's a woman against whom you can have nothing whatever to say. A woman without intrigue, who loves my master, ah! who loves him—more than one can say.

*Ar.* Only ask her how fondly she loves me.

*Toi.* That's true.

*Ar.* And how unhappy she feels at my ailments.

*Toi.* Certainly.

*Ar.* And the care, and the pains she takes about me.

*Toi.* That's certain. (*To Béralde.*) Would you have me convince you, and to show you presently how madame loves my master? (*To Argan.*) Sir, let me undeceive him, and deliver him from his mistake.

*Ar.* What do you mean?

*Toi.* My mistress has just returned. Stretch yourself out at full length in this chair, and pretend to be dead. You'll see her grief, when I tell her the news.

*Ar.* I'll do it.

*Toi.* Yes, but don't let her stay too long in despair; it might be the death of her.

*Ar.* Let me alone.

*Toi.* (*to Béralde*). Hide yourself in this corner.

*Ar.* Is there not some danger in counterfeiting death?

*Toi.* No, no. What danger can there be? Only stretch yourself out there. (*Aside.*) It will be a great pleasure to confound your brother. Here's my mistress. Stay as you are.

## SCENE XII.

BÉLINE, ARGAN (*stretched out in his chair*), TOINETTE.

*Toinette* (*pretending not to see Béline*). Oh, heavens! oh, what a misfortune! What strange trouble!

*Béline.* What's the matter, Toinette?

*Toi.* Oh, madame!

*Bél.* What's the matter?

*Toi.* Your husband's dead.

*Bél.* My husband's dead?

*Toi.* Alas! yes. The poor man is dead.

*Bél.* Certainly?

*Toi.* Certainly. No one knows of this trouble as yet; I was here all alone with him. He has just now departed in my arms. Here, see him lying full length in his chair.

*Bél.* Heaven be praised! How am I delivered from a grievous burden! What a fool you are, Toinette, to be so afflicted at his death!

*Toi.* Well, I thought, madame, one ought to cry.

*Bél.* Go, go along, do, it's not worth while. What loss is there in him, and what good did he do in the world? A wretch, troublesome to every one, a filthy, disgusting fellow, never without a clyster, or a dose in his inside; always snivelling, coughing, or spitting; a stupid, wearisome, ill-natured animal, continually worrying people, and scolding night and day his maids and footmen.

*Toi.* A fine funeral oration!

*Bél.* You must help me, Toinette, to carry out my plans, and you may depend on it that in serving me you will have a certain reward. Since, luckily, no one is yet aware of his death, let us keep it a secret, and carry him to his bed, till I have settled my business. There are papers and money, which I wish to take,

and it is not just or reasonable that I should pass the prime of my life with him, and get no benefit. Come, Toinette, let us take his keys.

*Ar.* (*starting up suddenly*). Gently.

*Bél.* Oh, oh!

*Ar.* So, my good wife, that's how you love me, is it?

*Toi.* Ah, ah! So, after all, the dead man is not dead!

*Ar.* (*to Béline, who runs off*). I'm very glad to have seen the value of your love, and to have heard all your fine sayings about me. It's a very good lesson, which I shall profit by for the future, and which will prevent me from doing a good many things.

*Bér.* (*coming out of the place where he was hiding*). Well, brother, you see how it is.

*Toi.* Indeed, I never could have believed it. But I hear your daughter coming; place yourself as you were, and let us see in what manner she will receive the news of your death. It is something which will not be amiss to try; and since you've started on it, you can learn in this way what your family really think of you.

## SCENE XIII.

ARGAN, ANGÉLIQUE, TOINETTE.

*Toinette* (*pretending not to see Angélique*). Oh, heavens! oh, sad trouble; unhappy day!

*Angélique.* What's the matter, Toinette, and what are you crying for?

*Toi.* Oh! I've sad news for you.

*An.* Eh? What?

*Toi.* Your father's dead.

*An.* What? My father dead, Toinette?

*Toi.* Yes, you see him there. He has just died in a fainting fit.

*An.* Oh! heavens, what a calamity! What a cruel blow. Alas! must I lose my father, all that I had in the world; and, to increase my despair, must I lose him at a time when he was angry with me? What will become of me, unhappy creature that I am, and what consolation can I find for so great a loss!

## SCENE XIV.

ARGAN, ANGÉLIQUE, CLÉANTE, TOINETTE, BÉRALDE.

*Cléante.* What is the matter with you, my fair Angélique? What misfortune are you weeping over?

*Angélique.* I am weeping for the loss of everything that's dear and most precious in life. I am weeping for the death of my father.

*Clé.* Good heavens, what a misfortune! What an unexpected blow. Alas, after the request for our marriage which I got your uncle to make on my behalf, I was just coming to present myself to him, to endeavour by my respectful entreaties to incline his heart to grant you to my wishes.

*An.* Ah! Cléante, let us here give up all thoughts of marriage. After the death of my father, I'll have nothing more to do with the world; I renounce it for ever. Yes, my dear father, if I have lately opposed your inclinations, I will at least carry out one of your wishes, and so make amends for the vexation I accuse myself of having given you. (*Kneeling.*) Permit me, father, now to give you my promise, and to embrace you as a token of my regret.

*Argan* (*embracing Angélique*). Ah, my daughter!

*An.* Oh, oh!

*Ar.* Come, don't be frightened, I'm not dead. Come, you're my true flesh and blood, my own true daughter, and I am charmed to have discovered the real goodness of your heart.

*An.* Oh, what a happy surprise! Since by extreme good fortune, heaven restores you, sir, to my wishes, allow me to throw myself at your feet to implore one favour of you. If you are not favourable to the inclination of my heart, if you refuse me Cléante for a husband, I implore you at least not to force me to marry another. This is all the favour I ask of you.

*Clé.* (*throwing himself at Argan's feet*). Oh, sir, permit yourself to be moved by her entreaties and mine, and do not oppose the mutual ardour of so warm a devotion!

*Béralde.* Brother, can you withstand this?

*Toinette.* Can you be insensible, sir, to so much love?

*Ar.* If he will only turn doctor, I consent to the marriage. (*To Cléante.*) Yes, sir, become a doctor and I give you my daughter.

*Clé.* Most willingly, sir. If that is all that stands in the way of my becoming your son-in-law, I'll turn physician, or even apothecary if you wish it. That's no great matter, and I would do much more to gain Angélique.

*Bér.* But, brother, a thought has just come into my mind. Turn doctor yourself. It will be much more convenient for you to have all you want within yourself.

*Toi.* That's true. That's the real way to cure yourself quickly, and there's no disease so daring as to meddle with the person of a doctor.

*Ar.* I think, brother, you must be laughing at me; am I of an age to study?

*Bér.* Nonsense. Study! Why you are learned enough. There are plenty of them who have no more skill than yourself.

*Ar.* But one ought to be able to speak Latin well, to know the nature of disease, and how to apply the proper remedies.

*Bér.* You'll learn all that by putting on the cap and gown of a doctor, and you'll afterwards be more skilful than you wish to be.

*Ar.* What! do people understand how to discourse about diseases, when they have that dress on!

*Bér.* Yes, you have nothing to do, but to put on a cap and gown, and any stuff becomes learning, and nonsense becomes sense.

*Ar.* Stay, sir, if you had nothing else but your beard, that would go a long way. A beard makes more than half a doctor.

*Clé.* In any case, I'm prepared for everything.

*Bér.* Won't you have the matter carried out at once?

*Ar.* What, immediately?

*Bér.* Yes, now, and in your own house.

*Ar.* In my own house?

*Bér.* Yes, I know a body of my lady friends, personal friends of mine, who will come at once and perform the ceremony in your hall. It shall cost you nothing.

*Ar.* But what shall I say, what shall I answer?

*Bér.* They will instruct you in a few words, and put down in writing what you must say. Go and dress yourself properly, and I'll go and send for them.

*Ar.* With all my heart. Let us see to this.

*Clé.* What's your intention; and what do you mean by this body of your lady friends?

*Toi.* What's your plan?

*Bér.* To amuse ourselves a little this evening. The players have composed an interlude for the admission of a doctor with dances and music. I wish that we should all take part in it, and that my brother should act the principal character.

*An.* But, uncle, I think you play on my father a little too much.

*Bér.* No, niece, this is not so much playing on him as

giving in to his fancies. We may each of us take a part in it, and so perform the comedy to one another. The carnival bears us out in this. Let us make haste and get everything ready.

*Clé.* (*to Angélique*). Do you agree to it?

*An.* Yes, since my uncle conducts it.

*Here follows a musical comedietta: a burlesque initiation of a doctor.*[1]

[1] This being a mixture of dog Latin and untranslatable words, is not given here.

# THE MISANTHROPE

## (*LE MISANTROPE*).

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ALCESTE, *lover of Célimène.*
PHILINTE, *friend of Alceste.*
ORONTE, *lover of Célimène.*
CÉLIMÈNE, *in love with Alceste.*
ÉLIANTE, *Célimène's cousin.*
ARSINOÉ, *friend of Celimène.*
BASQUE, *Célimène's servant.*
DU BOIS, *Alceste's servant.*
AN OFFICER OF THE MARSHALS OF FRANCE.

SCENE—PARIS, IN CÉLIMÈNE'S HOUSE.

### ACT I. SCENE I.

PHILINTE, ALCESTE.

*Philinte.* What's the matter, then? What ails you?

*Alceste* (*seated*). Pray leave me.

*Phi.* But once more, tell me what whim——

*Al.* Leave me, I say, and go and hide yourself.

*Phi.* But at any rate people listen to me without getting angry.

*Al.* I will be angry, and I won't listen.

*Phi.* When you are in these rough tempers I can't make you out; and, in short, though a friend, I am one of the first——

*Al.* (*rising hastily*). What, I your friend? No, strike that out of your books. I have hitherto professed to be so, but after what I have now discovered in you, I declare to you, flatly, that I am so no longer. I wish for no place in corrupt hearts.

*Phi.* According to your reckoning, then, Alceste, I am very much to be blamed?

*Al.* Why, you ought to die of mere shame; there's no excuse for such an action, and every man of honour ought to be shocked at it. I see you overflowing with courtesy to a man, and professing the utmost regard for him. When you embrace a man, you load him with protestations, offers, and oaths, and when shortly afterwards I ask you who the man is, you can scarcely tell me his name. The warmth of your regard for him cools as soon as you leave him, and you speak of him to me as a person utterly indifferent

to you. In truth, it is an unworthy, base, and infamous thing to lower one's self so far as to be a traitor to one's own feelings. If, by some ill luck, I had done as much, I should have gone at once and hanged myself for vexation.

*Phi.* I don't see, for my part, that this is a hanging matter; so I shall beg of you to allow me somewhat to lessen the severity of your sentence, and not to hang myself for this offence, if you please.

*Al.* This idle jesting is very unbecoming.

*Phi.* But seriously, what do you want me to do?

*Al.* I would have you be sincere and, like a man of honour not let slip a single word that does not come from the heart.

*Phi.* When a man comes and receives you with an effusion of delight, you should in reason pay him back in the same coin, answer his eagerness as far as you can, and return him offer for offer and oaths for oaths.

*Al.* No; I can't put up with that base method which most people of quality affect, and I hate nothing so much as the contortions of all those great protestation-makers, those affable dealers in empty words, who attack every one with civilities, and treat with the same air the man of worth and the blockhead. What good does it do you that a man swears to you eternal friendship, faith, zeal, esteem, tender regards, and makes a speech praising you to the skies, when he runs to do the same to the first scoundrel he meets? No, no, there is not a soul with any good disposition who can desire an esteem so degraded, and the highest praise has but a poor relish when one sees that it is shared with all the world. Esteem must be founded on some preference, and to esteem all the world is to esteem no one. Since you give in to these vices of the age, I cannot count you as one of my friends. I refuse the vast complaisance of a heart which makes no difference in merit. I desire to be distinguished from others, and, to cut the matter short, a friend to all mankind is no friend of mine.

*Phi.* But while we are in the world it is necessary that we should pay some outward civilities which custom demands.

*Al.* No, I tell you; we ought to chastise without mercy this shameful commerce of appearances of friendship. I would have us be men, and that on all occasions the bottom of our hearts should discover itself in our discourses. Let the heart itself speak, and let our sentiments never be masked under vain compliments.

*Phi.* There are a good many occasions when an absolute

frankness would be ridiculous and hardly endurable, and sometimes (without offence to your austere honour) it is right to conceal what we have in our hearts. Would it be proper or decent to tell thousands of people what we think of them? And when we have to do with a man we hate, or who is disagreeable to us, ought we to declare the matter to him just as it is?

*Al.* Yes.

*Phi.* What! would you go and tell the aged Émilie that it ill becomes her at her age to set up for a beauty, and that the paint which she lays on so thick shocks every one?

*Al.* Without doubt.

*Phi.* Or would you tell Dorilas that he is too impertinent? And that there is no ear at Court that he does not weary in recounting his bravery and the splendour of his family?

*Al.* Certainly.

*Phi.* You must be joking.

*Al.* Nothing of the kind. I would spare no one on this point. My eyes are too much offended. Neither court nor city presents anything but objects to provoke my spleen. It throws me into a melancholy temper, into a profound ill-humour, when I see men live together in the manner they do. I find nothing anywhere but base flattery, injustice, interest, treachery, and knavery. I can contain myself no longer; I am in a rage, and my purpose is to break off all intercourse with all mankind.

*Phi.* This philosophic vexation is too wild. I laugh at the gloomy fits I perceive you fall into, and I think I see in us two who have been brought up together the two brothers described in "The School for Husbands," of whom——

*Al.* Pray let us have none of these insipid comparisons.

*Phi.* No; in good earnest leave off all these rude freaks. The world will not alter its ways in spite of all the pains you may take, and since frankness has such charms for you, I may tell you plainly that this malady of yours is as good as a comedy wherever you go, and that so much anger against the manners of the age makes you ridiculous with a great many people.

*Al.* So much the better, so much the better; that's what I want; it is a good sign to me, and I am overjoyed at it. All men are so odious to me that I should be sorry to be wise in their eyes.

*Phi.* You wish very ill, then, to human nature?

*Al.* Yes; I have conceived a violent hatred of it.

*Phi.* Shall all poor mortals, without any exception, be involved in this hatred? Besides, are there not many in our age——

*Al.* No; it is general, and I hate all men—some because they are wicked and mischievous, and others for being complaisant to the wicked, and not having that vigorous hatred for them which vice ought to excite in all virtuous minds. One sees the unjust excess of this complaisance to that sheer villain with whom I have a lawsuit. The treacherous rascal is plainly seen through his mask, he is everywhere known for what he is; his rolling eyes and soft tones impose only upon strangers. People know that this wretched fellow, who ought to be hanged, has pushed his way in the world by dirty jobs, and that the splendid condition he finds himself in through them makes merit grumble and virtue blush. Whatever shameful titles people give him everywhere, his wretched honour hears no one call him infamous knave and cursed villain; everybody agrees to it, and no one contradicts it. In the meanwhile his hypocritical smile is everywhere welcome—he is entertained, well received, and he insinuates himself into all companies; and if there is any position to be gained by canvassing for it, he will carry it against men of the greatest worth. It gives me a mortal wound when I see men keep on good terms with vice, and sometimes I am seized with a sudden impulse to flee to a desert place and avoid all human beings.

*Phi.* Good heavens! Let us give ourselves less trouble about the manners of the age, and make some small allowance for human nature; let us not examine it with so much severity, but look on its defects with some indulgence. To live in the world one requires tractable virtue, and one may be blameworthy by stress of wisdom. Perfect reason avoids all extreme, and would have us wise with sobriety. That over-strictness of virtue in ancient times offends our age and general usage; it would have mortals too perfect. We must yield to the times without obstinacy, and it is an extremity of folly to busy ourselves in correcting the world. I observe, as you do, every day a hundred things which might go better if they took another course; but although I may discover them at every step, I don't fly off into a rage as you do. I take men very quietly, just as they are; I accustom myself to put up with what they do, and I think that at court and in the city my calmness is as philosophical as your anger.

*Al.* But this calmness, sir, which reasons so well, can nothing ruffle it? Should it happen by chance that a friend should betray you, that a subtle plot were laid to gain your estate, or that people should try and spread evil reports about you, could you see all this without putting yourself into a rage?

*Phi.* Yes. I look upon these defects that you make such a noise about as vices inherent in human nature; and, in short, my mind is no more shocked to see a man a knave, unjust, selfish, than to see vultures ravenous after carnage, apes mischievous, or wolves raging.

*Al.* Shall I see myself betrayed, torn to pieces, robbed without being——Plague on it! I won't talk at all. This is such an absurd way of reasoning.

*Phi.* Indeed you will do well to keep silence. Exclaim somewhat less against your antagonist, and bestow some of your pains on your lawsuit.

*Al.* I won't bestow any upon it. I have said so.

*Phi.* Who, then, do you expect will trouble themselves about it for you?

*Al.* Who do I expect will do so? Why reason, my just right and equity.

*Phi.* Shall you not visit any judge?

*Al.* No. Is my cause, then, unjust or doubtful?

*Phi.* I grant you that, but canvassing is a very troublesome job, and——

*Al.* No. I am determined not to move a step. Either I am right, or I am wrong.

*Phi.* Don't trust to that.

*Al.* I shall not move.

*Phi.* Your opponent is strong, and may by intrigue draw——

*Al.* It matters not.

*Phi.* You will be deceived.

*Al.* Be it so. I will see the issue of it.

*Phi.* But——

*Al.* I shall have the pleasure of losing my suit.

*Phi.* But in short——

*Al.* I shall see in this trial whether men will have impudence enough, will be wicked, villainous, perverse enough to do me injustice in the face of all the world.

*Phi.* What a strange man!

*Al.* I could wish, though it would cost me a great deal, that for the pleasantness of the thing I had lost my cause.

*Phi.* In good truth, Alceste, people would laugh at you if they heard you talk in this manner.

*Al.* So much the worse for him that laughed.

*Phi.* But this uprightness, which you would have in every one with so much exactitude, this absolute integrity that you intrench yourself in, do you find it in the person you are in love with?

I am astonished, for my part, that being, as it would seem that you are, embroiled with the whole world, in spite of all that can render it odious to you, you should have found anything to charm your eyes; the sincere Éliante has a liking for you, the prude Arsinoë casts a sly glance at you, whilst your heart will not favour their wishes, since Célimène keeps it enchained, though her coquettish humour and slanderous temper seem to give in so strongly to the manners of the times. How comes it, that bearing so mortal a hatred to these, you should so easily put up with what this fair one possesses? Are there no defects in this sweet object? Don't you see them? Or do you excuse them?

*Al.* No. The love that I feel for this young widow does not shut my eyes to her defects, and with what ardour soever she may have inspired me, I am the first to see and to condemn them. I confess my weakness. She has the art of pleasing me; in vain I see her faults, in vain I blame them; in spite of her faults she makes me love her; her charms are greater, and I doubt not my affection will be able to rid her mind of these vices of the times.

*Phi.* If you do that, you will do no slight thing. You believe, then, that you are beloved by her?

*Al.* Yes, indeed; I should not love her at all if I did not think so.

*Phi.* But if her affection for you discovers itself plainly, how comes it that your rivals cause you so much uneasiness?

*Al.* It is because a heart thoroughly smitten desires all for itself; and I came here only to tell her everything my passion inspires me with on this point.

*Phi.* For my part, had I nothing to do but to form a wish, her cousin Éliante should have all my sighs. Her heart, which esteems you, is steadfast and sincere; and this more suitable choice would be more worthy of your attention.

*Al.* It is true, my reason tells me so every day; but it is not reason which governs love.

*Phi.* I am very much afraid for this love of yours, and the hope you are in may perhaps——

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## SCENE II.

ORONTE, ALCESTE, PHILINTE.

*Oronte* (*to Alceste*). I was informed that Éliante and Célimène were both gone out shopping; but as I was told that you were here, I came up to assure you (and with a sincere heart) that I have conceived the highest regard for you, and that for a long

time this has made me ardently desire your friendship. Yes, my heart loves to do justice to merit, and I burn with impatience till the bond of friendship unites us. I think that a zealous friend, and one of my position, too, is certainly not to be rejected. (*During this time Alceste appears to be musing, and not to know that Oronte is speaking to him. Finally he looks up, when Oronte says to him*) It is to you, if you please, that this discourse is addressed.

*Alceste.* To me, sir?

*Or.* To you. Does that offend you?

*Al.* Not at all; but my surprise is very great, and I did not expect the honour I receive.

*Or.* The esteem in which I hold you ought not by any means to surprise you, since you may claim it from the whole world.

*Al.* Sir——

*Or.* The State contains nothing which is not inferior to the dazzling merit which is seen in you.

*Al.* Sir——

*Or.* Yes, for my part, I hold you preferable to all that is most considerable therein.

*Al.* Sir——

*Or.* May heaven crush me if I lie; and to prove my feelings toward you, allow me to embrace you with all my heart, and to beg for a place in your friendship. Your hand on it, if you please, and allow me to call you my friend.

*Al.* Sir——

*Or.* What! do you refuse?

*Al.* Sir, it does me too much honour. But friendship demands a little more reserve, and it is certainly profaning the name to bring it in on all occasions. This union ought to spring from judgment and choice; before we form a close connection, we should be better acquainted, and we may possibly be of such temperaments that we should both of us repent of our bargain.

*Or.* In truth, this is talking like a man of sense, and I esteem you still more for it. Let us leave it to time, then, to form so pleasing a union. But meanwhile I offer myself entirely to you. If I can ask any favour for you at court, it is well known that I make some figure there. I have the king's ear, and indeed he always treats me with the greatest freedom in the world. In short, I am in all respects absolutely yours. And as you are a man of bright parts, I come, by way of commencing this agreeable connection, to show you a sonnet which I made a little while ago, and to ask you whether it is worth publishing.

*Al.* Sir, I am a very unfit person to decide that. Pray excuse me.

*Or.* Why so?

*Al.* I have the fault of being rather more sincere in such matters than I should be.

*Or.* The very thing I ask of you; indeed, I should have reason to complain, if, after exposing myself to you that you might speak without dissimulation, you should deceive me, and conceal anything from me.

*Al.* Since you are pleased to have it so, sir, I am very willing.

*Or.* It is a sonnet. (*Reads.*) *Hope*——It is a lady who had flattered my passion with some hope. *Hope*——These are none of your long pompous verses, but soft, tender, languishing verselets. (*At each pause he looks at Alceste*).

*Al.* We shall see.

*Or.* *Hope*——I don't know whether the style may seem sufficiently clear and easy, and whether you will be satisfied with the choice of words.

*Al.* We shall see presently, sir.

*Or.* Besides, you must know that I only took a quarter of an hour to make them.

*Al.* Let us see, sir; the time has nothing to do with it.

*Or.* *Hope for a while allays, 'tis true,*
*And rocks to sleep our tedious pain,*
*But poor gain, Phyllis, must accrue*
*When nothing marches in its train.*

*Philinte.* I am charmed already with this little bit.

*Al.* (*to Philinte*). What! have you the face to admire this?

*Or.* *You show'd, indeed, great complaisance,*
*Less had been better, on my word;*
*Why should you be at that expense,*
*When hope was all you could afford?*

*Phi.* In what polite terms these things are expressed.

*Al.* (*aside to Philinte*). Oh, you vile flatterer, to praise such stupid things!

*Or.* *But if an endless expectation*
*Push to the last extreme my passion,*
*Death must be my reliever.*

*Nor to prevent this, serves your care,*
*Fair Phyllis, 'tis downright despair*
*When we must hope for ever.*

*Phi.* The fall is pretty, amorous, admirable.

*Al.* (*aside, softly*). A plague on your fall! You wretched poisoner! Would you had had a fall that would break your nose!

*Phi.* I never heard verses so well turned.

*Al.* (*softly, aside*). Zounds!

*Or.* (*to Philinte*). You flatter me, and perhaps you think——

*Phi.* No, I don't flatter at all.

*Al.* (*softly, aside*). What are you doing then, you wretch?

*Or.* (*to Alceste*). But now for you; you know the agreement we made. Speak, I pray you, with sincerity.

*Al.* This is always a delicate matter, and on the point of genius we always like people to flatter us. But I was saying the other day to a person who shall be nameless, when I saw some verses of his, that a man of the world should always keep under strong control that itch for writing which seizes us all; that he should keep a sharp curb over the great propensity we have to make a show of such amusements; and that this eagerness to show off their work causes them to make but a very poor figure.

*Or.* Do you mean by this to let me know that I am wrong to wish——

*Al.* I don't say that; but I told him that a frigid composition is a bore; that it needs no other weakness to disgrace a man; and that though in other respects they may have a hundred good qualities, yet we view people on their weak sides.

*Or.* Do you mean that you find any fault with my sonnet?

*Al.* I don't say that; but that he should not write, I set before his eyes how in our time the thirst for doing so had spoiled a great many worthy people.

*Or.* Do I write badly, and so resemble them?

*Al.* I don't say that. But, in short, I said to him, what urgent necessity have you for rhyming? and who on earth drives you to rush into print? If one could pardon the publication of a bad book, it would be in the case of those unfortunate wretches who have to write for their living. Take my word, resist the temptation, and keep such compositions from public view. Don't throw away the reputation you now have at court of being a worthy gentleman, to receive from the hands of a greedy printer that of a ridiculous and wretched author. This is what I tried to make him understand.

*Or.* Admirably put, and I think I understand your meaning. But mayn't I know what it is in my sonnet that——

*Al.* Frankly, it is a very good one to lock up in your desk. You have followed bad models, and your expressions are not at all natural. Pray, what is, *And rocks to sleep our tedious pain?* And what, *When nothing marches in its train?* And, *Why should you be at that expense, When hope was all you could afford?* And what, *Fair Phyllis, 'tis downright despair When we must hope for ever?* This figurative style that people are so fond of has neither the virtue of good taste nor of truth; it is nothing but a playing upon words, pure affectation, and it is not thus that nature speaks. The bad taste of the age in this respect is horrible; that of our forefathers, unpolished as they were, was much better; and I value all that people admire much less than an old ballad that I will repeat to you.

*Had Royal Henry given to me*
*His Paris large and fair,*
*And I straightway must quit for aye*
*The love of my own dear;*
*I'd say, pardie, my liege Henry,*
*Take back your Paris fair;*
*Much mo love I my dear, truly,*
*Much more love I my dear.*

The versification is not rich, and the style is antiquated. But don't you see that this is infinitely better than all those gewgaws so abhorrent to good sense, and that pure love is speaking here?

*Had Royal Henry given to me*
*His Paris large and fair,*
*And I straightway must quit for aye*
*The love of my own dear;*
*I'd say, pardie, my liege Henry,*
*Take back your Paris fair;*
*Much mo love I my dear, truly,*
*Much mo love I my dear.*

That is what a heart can say that is really smitten. (*To Philinte, who laughs.*) Yes, Mr. Laugher, in spite of all the wits, I value this more than all the florid pomp of the tinsel which every one cries up.

*Or.* And I, for my part, maintain that my verses are very good.

*Al.* You have your reasons for thinking them so; but you must allow me to have mine, which must be excused from giving way to yours.

*Or.* It is sufficient for me that other people value them.

*Al.* That is because they have the art of dissimulation, which I, for my part, have not.

*Or.* Do you think, then, that you have so great a share of wit?

*Al.* If I commended your verses I should have more.

*Or.* I shall do very well without your approbation.

*Al.* You must then, if you please, do without it.

*Or.* I should very much like to see how you would compose some verses on the same subject, in your own style.

*Al.* I might have the misfortune to make as bad ones, but I should take care not to show them to people.

*Or.* You speak with a great deal of assurance, and this self-sufficiency——

*Al.* Pray seek some one else to flatter you.

*Or.* But, my little sir, don't take quite so much on yourself.

*Al.* Indeed, my grand gentleman, I take just as much as I should do.

*Phi.* (*stepping between them*). Nay, gentlemen, this is going too far; drop it, I beg of you.

*Or.* I'm in the wrong, I own it; and I leave the field. (*To Alceste.*) Your servant, sir, with all my heart.

*Al.* And I, sir, am yours most obediently.

## SCENE III.

PHILINTE, ALCESTE.

*Philinte.* Now you see. By being too sincere, you have a troublesome affair on your hands. I saw that Oronte wanted to be flattered, when——

*Alceste.* Don't speak to me.

*Phi.* But——

*Al.* I don't want any more society.

*Phi.* This is too much.

*Al.* Leave me alone.

*Phi.* If I——

*Al.* No more words.

*Phi.* But how——

*Al.* I'm not listening.

*Phi.* But——

*Al.* What, again?

*Phi.* This is outrageous!
*Al.* This is too much! don't dog my steps.
*Phi.* You're joking with me. I shall not leave you.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

ALCESTE, CÉLIMÈNE.

*Alceste.* Madame, may I speak plainly to you? I am by no means satisfied with the way you are behaving. My anger rises when I think of it, and I feel that we must break off our connection. Yes, I should deceive you if I spoke otherwise; sooner or later we must certainly part. I might promise you the contrary a thousand times, but I should not have it in my power to do it.

*Célimène.* It is to scold me then, so far as I can see, that you wished to bring me home.

*Al.* I do not scold; but you have a way, madame, of opening your heart too easily to the first comer. One sees too many lovers laying siege to your heart, and I cannot at all reconcile myself to this.

*Cél.* Am I to blame for having lovers? Can I hinder people from thinking me agreeable? And when they make kindly efforts to visit me, ought I to take a stick and drive them out of doors?

*Al.* No; it is not a stick, madame, that you need, but a heart less easy and melting at their love sighs. I know that your charms accompany you everywhere, but the reception you give them retains those whom your eyes attract; and your gentleness to those who surrender to you, finishes in every heart the work which your charms had begun. The too-lively hope you inspire them with fixes their assiduous attendance about you; and a more reserved complaisance on your part would drive away that swarm of admirers. But, however, tell me, madame, by what chance that Clitandre of yours has the good luck to please you so much? On what foundation of merit and sublime virtue do you base the honour of your esteem for him? Is it for his beautifully kept finger-nails that he has gained your evident regard? Did you yield, like all the fashionable world, to the surpassing beauty of his fair wig? Or is it his large knee ornaments which make you like him? Has his profusion of ribbons charmed you? Or is it by the allurement of his large Rhingrave[1] that he has gained

[1] See p. 18.

your heart, while he was acting the part of your slave? Or has his manner of laughing and his effeminate voice found the secret of touching you?

*Cél.* How unjustly you take offence at him. Don't you know perfectly well why I humour him, and that he can interest his friends in my lawsuit, as he has promised to do?

*Al.* Lose your lawsuit, madame, with firmness of mind; but do not keep on friendly terms with a rival who is disagreeable to me.

*Cél.* But you are getting jealous of all the world.

*Al.* That is because all the world is kindly received by you.

*Cél.* That is the very thing that ought to calm your indignant spirit, since my complaisance diffuses itself everywhere; and you would have more reason to be offended if you saw me taken up entirely with one.

*Al.* But as for me, whom you blame so much for jealousy, pray what have I, madame, more than any of them?

*Cél.* The happiness of knowing that you are beloved.

*Al.* And what ground has my burning soul for believing that?

*Cél.* I think, that having taken the trouble to tell you so, such a confession should suffice.

*Al.* But who shall assure me that, at the same time, you may not be saying quite as much perhaps to everybody else?

*Cél.* A charming compliment, certainly, for a lover to make; and you make me out a very lady-like person. Well, then, to remove any such suspicion, I here unsay all I have said, and nothing can deceive you any longer but yourself. Rest satisfied.

*Al.* Good heavens! Must I then love you? Oh, if I could only snatch this heart of mine out of your hands, I should bless heaven for the exquisite happiness! I make no secret of it—I do all that I can to tear from my heart this terrible attachment; but my greatest efforts hitherto have done nothing, and it is a punishment for my sins that I love you so.

*Cél.* It is true; your love for me is unparalleled.

*Al.* Yes; on that head I can defy all the world. My love is inconceivable, and never did any one, madame, love as I do.

*Cél.* In good truth, the method of it is entirely new, for you love people only to scold them. Your passion only shows itself in peevish expressions; never did any see such a grumbling lover.

*Al.* But it only rests with you whether my ill-temper shall disappear. Pray let us cut short all these discussions; let us talk open-heartedly, and put a stop to——

## SCENE II.

CÉLIMÈNE, ALCESTE, BASQUE.

*Célimène.* What's the matter?

*Basque.* Acaste is below.

*Cél.* Well; tell him to come up. [*Exit Basque.*

*Al.* What, can one never have a private talk with you? One always sees you ready to receive people, and you cannot resolve even for one moment to let yourself be denied to any one.

*Cél.* Do you want me to quarrel with him?

*Al.* You consider people in a way which is not at all agreeable to me.

*Cél.* He is a man who would never forgive me, if he knew that his visits could be troublesome to me.

*Al.* And what good does it do you to inconvenience yourself in this manner?

*Cél.* Good heavens! the goodwill of such people is of consequence, and these are the kind of people who, I don't know how, have the privilege of talking freely at court. One sees that they take part in every conversation; they may not do you good, but they can certainly do you harm, and whatever support one may have besides, one should never embroil oneself with these loud talkers.

*Al.* In short, be the matter what it may, you always find reasons for putting up with all the world, and the precautions of your judgment——

## SCENE III.

BASQUE, ALCESTE, CÉLIMÈNE.

*Basque.* Here's Clitandre too, madame.

*Alceste* (*appearing about to go*). Just so.

*Célimène.* Where are you off to?

*Al.* Out of doors.

*Cél.* Stay.

*Al.* What for?

*Cél.* Stay.

*Al.* I can't.

*Cél.* I want you to.

*Al.* Not at all. These conversations only weary me, and it is unreasonable to wish me to put up with them.

*Cél.* I say I will; I will have you stay.

*Al.* No; it is impossible for me.

*Cél.* Well then, go; you are quite ready to do so.

## SCENE IV.

ÉLIANTE, PHILINTE, ACASTE, CLITANDRE, ALCESTE, CÉLIMÈNE, BASQUE.

*Éliante.* Here come the two marquises with us. Did any one announce us?

*Célimène.* Yes. (*To Basque.*) Chairs here for every one. (*To Alceste.*) What, aren't you gone?

*Alceste.* No; but I choose to make you declare yourself, madame, either for them or for me.

*Cél.* Be quiet.

*Al.* You shall explain yourself this very day.

*Cél.* You are losing your senses.

*Al.* No; you shall declare yourself.

*Cél.* Nay——

*Al.* You must choose one side or the other.

*Cél.* Surely you're joking!

*Al.* No, but you must make your choice. My patience has been too much tried.

*Clitandre.* Zounds! I am just come from court, madame, where Cléonte, at the Levée, made himself most ridiculous. Has he no friend who can give him charitable advice about his behaviour?

*Cél.* To tell the truth, he makes a very sad figure. Wherever he goes, he wears an air that at once strikes the eye; and when one sees him again after a short absence, one finds him still more absurd.

*Acaste.* If one must talk of absurd people, I have just had to do with a most wearisome one—Damon, who cares for nothing but discussion, and who kept me, if you please, a whole hour out of my chair, in the heat of the sun.

*Cél.* He is a strange tattler, and then he had always the art of saying nothing at great length. One can never see anything in the arguments which he holds, and all we hear is nothing but noise.

*Él.* (*to Philinte*). Not a bad beginning. The conversation takes a nice turn towards our neighbours.

*Cli.* Timante, too, madame, is an admirable character!

*Cél.* From head to foot the man is all mystery; he just casts one wild glance on you as he passes you, and having nothing to do is always busy. Everything he says is full of affectation; he quite wearies one with his ceremonious ways; he constantly breaks off the conversation, in order to whisper a secret to you, and that

secret is—nothing; he makes a wonder of the least trifle, and whispers everything in your ear, even when he wishes you good-day.

*Acaste.* And Géralde, madame?

*Cél.* Oh, the tedious romancer! One never hears him leave his grand society. He's head over ears with great people, and never speaks of any one less than a duke, a prince, or a princess. Grand folks turn his head, and all his discourse turns upon nothing but horses, equipages, and dogs; he thee's and thou's people of the highest rank, and the word "sir" is quite obsolete with him.

*Cli.* They say that he is most intimate with Belise.

*Cél.* Oh, the stupidity of the woman, and her dry conversation! I suffer a perfect martyrdom when she comes to see me. One has to rack one's brain all the time to find out what to say to her, and the barrenness of her ideas lets the conversation drop at every turn. In vain do you invoke the aid of all your commonplace subjects to attack the stupid silence; the fine weather, or the rain, the cold or the heat, are matters one soon exhausts with her. At the same time, her visits, insupportable enough in themselves, are drawn out to an unconscionable length, and one may ask what o'clock it is, and yawn twenty times, she no more thinks of moving than if she were a log of wood.

*Acas.* What do you think of Adraste?

*Cél.* Oh, what extravagant pride! There's a man puffed up with self-love! His merit is never satisfied with the court. He makes it his daily occupation to revile it, and there is never an employment, charge, or benefice given to another, but he thinks they are doing injustice to him.

*Cli.* How about young Cléon, whom all the fashionable people now visit; what do you say of him?

*Cél.* That he owes it to his cook, and that it is to his table that people pay their visits.

*Él.* He takes care to have the choicest provisions served at his table.

*Cél.* Yes, but I wish he would not serve himself up. His stupid person is a very unsatisfactory dish, and it spoils, to my taste, all the entertainments he gives.

*Phi.* His uncle Damis is very much esteemed; what do you say of him?

*Cél.* Oh, he's one of my friends.

*Phi.* I consider him to be a worthy man, and very sensible.

*Cél.* Yes, but what makes me wild is that he will needs have too much wit. He is always on a stilt, and one can see that in

everything he says he is labouring to be witty. Since he has taken it into his head to be a clever man, nothing can suit his taste, he is so difficult to please; he sees faults in everything that is written, and thinks that to praise is not the part of a man of wit; that it is learned to find fault, and that only fools admire and laugh, and that in censuring all the works of the age, he shows himself superior to other people. Even in conversation he finds he cannot descend so low, and, with arms crossed, he looks down with pity from the height of his genius upon all that is said.

*Acas.* I'm blessed if that is not a true portrait of him.

*Cli.* (*to Célimène*). You paint people to the life.

*Al.* Well done! Steady! Go on, my brave court friends. You spare nobody, and each has his turn. Meanwhile, let but one of these persons appear, and we shall see you run in haste to meet him, offer him your hand, and back up with a flattering kiss your assurances that you are his humble servant.

*Cli.* Why do you find fault with us? If what is said offends you, your charge must be made against my lady.

*Al.* No, indeed, it is against you; and your fawning laughs draw from her all these slanderous reflections; her satirical humour is constantly fed by the culpable incense of your flattery; her mind would find less pleasure in sarcasm, had she observed that you did not applaud it. It is thus that one ought to impute to flatterers all the vices that overspread mankind.

*Phi.* But why do you take so great an interest in these people, when you yourself would condemn what is blamed in them?

*Cél.* Is not this gentleman bound to contradict? Would you have him reduce himself to the level of common opinion? Should he not everywhere display that contradictory spirit with which heaven has endowed him? The sentiments of others can never please him, he always maintains the contrary opinion, and would think he appeared like a vulgar person if he should be known to share any one else's opinion. The honour of contradicting has such charms for him, that he constantly takes up arms against himself; and he attacks his own sentiments as soon as he meets them in the mouth of another.

*Al.* The laughers are on your side, madame, which is saying everything; and you may push your satire against me as far as you please.

*Phi.* But it is very true, too, that your way is to take up arms against everything one says; and by a peevishness which you yourself avow, you can neither bear people to praise nor blame you.

*Al.* That is because men are always in the wrong; because vexation against them is always in season, and because I see that in all matters they are either barefaced flatterers, or rash fault-finders.

*Cél.* But——

*Al.* No, madame, no, though I should die for it, you have ways of amusing yourself that I cannot put up with, and people are greatly in the wrong to nourish in your heart this strong inclination to the faults which they themselves blame.

*Cli.* For my part I do not know; but I will openly confess, that I always thought hitherto that the lady was faultless.

*Acas.* With graces and attractions I see her well provided, but her faults are not perceptible to me.

*Al.* But they all are to me; and far from concealing them from myself, she knows I take care to reproach her with them. The more we love any one, the less it behoves us to flatter them; true love shows itself by pardoning nothing, and for my part I would banish all those mean-spirited lovers whom I found submissive to all my opinions, and whose soft complaisance offered incense to all my extravagant ideas.

*Cél.* In short then, if you are to be umpire of hearts, in order to love rightly, one ought to renounce all tenderness; and to make it the highest honour of perfect devotion to find constant fault with the person loved.

*Él.* Love for the most part is not governed by these rules, and we always find lovers extolling their choice. Their passion never sees anything to be blamed, and everything becomes lovable in the person beloved. They reckon blemishes as perfections, and know how to give them pleasing names. The pale vies with the jasmine in fairness; the deepest black is an adorable brunette; the lean has shapeliness and ease of deportment; the stout has a stateliness full of majesty; the slattern by nature, who has few charms, is termed a negligent beauty; the giantess becomes a goddess in their eyes; the dwarf an epitome of all the wonders of heaven; the haughty has a soul worthy of a diadem; the cheat has wit; the fool is all good-nature; the chatterbox has a pleasant humour; and the dumb preserves a decent modesty. It is thus that the ardent lover loves even the very faults of the person he loves.

*Al.* And for my part, I maintain——

*Cél.* Let us drop this conversation, and take a turn or two in the gallery. What! are you going already, gentlemen?

*Cli.* and *Acas.* No, madame.

*Al.* Does the fear of their departure trouble you so much? You can go when you like, gentlemen; but I give you notice that I shall not leave till you are gone.

*Acas.* Unless I am in madame's way, I have nothing to call me hence the whole day.

*Cli.* As for me, so long as I am in time to attend in the king's bedchamber, I have nothing else to occupy me.

*Cél.* (*to Alceste*). This is a joke, I believe.

*Al.* No, by no means. We shall see whether I am the person you want to get rid of.

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## SCENE V.

BASQUE, ALCESTE, CÉLIMÈNE, ÉLIANTE, ACASTE, PHILINTE, CLITANDRE.

*Basque* (*to Alceste*). Sir, there is a man here who wants to speak with you about a matter which he says admits of no delay.

*Alceste.* Tell him that I have no such urgent affairs.

*Bas.* He has a jacket on with large plaited skirts and edged with gold lace.

*Cél.* Go and see what he wants, or ask him to come in. (*Enter Officer.*) Well, then, what's your pleasure? Come here, sir.

## SCENE VI.

*Officer*, ALCESTE, CÉLIMÈNE, ÉLIANTE, ACASTE, PHILINTE, CLITANDRE.

*Officer.* Sir, I have a word or two to speak with you.

*Alceste.* You may speak aloud, sir, for my information.

*Officer.* The Marshals,[1] whose commands I am charged with, order you to come and appear before them at once.

*Al.* Who? Me, sir?

*Officer.* Yourself, sir.

*Al.* And what for?

*Philinte* (*to Alceste*). It is that ridiculous affair between you and Oronte.

*Célimène* (*to Philinte*). What was that?

*Phi.* Oronte and he affronted one another just now about some trifling verses he did not approve of, and they want to stop the matter before it goes any further.

*Al.* I shall never show any base compliance.

[1] A Court established to try and arrange matters of honour, without having recourse to duelling.

*Phi.* But you must obey the order. Come, get ready.

*Al.* What arrangement would they make between us? Will these gentlemen condemn me to approve of those verses which are the occasion of our quarrel. I won't unsay what I have said; I think them villainous.

*Phi.* But with a more gentle spirit——

*Al.* I won't give in the least. The verses are execrable.

*Phi.* You should show yourself more tractable in your ideas. Come, let us be off.

*Al.* I will go, but nothing shall induce me to retract.

*Phi.* Come, and show yourself.

*Al.* Unless an express command comes from the king that I should approve these verses, about which they are making such a fuss, I shall always maintain that they are wretched, and that the man who made them deserves hanging. (*To Clitandre and Acaste, who laugh.*) Hang it, gentlemen, I did not think I should cause so much amusement!

*Cél.* Go at once, and appear where you should.

*Al.* I am going there, madame, and I shall come back here directly to end our discussion.

## ACT III. SCENE I.

CLITANDRE, ACASTE.

*Clitandre.* My dear Marquis, I see that you are quite at your ease; everything pleases you, and nothing disturbs you. Do you think indeed, if your eyes are not dazzled, that you have good reason for seeming so happy?

*Acaste.* Well, really, when I come to cross-examine myself, I do not see where I can find any cause for being melancholy. I have a fortune, I am young, and I come of a family which may rightly be called noble; and I think, by the rank which my birth gives me, that there are very few employments which are not open to me; while as to courage, which we ought to value above everything, without vanity I may say that the world knows that I am not wanting in it; and I have been pushing my way in the world in a bold and vigorous manner. As to wit, no doubt I have some, and a certain amount of good taste too, which enables me to judge and reason upon everything without study; and at first nights at the theatre, which I am devoted to, I pose as a critic in the stage-boxes, give my verdict, and make a great uproar at the finest passages. I am clever enough, I have a good appearance, a specially good set of teeth, and a very fine figure. As to

dress, I think, without flattering myself, he would be in the wrong who would dispute the palm with me. I find myself esteemed as much as a man can be, beloved by the fair sex, and standing well with my prince. I think with all this, my dear Marquis, I really do think that a man might be quite satisfied with himself in any country.

*Cli.* Yes, but finding conquests so easy elsewhere, why should you come and sigh here to no purpose?

*Acas.* I? Good heavens, I'm not of the make or the temper to put up with the indifference of a fine lady! It is for vulgar, awkward people, to worship constantly at the shrine of your severe beauties; to languish at their feet and put up with their cruelty; to seek relief from sighs and tears, and endeavouring by dancing a prolonged attendance to obtain what is denied to their merit. But people of my stamp, Marquis, are not made to live on trust, and pay all the cost. However great may be the excellence of the fair ones, I am of opinion, thank heaven, that we are worth as much as they; and it is not just, if they are to be honoured by a heart like mine, that it should cost them nothing, and at least, to weigh everything justly, it is right that advances should be made on both sides.

*Cli.* So you think, Marquis, that you are all right here?

*Acas.* Well, Marquis, I have some reason to do so.

*Cli.* Then, believe me, have done with so great a mistake. You flatter yourself, my dear fellow, and blind yourself.

*Acas.* That is quite true. I flatter myself, and I really am blind.

*Cli.* But what makes you consider yourself so perfectly happy?

*Acas.* I flatter myself.

*Cli.* On what do you base your conjectures?

*Acas.* I am blinded.

*Cli.* Have you pretty sure proofs of it?

*Acas.* I impose on myself, I tell you.

*Cli.* Has Célimène made any secret avowal of her passion?

*Acas.* No; I am scorned.

*Cli.* Pray answer me.

*Acas.* I meet with nothing but rebuffs.

*Cli.* Have done with this pleasantry, and tell me what hopes she has given you.

*Acas.* I am a wretch, and you are the lucky man. She has a great dislike to my person, and one of these days I must hang myself.

*Cli.* Are you willing then, Marquis, that in order to settle our love affair we should both agree on one thing? That whoever

can show a certain sign of having the greater share of Célimène's heart, the other shall give place to the acknowledged conqueror, and set him free from persistent rivalry?

*Acas.* Ah, indeed, you speak exactly to my taste, and I agree to your proposal from the bottom of my heart. But hush!

(*Enter* CÉLIMÈNE.)

SCENE II.

CÉLIMÈNE, AGASTE, CLITANDRE, BASQUE.

*Célimène.* What! here still?

*Clitandre.* Love, madame, is keeping us.

*Cél.* I just now heard a carriage enter the courtyard. Do you know who it is?

*Cli.* No.

*Enter* BASQUE.

*Basque.* Arsinoé, madame, is coming up to see you.

*Cél.* What does this woman want with me?

*Bas.* Éliante is below talking with her.

*Cél.* What has she got in her head? And who sent for her?

*Acaste.* She passes everywhere for a consummate prude, and the ardour of her zeal——

*Cél.* Yes, yes, mere cant. In her heart she belongs to the world, and all her anxiety is to hook some one, though she has not succeeded. She can only view enviously the professed lovers of another, and her disagreeable goodness, abandoned by every one, raves perpetually against the blindness of the age. She endeavours under the false cloak of prudery to conceal the frightful solitude of her home, and to save the credit of her feeble charms she would make a crime of every power they lack. At the same time a lover would greatly please the lady; and she has a sneaking kindness even for Alceste. The court he pays to me is an outrage on her charms, and she regards it as a kind of robbery committed against her. Her jealous spite, which she hides with great difficulty, gives me an underhand fling wherever she goes. In short, I never saw anything to my mind so stupid. She is impertinent to the last degree, and——

*Enter* ARSINOÉ.

SCENE III.

ARSINOÉ, CÉLIMÈNE: CLITANDRE *and* ACASTE.

*Célimène.* Ah! what happy chance has brought you hither, madame? Sincerely I was very uneasy about you.

*Arsinoé.* I come to give you some advice which I thought it my duty to impart.

*Cél.* Oh, how glad I am to see you!

[*Clitandre and Acaste leave the room, laughing.*

*Ar.* They have gone away most opportunely.

*Cél.* Shall we sit down?

*Ar.* It is not at all necessary. Friendship, madame, ought above all to display itself in those things which may be of most importance to us. And as nothing can possibly be more important than honour and decorum, I come to show the kindliness my heart feels for you, by telling you of something which touches your honour. Yesterday I was calling on some people of distinguished virtue, and the conversation turned on you; and your conduct, madame, with its great display, unhappily did not meet with commendation. This crowd of people whose visits you admit, your easy manners and the talk they give rise to, found more critics than was desirable, and the censure was more severe that I should have wished. You may well suppose which side I took. I did all I could in your defence. I strongly excused you on the ground of your good intentions, and offered to be answerable for your good principles. But you know there are certain things in life which one cannot excuse, even with the strongest desire to do so; and I was obliged to own that your way of living did you a certain amount of harm; that in the eyes of the world it had an ill appearance; that all sorts of ill-natured stories are being told about you, and that if you chose, uncharitable judges would have less to find fault with. Not that I believe that decency is in any way outraged; heaven forbid such a thought! But people easily give credit to the shadow of a fault, and it is not enough to live well, as far as regards ourselves. I believe, madame, that you are too sensible not to take in good part this useful advice, and that you will attribute it to the secret promptings of a zeal which attaches me thoroughly to your interests.

*Cél.* Madame, I must thank you greatly for the advice you have given me; and far from taking it ill, I desire at once to acknowledge the favour by telling you something that equally touches your honour. And as I see that you prove yourself my friend by telling me of the reports people spread about me, I shall in my turn follow so kind an example by acquainting you with what people say of you. I was paying a visit the other day, and found there some people of rare merit, who, speaking of the care which those must take who lead a virtuous life, turned the conversation on you. There your prudishness and your displays of zeal were

by no means referred to as a good model; your affectation of an outward gravity, your endless discourses about wisdom and honour, your affectation and outcries at the shadow of an indecency, through an ambiguous word, which yet may have been meant innocently; the high esteem you are held in by yourself, and the eye of pity you cast on every one else; your frequent lectures and your bitter censures upon things that are innocent and pure; all this, madame, if I may speak frankly to you, was blamed by common consent. What is the good, they said, of that modest look and that quiet exterior which all the rest belies? She's most punctual at her devotions, but she beats her servants and does not pay them their wages. She makes a great show of zeal in all places of devotion, but she paints, and wishes to appear handsome. She has nude figures in pictures covered over, but she likes the reality. For my part I undertook your defence against them all, and positively assured them that it was all scandal. But the whole run of their opinion was against me, and their conclusion was that you would do well to trouble less about the actions of others, and to take a little more pains with your own; that one ought to look a long time into one's self before thinking of condemning others; that we should add the weight of an exemplary life to the corrections we desire to make in our neighbours, and that it would be still better for us to leave this matter to those in whose hands heaven has placed it. I believe that you also are too reasonable, madame, not to take this advice in good part, and that you will attribute it to the secret promptings of a zeal which attaches me thoroughly to your interests.

*Ar.* Whatever we may be exposed to in giving reproofs, I did not expect such a reply as this, madame; and I see plainly by its sharpness, that my sincere advice has touched you to the quick.

*Cél.* On the contrary, madame, if people were but wise, these mutual cautions would be more in vogue; and we should, by this frank treatment of each other put an end to that great blindness which most persons are under in respect of themselves. It will be entirely your fault if we do not continue this faithful office, and take great care to compare notes as to what we hear of each other, you of me, or I of you.

*Ar.* Ah! madame, I can hear nothing of you; it is in me that people see a great deal to find fault with.

*Cél.* Madame, one may praise or blame everything, and each one may be right according to his age or taste. There is a time for gallantry, and one also more fit for prudery. One may, out of policy, choose that, when the glory of our youthful days is faded.

This serves to cover some vexatious disaster. I do not say but what I may, some time or other, follow your steps; age will bring about everything, but it is not the time, madame, to be a prude at twenty years of age.

*Ar.* Really you pride yourself on a very trifling advantage, and make a great noise about your age. Whatever difference there may be between your age and mine, it is no such wonderful matter to value yourself upon; and I cannot imagine, madame. why you should put yourself into such a passion, and flout me as you are doing.

*Cél.* Nor do I also know, madame, why you everywhere inveigh so bitterly against me. Must you needs be always revenging your vexations on me? and can I help it if people will not pay their attentions to you? If my person captivates people, and they continue daily to make me offers of love which you may wish to deprive me of, I do not know what to do in this matter, and it is not my fault. You have a clear field, and I am no hindrance to your having charms to attract people.

*Ar.* Ah, do you suppose I give myself any trouble about the crowd of lovers you are so vain of? And is it not very easy to judge at what price one may attract them nowadays? Do you think to make one believe, as things go, that your merit alone attracts all this crowd? That they burn with nothing but honourable love for you, and all pay court to you for your virtues? People are not blinded by vain pretences; the world is no dupe, and I see some people who are formed to inspire tender sentiments, who nevertheless do not gather lovers to their houses; from which we can draw the conclusion that one does not win their hearts without great advances, that no one is our admirer merely for our looks, and that we must pay for the court that is made to us. Therefore, don't puff yourself up with vainglory for the trifling advantage of a poor victory; moderate somewhat the pride of your charms, and don't treat people with contempt because of them. If my eyes envied yours their conquests, I think I might do like other people—be under no restraint, and show you plainly that we can have lovers when we wish to have them.

*Cél.* Have some then, madame, and let us see you manage it; make an effort to please by means of your grand secret; and without——

*Ar.* Let us break off this conversation, madame; it would try both your temper and mine too much; and I should already have taken my leave had I not been obliged to wait for my carriage.

*Cél.* You can stay, madame, as long as you please; you need not hurry on that account; but, without fatiguing you with ceremony, I will give you better company, and this gentleman (*Alceste enters*), whom chance has brought hither just at the right time, will better fill my place in conversing with you. (*To Alceste.*) Alceste, I must go and write a letter or two, which I cannot put off any longer without doing myself harm; so please to stay with madame, who will, I am sure, be so good as to pardon my want of civility.

## SCENE IV.

ALCESTE, ARSINOÉ.

*Arsinoé.* You see she desires that I should entertain you while I am waiting a moment for my carriage, and never could all her attention offer me anything more charming than such a conversation. Indeed, persons of sublime merit attract the love and esteem of every one, and yours certainly has hidden charms which make me interested in all your affairs. I wish that the court would do more justice to your worth and regard it more favourably. You have reason to complain, and I am out of all patience when I see, from day to day, that they do nothing for you.

*Alceste.* For me, madame? And what pretensions have I to anything? Have I been known to do any service to the State? What have I done, if you please, that is so striking in itself, that I should complain of the court doing nothing for me?

*Ar.* Those on whom the court casts a favourable eye have not always rendered such distinguished services. There must be opportunity as well as capacity, and in short the merit you discover ought——

*Al.* There, no more of my merit, for goodness' sake. Why should the court trouble itself about that? It would have enough to do, and its hands full of business, if it had to unearth people's merits.

*Ar.* Illustrious merit brings itself to light; yours is extremely valued in many quarters, and you may believe me when I tell you that only yesterday, in two important circles, you were praised by persons of great consequence.

*Al.* Why, madame, everybody is praised nowadays, and everything is thereby confused in the present age; every man is credited with equally great merit, so that is no longer any honour to be praised. I am sick of eulogies; they throw them at one's head. Even my valet is in the Gazette.

*Ar.* For my part, I could heartily wish that, to bring you into

greater notice, a place at court might allure you. If you would only show the least inclination that way, one might set many engines at work to serve you, and I have persons at my beck whom I will employ for you, who will make your way easy to everything.

*Al.* But what would you have me do there, madame? The temper I am of requires me to keep away from court. Heaven, when it sent me into the world, did not give me a soul suited to the air of courts. I do not find in myself the virtues necessary to succeed, and make my fortune there. My chief talent is to be frank and sincere. I do not know how to cajole people in conversation, and he who has not the art of concealing his thoughts ought to make a very short stay in that country. No doubt, away from the court one has not the standing and the titles of honour which it can confer; but, at the same time, in losing these advantages one has not the vexation of cajoling some very silly persons. One has not a thousand cruel rebuffs to suffer; one has not Mr. So-and-so's verses to praise, nor my Lady Such-an-one to flatter, nor to put up with the numskull of a marquis.

*Ar.* Well then, if you please, we will drop this question of a court, but I must pity you for your love affair, and, to let you know my thoughts on that point, I could heartily wish that your affections were better placed. You certainly deserve a much happier fate, and she whom you are charmed with is unworthy of you.

*Al.* But, pray, madame, consider, when you say so, that this person is your friend.

*Ar.* Yes, but it really goes against my conscience to suffer any longer the wrong she does you. Your situation greatly distresses me, for I give you warning that your love is being taken advantage of.

*Al.* This is showing a tender interest in me, madame, and such advice to a lover is very kind.

*Ar.* Yes, for all she is my friend, she is, I declare, unworthy to subjugate the heart of a man of honour, and she entertains only pretended kindness for you.

*Al.* That may be, madame — one cannot see into people's hearts; but your charity might well have forborne to throw such a suspicion into mine.

*Ar.* If you will not be undeceived, I will say no more; that is easy enough.

*Al.* No; but on this subject, whatever we may be told, doubts are of all things the most tormenting, and for my part I should be

glad if you would inform me of nothing on which you cannot throw the fullest light.

*Ar.* Well, you have said enough, and you shall receive full light on this matter. Yes, I am willing that your own eyes should convince you of everything. Only escort me as far as my house. There I shall show you absolute proof of the infidelity of your fair one's heart, and if yours can be smitten by any other eyes, we may perhaps offer you something in the way of consolation.

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

ÉLIANTE, PHILINTE.

*Philinte.* No, never was any one so difficult to manage; never did a reconciliation cost so much pains to bring about; in vain did they try and turn him this side or that—there was no changing his opinion. In my idea, never did so absurd a difference occupy the wisdom of these gentlemen. "No, gentlemen," he said, "I shall not retract, but I will agree to anything barring this point. What has he taken offence at? What has he to say against me? Is his honour at stake because he cannot write well? What harm did my opinion do to him that he took it in such bad part? One may be an excellent man, and yet write bad verses. Honour is not affected by such things. I esteem him a gallant man in all respects, a man of quality, merit, and courage; all you please, but he is a very bad author. I'll praise, if you like, his equipage and his style of living, his skill in horsemanship, in arms, in dancing; but as to praising his verses, I am his most obedient servant; and when one has not the happiness to be able to write better, one should have no desire to write verses unless upon pain of death." In short, the utmost favour and modification which, after great efforts, he could be brought to yield, was to say (thinking greatly to soften his style), "Sir, I am sorry that I am so difficult to please; and out of respect to you I could have wished with all my soul that I thought your sonnet better." To conclude, they forced them to close the whole matter with an embrace.

*Éliante.* His modes of acting are very singular, but I have, I own it, a special regard for him; and the sincerity he piques himself on has something noble and heroic in it: it is a rare virtue in the present age, and I could wish to see it in everybody as in him.

*Phi.* For my part, the more I see him, the more I am astonished at this passion he gives way to. In the temper in

which heaven has thought fit to form him, I can't imagine why he takes it in his head to be in love; and still less can I imagine why your cousin should be the person his fancy inclines him to.

*Él.* This shows us sufficiently that love is not always produced in people by a similarity of temper; and in this instance all theories about tender sympathies are falsified.

*Phi.* But, by what you can see, do you think she loves him?

*Él.* Ah, that is a point not easily known. How can one judge whether she really loves him? Her heart is not even itself very sure what it thinks; it loves sometimes without very well knowing why, and fancies too that it loves when there is nothing in it.

*Phi.* I believe that our friend will have more vexation with this cousin of yours than he imagines; and to say the truth, if he were of my mind, he would pay his addresses in quite another quarter, and we should see him, madame, make a more suitable choice, and profit by the kindness your heart shows him.

*Él.* For my part, I make no disguise in the matter, and I think one should be sincere on these points. I do not oppose his passion at all, on the contrary my heart interests itself in it; and if the matter depended only on me, I would myself join him to her he loves. But if in such a choice, as anything may happen, his love should experience some contrary fate, and if she decided to crown some one else's love, I could make up my mind to receive his addresses; and his having been refused under such circumstances would not cause me to dislike him.

*Phi.* And I, for my part, madame, do not at all oppose that kindness which your beauty entertains for him; and he himself, if he would, could tell you what I have taken the trouble to say to him on this point. But if by their being united in marriage you should be unable to receive his addresses, all mine should seek to gain that distinguished favour which with so much goodness you offer to him. Happy should I be, madame, if, when your heart can withdraw itself from him, it might but fall to my share.

*Él.* You are amusing yourself, Philinte.

*Phi.* No, madame, I speak now from the bottom of my heart. I await the opportunity to make you an offer openly, and with all my heart I long for that moment.

## SCENE II.

ALCESTE, ÉLIANTE, PHILINTE.

*Alceste.* Ah, madame, give me satisfaction for an offence which has just triumphed over all my constancy.

*Éliante.* What is the matter? What ails you? Who has disturbed you?

*Al.* Something ails me which it is death for me to think of. The dissolution of all nature had not oppressed me like this occurrence. It is all over with me—my love—I can't speak.

*Él.* Endeavour to recover your spirits a little.

*Al.* Oh, just heaven! must so many charms be joined to the odious vices of the basest souls?

*Él.* But pray, who can——

*Al.* Ah! all is ruined; I am—I am betrayed: I shall die of it. Célimène—could one have believed the news? Célimène deceives me, and is faithless.

*Él.* Have you just grounds for believing it?

*Philinte.* Perhaps it is a suspicion lightly conceived; your jealous temper sometimes indulges chimeras.

*Al.* Oh, sir, for goodness' sake concern yourself with your own affairs! (*To Éliante.*) I am only too certain of her treachery, having a letter in my pocket written by her own hand. Yes, madame, a letter written to Oronte sets before my eyes my disgrace and her shame—Oronte, whose addresses I thought she avoided, and whom I dreaded least of all my rivals.

*Phi.* A letter may deceive us by appearances and is sometimes not so guilty as one thinks it.

*Al.* Once more, sir, leave me if you please, and only trouble yourself about your own concerns.

*Él.* You should moderate your passion, and the outrage——

*Al.* This work, madame, belongs to you; it is to you that my heart has now recourse for power to free itself from this cutting pain. Revenge me on your ungrateful and perfidious relation who basely betrays my constant love; revenge me for this stroke which ought to excite your horror!

*Él.* I revenge you! How?

*Al.* By receiving my heart. Accept it, madame, instead of that faithless creature; in that way I can take vengeance on her; and I will punish her by the sincere vows, the profound love, the respectful concern, the earnest devotion, and the assiduous service, which this heart shall offer you as an ardent sacrifice.

*Él.* I sympathise with you certainly in what you suffer, and do not despise the heart you offer me; but perhaps the evil is not so great as you think it, and you may lay aside this desire of vengeance. When the injury proceeds from an object full of charms, one forms many designs one never executes. In vain do we see powerful reasons to part; the beloved criminal is perfectly

innocent; all the harm we wish her easily vanishes, and it is very well known what the anger of a lover is.

*Al.* No, no, madame, no; the crime is too deadly; there is no return, and I absolutely break off with her. Nothing shall change my resolution, and I should punish myself if ever I loved her more. Here she is. My anger redoubles at her approach. I will go and reproach her vehemently for her black ingratitude, will absolutely confound her, and after that bring you a heart entirely freed from her delusive charms.

## SCENE III.

CÉLIMÈNE, ALCESTE.

*Alceste* (*aside*). Oh, heaven! how can I here master my emotion?

*Célimène* (*aside*). Ah! (*To Alceste.*) Why, what is the meaning of this state I find you in? This sighing and these gloomy looks that you cast on me?

*Al.* That all the horrors of which a soul is capable have nothing in them comparable to your disloyalty; that fate, devils, and incensed heaven never produced anything so wicked as yourself.

*Cél.* This is certainly an admirable way of courtship.

*Al.* Nay, none of your jests; this is no time for laughing—much rather blush, you have reason for it. I have sure proofs of your treachery. This is what the troubles of my heart pointed at; it was not in vain that my affection was alarmed. By those frequent suspicions which you found so hateful, I was looking for the misfortune which my eyes have met with; and in spite of all your caution and dissembling, my star hinted to me what I had to fear: but do not presume that I shall endure the vexation of seeing myself outraged without being revenged. I know that one has no power over inclinations, and that love will always spring up spontaneously; that one can never take possession of a heart by force, and that every soul is free to name its conqueror. So I should have no ground for complaint had you spoken to me without dissimulation; and if you had rejected my addresses at once, my heart would have had only destiny to blame. But to have my love encouraged by a false confession, is a treachery and perfidy which cannot have too great a punishment, and I shall give full vent to my resentment. Yes, yes; after such an outrage dread everything. I am no longer myself, I am given over to

rage. Pierced by the mortal blow which you have struck me, my senses are no longer under the control of reason; I yield to the transports of a just anger, and cannot answer for what I may do.

*Cél.* Pray tell me the meaning of this wild raving. Tell me—have you lost your senses?

*Al.* Yes, yes, I lost them, when, in seeing you, to my misfortune I drank in the poison that is killing me, and when I thought to find sincerity in the treacherous charms by which I was enchanted.

*Cél.* What treachery, then, can you complain of?

*Al.* Oh, that double heart! How well it knows how to dissemble! But I have means quite ready to drive it to extremity. Cast your eyes here and recognise your own handwriting. The discovery of this letter is enough to confound you. Against this evidence you can have nothing to answer.

*Cél.* And it is this which troubles your mind?

*Al.* Don't you blush at seeing this writing?

*Cél.* No! Why should I?

*Al.* What! will you add audacity to artifice? Will you disown it because it is not signed?

*Cél.* Why should I disown a letter in my own handwriting?

*Al.* And can you look upon it without being confounded at the crime against me, of which its tenor accuses you?

*Cél.* You are assuredly an outrageous mortal.

*Al.* What! Do you thus brave out this convincing proof? And has that which shows me how favourable you are to Oronte nothing in it injurious to me, and shameful to you?

*Cél.* Oronte! Who told you that the letter is for him?

*Al.* The persons who this day put it in my hands. But I am willing to grant that it may be for another. Has my heart the less reason to complain of yours? Would you be really less blameworthy towards me on that account?

*Cél.* But supposing it's a woman this letter is meant for, how does that hurt you, and what is there blamable in it?

*Al.* Ah! That turn is good, and the excuse admirable. I own I was not prepared for this stroke, and here I am absolutely convinced! Dare you have recourse to such gross impositions? Do you think people have lost their eyes? Come, let us see a little in what way, with what air, you can maintain so palpable a falsity, and how you can apply to a woman all the impassioned words of this letter. To cover your breach of constancy, explain these words which I am going to read——

*Cél.* I have no wish to do so. It is ridiculous for you to take such authority on yourself, and to tell me to my face what you have just ventured to say.

*Al.* No, no; without going into a passion, take a little pains to justify the terms you use here.

*Cél.* No, I will not have anything to do with it, and whatever you may believe about this incident is of very little consequence to me.

*Al.* Pray prove to me, and I shall be satisfied, that you can explain this letter as meant for a woman.

*Cél.* No, it is for Oronte, and I would have you think so; I receive all his attentions with the greatest pleasure. I admire his conversation; I esteem him for what he is, and I admit whatever you please. There now, take your own course, let nothing stop you, only don't torment me any more.

*Al.* (*aside*). Good heavens! Can anything be conceived more cruel? And was ever a heart treated thus? What! I am justly in a passion with her; and when I come to complain, it is I who am scolded! She aggravates to the utmost my sorrow and my suspicions; she lets me believe everything, she glories in everything, and yet my heart is cowardly enough not to break the chain which binds it, not to arm itself with a generous disdain against the ungrateful object with which it is but too much smitten. (*To Célimène.*) Ah! perfidious creature, how well you know how to take advantage of my extreme weakness even against myself, and to make subservient to your own ends the prodigious excess of this fatal love, born of those traitorous eyes! Clear yourself at least from a crime which overwhelms me, and do not pretend to be guilty. Show, if you can, that this is an innocent letter; my fondness consents to lend a helping hand. Try and appear faithful, and I will do all I can to believe you such.

*Cél.* Get along with you, you are mad with your transports of jealousy, and you do not deserve the love I have for you. I should like to know who could constrain me to descend to the baseness of dissembling with you? And why, if my heart inclined another way, should I not say so sincerely? What! does not the obliging assurance of my sentiments defend me sufficiently against all your suspicions? Are they of any weight against such a pledge? Is it not an affront to me to listen to them? and since it is our heart's utmost effort to bring itself to confess its love, since the honour of our sex, hostile to our passions, strongly opposes such confessions, should the lover who sees us overcome such an

obstacle for his sake suspect this oracle with impunity? And is he not a criminal, not to rest secure of that which one can only declare after a great struggle with oneself? Go; such suspicions deserve my anger, and you are not worthy of consideration. I am foolish, and am vexed at my folly in still retaining any kindness for you. I ought to fix my regard somewhere else, and so give you just reason to complain of me.

*Al.* Ah, traitress! How strange is my weakness for you. You certainly deceive me with these tender expressions; but it signifies nothing, I must follow my fate. My soul is entirely devoted to you. I must see to the last what your heart will prove, and whether it can form so black a design as to deceive me.

*Cél.* No, you don't love me as you ought.

*Al.* Oh, nothing is comparable to my intense love, and in my zeal to show it to all the world, I go so far as to form wishes against you. Yes, I could wish that no one thought you lovable, that you were reduced to a miserable condition, that heaven at your birth had bestowed nothing on you, that you had neither rank, family, nor fortune, so that I might, by a striking sacrifice of my heart, have repaired the injustice of your condition; and that I might now have had the joy and glory of seeing you receive all from the hands of my love.

*Cél.* This is wishing me well after a strange fashion! Heaven preserve me from your ever having occasion——Here comes Monsieur Du Bois, comically got up.

## SCENE IV.

DU BOIS, CÉLIMÈNE, ALCESTE.

*Alceste.* What means this get-up, and this frightened look? What is the matter with you?

*Du Bois.* Sir——

*Al.* Well?

*Du B.* Strange events, without end.

*Al.* What is it?

*Du B.* Ah! sir, our affairs are going wrong.

*Al.* How so?

*Du B.* Shall I speak out?

*Al.* Yes, speak quickly.

*Du B.* Isn't there some one here?

*Al.* This is mere trifling. Will you speak?

*Du B.* Sir, you must march off.

*Al.* What for?

*Du B.* We must be off as quickly as we can.

*Al.* And why?

*Du B.* I tell you we must leave this place.

*Al.* But the reason?

*Du B.* You must go, sir, without taking leave.

*Al.* But what do you mean by all this talk?

*Du B.* I mean that we must pack and be off.

*Al.* Ah! I shall certainly break your head, you rascal, if you don't explain yourself differently.

*Du B.* Sir, a man whose face and dress were equally black actually came into the kitchen to leave a paper, scribbled about in such a way that it would take more than the devil to read it. I make no doubt but it concerns your lawsuit, though Old Nick himself could not make anything of it.

*Al.* Well, well, but what has this paper to do with our going away, you vagabond, that you spoke of just now?

*Du B.* Why, sir, I want to tell you that about an hour afterwards a man, who often comes to see you, came to look for you very anxiously, and not finding you, begged me very quietly, knowing that I serve you zealously, to tell you——Stay, what is his name?

*Al.* Never mind his name, you rascal, and tell me what he said.

*Du B.* He's one of your friends, and that is enough. He told me it's at your peril if you stay here, and that fortune threatens you with being arrested.

*Al.* But how? Would he not specify anything to you?

*Du B.* No; he asked for pen, ink, and paper, and wrote a word or two, by which I believe you may get to the bottom of this mystery.

*Al.* Give it me, then.

*Célimène.* What can there be in all this?

*Al.* I don't know; but I want to get to the bottom of it. Will you have done soon, you impertinent devil?

*Du B.* (*after having looked for it a long while*). Indeed, sir, I left it on your table.

*Al.* I don't know what hinders me——

*Cél.* Now, don't enrage yourself, but go and get to the bottom of this perplexing business.

*Al.* It seems to me that fortune, take what care I can, has sworn to stop me from conversing with you; but to triumph over

it, allow my love, madame, to see you again before the day is over.

## ACT V. SCENE I.

ALCESTE, PHILINTE.

*Alceste.* My resolution is taken, I tell you.

*Philinte.* But whatever this blow may be, must it needs oblige you——

*Al.* No, you talk and argue in vain; nothing can divert me from what I say. Too much perverseness prevails in our age, and I am resolved to withdraw myself from human intercourse. What! honour, uprightness, honesty, modesty, and law are all united against my adversary. Everywhere people speak of the justice of my cause. My mind rests on the certainty of my cause, and yet I am deceived in the result; I have justice on my side, and I lose my cause. A scoundrel whose scandalous history is well known, comes off triumphant by most shameless falsehood. All honesty yields to his perfidy. He finds a way to justify himself while cutting my throat. The weight of false show, in which artifice is pre-eminent, overthrows all right and perverts justice. He gets a decree of the Court to crown his villainy, and not content with the injury done to me, there is published an abominable book, the mere reading of which is criminal, a book that deserves the utmost severity, of which the knave has the impudence to make me the author. And even Oronte is heard to mutter about it, wickedly endeavouring to support the imposture. He, who has the credit at court of of being an honourable man, to whom I have done nothing that is not sincere and frank, who comes to me, without my asking him, with eagerness begging my opinion of some verses he had made, and because I treat him honourably, and would betray neither him nor the truth, he is helping to overwhelm me with an imaginary crime! Now he is become my greatest adversary! And I can never get his sincere pardon, because I did not think his sonnet a good one. And mankind are made after this fashion! These are the actions to which the desire of glory carries them! This is the fidelity, the virtuous zeal, the justice and honour one finds among them! Let us go; it is too much to bear the vexations they are devising against us. Let us escape from this cut-throat wood; and since among men you live like

wolves, traitors that you are, I will never again live among you.

*Phi.* I think your design a little too hasty, and the whole mischief is not so great as you make out. What your opponent had the assurance to charge against you has not been sufficiently credited to get you arrested. His false report is destroying itself, and his actions will very probably injure him.

*Al.* Him! He does not fear the exposure of such tricks; he has license to be an arrant rascal, and far from this incident damaging his credit, you'll see him to-morrow still more flourishing.

*Phi.* In short, it is certain that people have not given much credit to the report his malice has spread against you. On this side you have nothing to fear; and as for your lawsuit, about which you have reason to complain, it is easy for you to try it afresh, and to lodge an appeal against the sentence.

*Al.* No, I'll abide by it. However serious a wrong such a sentence does me, I'll take good care not to desire its reversal; one can see plainly by this how right is abused, and I would have it handed down to posterity as a notorious mark and witness of the wickedness of this age. It may indeed cost me some twenty thousand livres, but for that sum I shall have the right to curse the iniquity of human nature, and to nourish an everlasting hatred of it.

*Phi.* But, in short——

*Al.* But, in short, your pains are thrown away. What can you say, sir, on this head? Can you possibly have the assurance to excuse to my face the abominable things that go on now?

*Phi.* No, I agree to all you please. Everything goes by intrigue and by interest. Nowadays cunning carries all before it. Men ought to be made quite otherwise. But is their want of justice a reason why we should think of withdrawing from their society? All these human defects give us in life the opportunity of exercising our philosophy. It is the best employment that virtue can find. If everything were clothed with integrity, and all hearts were frank, just, and docile, most of our virtue would be useless, since we can only use them in bearing the injustice of others in respect to our rights. And in the same way a heart of true virtue ——

*Al.* I know, sir, that you speak excellently. You always abound in good reasoning, but you are wasting your time and all your fine speeches. Reason advises me to retire for my own good. I have not sufficient command over my tongue to answer for what I might say, and I should involve myself in a thousand

broils. Permit me, then, without any more words, to wait for Célimène. I must have her consent to the plan which I have formed. I shall see whether she really loves me, and this very moment must convince me of it.

*Phi.* Let us go up to Éliante, and wait her coming.

*Al.* No, my mind is too much agitated with anxieties. Do you go and see her, and leave me in this corner with my gloomy melancholy.

*Phi.* It is a strange sort of company to wait with. I'll go and get Éliante to come down.

## SCENE II.

ORONTE, CÉLIMÈNE, ALCESTE (*hiding in a corner*).

*Oronte.* Yes, madame, it is for you to consider whether by ties so dear you will bind me to you for ever. I need an absolute assurance of your affections. A lover does not like hesitation on such a point. If the warmth of my devotion has really moved you, you should not scruple to show it to me; and, after all, the proof I ask of you is no more than not to admit Alceste's addresses. Sacrifice him, madame, to my love, and, in short, from this day forbid him your house.

*Célimène.* But what important reason provokes you against him—you whom I have so often heard speak of his merit?

*Or.* There is no need, madame, of these explanations. The question is to know your sentiments. Choose, if you please, to keep one or the other; my resolution only waits on yours.

*Alceste* (*stepping out of his corner*). Yes, this gentleman is right. You must make your choice, madame; his demand agrees with my desire. An equal impatience urges me, and the same anxiety brings me. My love desires a sure token of yours. Matters can be protracted no longer; this is the moment to show your heart.

*Or.* I do not desire, sir, by any importunate declaration, to disturb your good fortune in any way.

*Al.* Jealous or not jealous, sir, I cannot consent to share her heart in any degree with you.

*Or.* If your love seems to her preferable to mine——

*Al.* If she is capable of the least inclination towards you——

*Or.* I swear henceforward to make no pretensions to her.

*Al.* I resolutely swear never to set eyes on her more.

*Or.* Madame, it is for you to speak without restraint.

*Al.* Madame, you may explain yourself without fear.

*Or.* You have nothing to do, but to tell us where your inclinations are fixed.

*Al.* You have only to cut the matter short, and choose which of us you will.

*Or.* What! have you any difficulty in making your choice?

*Al.* What! do you hesitate, and appear uncertain?

*Cél.* Good gracious! how unseasonable is this importunity, and how unreasonable you both show yourselves! I can easily determine my preference, and it is not my heart here that wavers; it is not in suspense between you, nor is anything sooner done than making my choice. But to speak the truth, I am greatly troubled at having to make a declaration of this kind to your faces. I think these disobliging speeches should never be spoken in the presence of people; that a heart may give sufficient light as to its inclinations without being obliged to proceed abruptly to a quarrel; and that it is sufficient, in short, that gentler evidence should inform a lover of the ill success of his courtship.

*Or.* No, no; I have nothing to fear from a frank confession. I consent to it for my part.

*Al.* And I demand it. It is an open declaration here that I require above all things, and I do not wish you to consider anything. Your great study is to keep every one—but no more trifling, no more uncertainty. You must express yourself clearly on this matter, otherwise I shall take your refusal for a decision. I shall know, for my part, how to interpret this silence, and reckon as said the worst I can think.

*Or.* I am obliged to you, sir, for this warmth, and I say the same thing to her that you do.

*Cél.* How you worry me with this whim! Is there any justice in what you demand? And have I not told you what restrains me? I'll be judged by Éliante, who comes here.

## SCENE III.

PHILINTE, CÉLIMÈNE, ORONTE, ALCESTE.

*Célimène.* Here am I persecuted, cousin, by people whose temper seems to me to be preconcerted. They both, with the same warmth, will needs have me declare which of them my

heart makes choice of; and require that by a decision which I must pronounce to their faces I should forbid one of the two ever to pay his addresses to me again. Tell me if that is ever done.

*Éliante.* Don't address me on the subject; you may perhaps address yourself to a very wrong person. I hold with people who speak their mind.

*Oronte.* It is in vain, madame, for you to excuse yourself.

*Alceste.* All your evasions will be ill-supported.

*Or.* You must, you really must speak, and put an end to this wavering.

*Al.* It will be enough if you continue silent.

*Or.* I only want one word to finish our discussion.

*Al.* And for my part, I understand you if you don't speak at all.

## SCENE IV.

ACASTE, CLITANDRE, ARSINOÉ, PHILINTE, ÉLIANTE, ORONTE, CÉLIMÈNE, ALCESTE.

*Acaste* (*to Célimène*). We have come, both of us, madame, to clear up a certain trifling matter.

*Clitandre* (*to Oronte and Alceste*). You are here, gentlemen, very opportunely, since you are also concerned in this affair.

*Arsinoé* (*to Célimène*). You will be surprised, madame, to see me, but these gentlemen are the cause of my coming. They both came to me and complained of a trick which I can scarcely credit. I have too high an esteem for the uprightness of your mind ever to believe you capable of such a crime; my eyes contradicted their strongest proofs, and my friendship overlooking a few words which we had together, I was willing to come with them to your house, to see you clear yourself from this calumny.

*Acas.* Yes, madame, let us see with composure how you will manage to support this. Was this letter written by you to Clitandre?

*Cli.* Did you write this tender epistle to Acaste?

*Acas.* (*to Oronte and Alceste*). Gentlemen, there is nothing hidden or obscure in these observations. I have no doubt that her civility has made you well acquainted with her handwriting. But this is well worth reading (*reads*)—

*You are a strange man to condemn my gaiety, and to reproach me with the fact that I am never so happy as when I am away from you. This is most unjust; and if you do not come very soon to ask my pardon for this offence, I will never forgive you. Our lanky, gawky Viscount—*

He should have been here—

*Our lanky, gawky Viscount, with whom you begin your complaints, is a man who can never please me; and since I saw him throwing stones into a pond, for three quarters of an hour together, to make circles, I could never have a good opinion of him. As to the little Marquis—*

That's myself, gentlemen, without vanity—

*As to the little Marquis, who held me so long by the hand yesterday, I think there is nothing so trivial as his whole person; and his merits consist only in his cloak and his sword. As to the man with the green ribbons—*

Your turn now, sir (*to Alceste*)—

*As to the man with the green ribbons, he amuses me sometimes with his rough ways and his surly peevishness; but there are frequent occasions when I think him the most amusing person in the world. And as to the sonnet-maker—*

This is for you (*to Oronte*)—

*And as to the sonnet-maker, who puts himself forward as a wit, and will be an author in spite of everybody, I cannot take the trouble to listen to what he says, and his prose wearies me as much as his verses. Believe, then, that I am not always amused so well as you imagine, and that I miss you in all the parties I am taken to, while the presence of people we love gives a wonderful relish to pleasures.*

*Clitandre*—Now for myself—

*Your Clitandre, of whom you talk to me, and who is such a fop, is the last man I should have a kindness for. He is infatuated in persuading himself that I care for him, and you are the same for believing I do not love you. If you wish to be in the right, change your ideas for his, and see me as often as you can, to help me to bear the trouble of being besieged by him.*

Here is the model of a very fine character, madame, and you know what to call it. It is enough. We are both going to show this glorious portrait of your heart everywhere.

*Acas.* I could say a great deal to you, and it is a fine subject, but I don't hold you worthy of my anger; and I will let you see that your little marquises can give consolation to worthier hearts.

*Oronte.* What! am I thus torn to pieces after all you have

written to me? And does your heart, decked with all the fair appearance of love, engage itself by turns to all the world? Away with you! I have been too much of a dupe, and will be so no longer. You have done me a favour in letting me know what you really are. I am richer by a heart which you thus restore to me, and I have my revenge in what you lose. (*To Alceste.*) Sir, I do not put any further obstacle in your way, and you may settle your love affair with the lady.

*Ar.* This is certainly the blackest action in the world. I can no longer be silent; I am shocked at it. Were there ever any proceedings like yours, madame? I am not concerned about the rest, but here is a gentleman (*pointing to Alceste*) who staked his whole happiness on you—a man of merit and honour, who doted on you to idolatry, should he——

*Al.* Pray, madame, leave me to look after my own interests in this matter, and do not burden yourself with superfluous cares. In vain do I see you take up my quarrel. It is not in a condition to requite you for so much zeal, and you are not the person I should think of, if I sought to revenge myself by another choice.

*Ar.* What, sir, do you fancy I have any such notion, and that I should be in such a violent hurry to have you? You must have a great deal of vanity, I think, in your composition, if you can flatter yourself with such a belief. This lady's leavings is a kind of ware one would be very wrong to be greatly smitten with. Pray undeceive yourself, and be less haughty. Persons like myself are not for you. You will do well still to sigh for her, and I long to see so fine a match. [*Exit.*

*Al.* (*to Célimène*). Ah, well, in spite of all I have seen, till now I have said nothing, and have let every one speak before me. Have I commanded myself long enough, and may I now——

*Cél.* Yes, you may say everything. You are right when you complain, and reproach me as you please. I'm to blame, I confess, and my confused mind does not seek to put you off with any idle excuse. I despised the anger of the rest here, but I own my fault towards you; your resentment is just. I know how guilty I must appear to you, that everything declares my unfaithfulness, and that, in short, you have reason to hate me. Do so, I agree to it.

*Al.* But can I do so, traitress—can I thus get the better of all my fondness? And though I should ardently wish to hate you, shall I find my heart ready to obey me? (*To Éliante and Philinte.*) You see what an unworthy fondness can do, and I make you both witnesses of my weakness. But to tell you the truth,

this is not all yet, and you will see me push this to the extreme in order to show you that we are wrongly called wise, and that in every heart there is still something of the man. (*To Célimène.*) Yes, perfidious creature, I am willing to forget the wrong you have done me, and excuse it all under the name of weakness, into which the viciousness of the age has betrayed your youth, provided your heart will second a design I have formed to flee from all mankind, and that you will at once follow me into the desert, where I have made a vow to live. It is by this means alone that in every one's opinion you can repair the mischief of your letters; and that after such an exposure, which any honourable mind must revolt at, I may be permitted still to love you.

*Cél.* What, renounce the world before I grow old, and go and bury myself in your desert?

*Al.* And if your love answers to mine, what does the rest of the world matter to you? Are not your desires satisfied with me?

*Cél.* Solitude frightens any one at twenty. I do not feel my soul great enough, or strong enough, to resolve on undertaking so serious an affair. If this gift of my hand can satisfy your wishes, I will not refuse to go to the altar with you, and Hymen——

*Al.* No; my heart detests you now, and this refusal does more than all the rest, since you are not willing in these pleasing bonds to find your all in me as I do in you. Go, I discard you, and this deeply-felt outrage frees me for ever from your unworthy chains. [*Exit Célimène.*

*Al.* (*to Éliante*). A thousand virtues, madame, adorn your beauty, and I have seen nothing in you but sincerity. For a long time I have had the greatest regard for you; pray allow me to continue always to esteem you in the same way. Permit my heart in its variety of troubles to do itself the honour of wearing your chains. I am well aware that I am unworthy of them, and heaven has not marked me out for marriage. The refuse of a heart not worthy of you would be too low a homage; and in short——

*Él.* You may carry out your thought. My hand is quite free to bestow itself where it will. And without troubling myself too much, here is your friend, who might possibly accept it if I should ask it of him.

*Phil.* Ah! madame, that honour is my utmost ambition, and I would sacrifice my life for it.

*Al.* May you know what true contentment means by keeping for ever the same sentiments one for the other! Betrayed on all

sides, overwhelmed with injustice, I am going to escape from a gulf where vice reigns triumphant, and to find out some retired corner of the earth where one can be free to live as an honourable man.

*Phil.* Come then, madame, let us exhaust every means to deter him from this purpose.

# TARTUFFE.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MADAME PERNELLE, *Orgon's mother.*
ORGON, *husband of Elmire.*
ELMIRE, *Orgon's wife.*
DAMIS, *Orgon's son.*
MARIANE, *Orgon's daughter.*
VALÈRE, *Mariane's lover.*
TARTUFFE.
CLÉANTE, *Orgon's brother-in-law.*
DORINE, *Mariane's maid.*
MONS. LOYAL, *sergeant.*
A POLICE-OFFICER.
FLIPOTE, *Mdme. Pernelle's maid.*

SCENE—PARIS, IN ORGON'S HOUSE.

### ACT I. SCENE I.

MADAME PERNELLE *and* FLIPOTE, ELMIRE, MARIANE, DORINE, DAMIS, CLÉANTE.

*Madame Pernelle.* Come, Flipote, let's begone, that I may get rid of them.

*Elmire.* You walk so fast, madame, it is not easy to keep up with you.

*Mdme. Per.* Stop, daughter-in-law: don't trouble to come farther; there is no need of all this ceremony.

*El.* We are only doing our duty to you. But pray, mother, why are you in such a hurry to leave us?

*Mdme. Per.* Because I cannot bear to see such goings on. No one takes any pains to please me. I leave your house, I tell you, very much shocked: all my teaching is contradicted. You have no regard for anything; every one talks at the top of his voice, and the place is a perfect Bedlam.

*Dorine.* If——

*Mdme. Per.* You are rather too talkative and impertinent a serving-girl, and venture to give your advice on all occasions.

*Damis.* But——

*Mdme. Per.* In four letters, my child, you're a fool! I, your grandmother, tell you so, just as I predicted to my son, your

father, a hundred times, that you would turn out a regular vagabond, and would be nothing but a plague to him.

*Mariane.* I believe——

*Mdme. Per.* Good gracious, you're Damis's sister! You play the prude; you pretend to be very good, and look as if butter would not melt in your mouth; but still waters, they say, run deep, and under your sly airs you carry on a game which I don't approve of.

*El.* But, mother——

*Mdme. Per.* By your leave, daughter-in-law, your conduct is not at all satisfactory. You ought to set them a good example. Their late mother managed so much better. You spend a deal of money, and what I can't away with, dress like a princess. Remember, daughter, that she who wishes to please her husband only, wants none of that finery.

*Cléante.* But, madame, after all——

*Mdme. Per.* As for you, sir, who are her brother, I esteem you very much. I love and respect you; but yet, if I were in my son's place, I should beg you not to enter my house. You are always laying down rules of life that respectable people should never follow. I speak rather freely to you, but it is my way. I always blurt straight out what I have on my mind.

*Dam.* Your Master Tartuffe, no doubt, is very fortunate——

*Mdme. Per.* He's an excellent man. What he says is worth listening to, and I can't bear, without being angry, to hear him run down by such a fool as you.

*Dam.* What! Should I suffer a bigoted fault-finder like that to come and exercise a tyrannical authority in the family? And must not we take the least diversion, unless that fine gentleman sees fit to allow it?

*Dor.* If we must listen to him, and be guided by his maxims, we can do nothing that would not lead us into sin, for this bigoted critic rules the whole roast.

*Mdme. Per.* And what he rules, is very well ruled. He would show you the way to heaven, and my son ought to make you all love him.

*Dam.* Now look you, grandmother, neither father nor any one else can oblige me to have any regard for him. I should be a traitor to my heart if I told you otherwise. To me all his actions are detestable; and I foresee that some time or other matters will come to a breach between that low-bred wretch and me.

*Dor.* It is perfectly scandalous to see an upstart like him carry on as he does; a vagabond, who when he came here had not a

pair of shoes to his feet, and whose clothes, all the lot, would not fetch sixpence, now carries on so far as to forget himself, to contradict everything and to play the master.

*Mdme. Per.* Bless my life, everything would go on very differently if managed by his pious directions.

*Dor.* You take him for a saint; but, on my word, all he does is nothing but hypocrisy.

*Mdme. Per.* Only listen to her tongue.

*Dor.* I would not trust him without good security; nor his man Laurent.

*Mdme. Per.* I cannot tell what the servant may really be, but I can answer for the master that he is a good man; you wish him ill and reject him because he tells you all the plain truth. His anger is aroused against sin, and all that he cares for is the interest of heaven.

*Dor.* Well, but why, then, especially for some time past, cannot he endure that any one should visit us? How can a civil visit offend heaven, so much so that we must have such an uproar about it as to stun one? Shall I tell you in confidence what I think? (*Pointing to Elmire.*) I believe, truly, that he's jealous of madame.

*Mdme. Per.* Hold your tongue, and consider what you are talking about. He is not the only person who condemns these visits. The noise of people coming to see you, the carriages constantly standing at the door, and the noisy assembling of such a quantity of footmen, disturbs the whole neighbourhood. I am willing to believe that there's no harm done; but people talk, and that is not desirable.

*Clé.* Ah, madame, how can you hinder people from gossiping? It would be a grievous thing in life, if, because of any foolish stories that might be spread about, people should be forced to give up their best friends; and even if we could resolve to do so, do you think that would keep the world from talking? There is no defence against calumny. So let us not mind foolish tittle-tattle, and let us endeavour to live innocently, and leave the gossips to say what they please.

*Dor.* Is it not our neighbour Daphne and her little husband who speak ill of us? People whose conduct is the most ridiculous, are always the readiest to run down that of others. They are always ready to catch at the slightest appearance of an attachment, to spread the news with the greatest delight, and to give things the turn they would have believed. By colouring other people's actions with their own colours they think to justify

their conduct to the world, and fondly hope by reason of some resemblance to give their own intrigues the air of innocence, or to shift part of the blame elsewhere which they find falls too heavy on themselves.

*Mdme. Per.* All these arguments are nothing to the purpose. Orante is known to lead an exemplary life; all her care is for the next world, and I have been told that she has no great opinion of the people that frequent your house.

*Dor.* An admirable pattern, indeed. She is an excellent lady, and it is true that she lives a very strict life; but it is age that has brought this access of zeal upon her, and we know that she is a prude in spite of herself. As long as she could make conquests, she did not forego any of her chances, but when she found the brightness of her eyes grow dim, then she must needs renounce the world that was leaving her, and under the specious mask of great prudence conceals the decay of her worn-out charms. This is the old coquette's last resource. It is hard to see themselves forsaken by all their lovers. Being deserted, they find no refuge but in prudery, and then the severity of these good ladies censures all and forgives none. They cry out against everyone's way of living, not from charity, but from envy, not enduring that others should taste those pleasures from which age has weaned themselves.

*Mdme. Per.* (*to Elmire*). This is the idle talk that pleases you. Why, daughter-in-law, there's no chance to say a word in your house, for my lady here keeps all the talk to herself. But I will have a word in my turn, and I tell you that my son never acted more wisely than when he took this devout man into his family: that heaven sent him here on a special mission to reclaim your erring minds; that it is for your good to hearken to his advice, and that he blames nothing that is not blamable. These visits, balls, and assemblies are all inventions of the Evil Spirit. There's not a good word to be heard at any of them, only idle talk, songs and rubbish. Scandal about one's neighbours is a standing dish, and the heads of reasonable people are turned by such meetings. A thousand ill-natured tales are started about less than nothing, and as a doctor said the other day, it is a perfect Tower of Babel, for every one here babbles beyond all belief, and beyond all measure. Now to tell you how it was the affair was brought up——(*Pointing to Cléante.*) Why that man's tittering already. Go and find some other donkey to laugh at. (*To Elmire.*) There, there, daughter-in-law, I shall say no more. Good-bye. I've not half the regard for your house which I had, and you may depend upon it, it will be

a very fine day when I put my foot in it again. (*Giving Flipote a box on the ears.*) Now, then, are you dreaming and gaping at the crows? I'll warm your ears for you, you idle hussy; let's move on.

## SCENE II.

CLÉANTE, DORINE.

*Cléante.* I won't go down to the door, for fear she should quarrel with me again. That this good old lady——

*Dorine.* It really is a pity she doesn't hear you call her so. She'd tell you how good she thought you, and that she was not old enough to be called so.

*Clé.* What a fuss she's been making with us for nothing. And how infatuated she seems with Tartuffe?

*Dor.* Oh, that's nothing compared to the infatuation of her son, and if you were to see him you would say, This is much worse. His conduct during the late troublous times gained him great reputation, and he showed much courage in the cause of the Prince, but he's grown quite stupid since he's so taken up with Tartuffe. He calls him brother, and really loves him better than he does his mother, wife, or children. He's the only confidant of all his secrets, and the director of all his actions. He embraces him, he pays him every attention a lover could to his mistress. He seats him by his side at dinner, and likes to see him eat as much as six. He must be helped to all the tit-bits, and if he only sneezes he cries, God bless you! In short, he's wild about him: he's everything to him, his hero; he admires all he does, quotes him on all occasions, looks on every trifling action as a wonder, and every word as an oracle. At the same time the fellow, knowing his dupe's blind side, and wishing to make the most of it, has a hundred tricks by which to impose on his judgment, and get his money from him by his sanctimoniousness. He now takes on him to keep the whole family in order, and even his awkward fool of a servant, with his fanatic face, lectures us, and runs down our patches, paint, and ribands. The other day the rascal tore up a fine handkerchief that was lying in a prayer-book, saying that it was a profanation to mix the devil's ornaments with sacred things.

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## SCENE III.

ELMIRE, MARIANE, DAMIS, CLÉANTE, DORINE.

*Elmire* (*to Cléante*). You are very fortunate not to have had to

listen to her harangue at the door. But I saw my husband; as he did not see me, I am going to await him upstairs.

*Cléante.* I will wait for him here, to lose less time. I am only going to wish him good-day.

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### SCENE IV.

CLÉANTE, DAMIS, DORINE.

*Damis* (*to Cléante*). Say something to him about my sister's marriage. I suspect that Tartuffe fears its result, since he is compelling my father to such shifts. You know the interest I take in it; I am inspired by the same devotion as my sister and Valère, for I am in love with his sister; and if it were necessary——

### SCENE V.

ORGON, CLÉANTE, DORINE.

*Orgon.* Ah, brother, good-day!

*Cléante.* I was just going, and am glad to see you back. The country just now is not very pleasant.

*Or.* Dorine——(*To Cléante.*) Brother, wait a moment while I ask for news of the family, to set me at ease. (*To Dorine.*) Has all gone on well since I've been away? Has anything happened during these two days? How are they all?

*Dorine.* The day before yesterday my lady was feverish and had a very bad headache.

*Or.* And Tartuffe?

*Dor.* Oh, Tartuffe? Extremely well, fat, fair, and fresh-coloured.

*Or.* The poor man!

*Dor.* At night she had no appetite, and could not eat any supper, her headache was so violent.

*Or.* And Tartuffe?

*Dor.* He supped by himself in her presence, and ate up a brace of partridges, and half a leg of mutton hashed.

*Or.* The poor man!

*Dor.* She never closed her eyes the whole night—the fever was so strong that she could not get a wink of sleep, so that we were forced to sit up with her till daybreak.

*Or.* And Tartuffe?

*Dor.* Feeling sleepy, he went from supper to his room, then into a warm bed, and slept comfortably till the morning.

*Or.* The poor man!

*Dor.* At length my lady was prevailed on by our reasonings to be bled; then she soon got better.

*Or.* And Tartuffe?

*Dor.* He kept up his courage, and then fortifying his mind against all evils, to make up for the blood my lady lost, he drank at breakfast four great goblets of wine.

*Or.* The poor man!

*Dor.* At present they are both pretty well. I will go and let my lady know how glad you are at her recovery.

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## SCENE VI.

ORGON, CLÉANTE.

*Cléante.* She laughs in your face, brother, and without wishing to make you angry I must say she is quite right. Was there ever such a whim heard of? Is it possible that at this time of day a man can be so charming as to make you forget everything for him? That after having in your own house relieved his poverty, you should be ready to——

*Orgon.* Stop there, brother; you don't know the man you're speaking of.

*Clé.* Well, then, I don't know him, if you like; but then, in order to know what this man is——

*Or.* Brother, you would be charmed if you knew him, and there would be no end to your raptures. He is a man—that—ah—a person—a man, in short, who always carries out what he teaches, tastes profound peace, and looks on the world as trash. I am quite changed by my intercourse with him. He teaches me not to set my affection on anything; he disengages my mind from all friends and relations, and I could see my brother, children, mother, wife, all die without showing any emotion.

*Clé.* Well, brother, these are humane sentiments indeed!

*Or.* Ah, brother, if you had seen him as I first met with him, you would have been as much taken with him as I am. He came every day to church, with a quiet look, and knelt down just opposite me. He attracted the attention of the whole congregation by the fervency with which he offered up his prayers, and when I went out, hurried in front of me to the door to sprinkle me with holy water. He sighed and groaned heavily, and prostrated himself every moment. Understanding by his servant (who copied him in everything) that he was poorly off, I made him presents, but he would modestly offer to return part. "It is too much," he would say, "too much by half. I am not worth your

pity;" and when I refused to take it back, he would go and distribute it among the poor before my face. At length heaven put it into my mind to take him home, and since then everything seems to prosper there. I see that he reproves all without distinction, even my wife, and takes the greatest care of my honour. He tells me if any one ogles her, and is ten times more jealous over her than I am myself. But you can hardly imagine how good he is—he counts every trifle as a sin, and is scandalised at the smallest thing: so much so, that he told me the other day that, having caught a flea when he was saying his prayers, he was afraid he had killed it with too much anger.

*Clé.* Why, brother, I think you must be mad; or do you want to make a fool of me with such nonsense? What do you mean by all this rubbish?

*Or.* Brother, your conversation savours of libertinism. I am afraid you are somewhat tainted with it, and as I have told you more than once, you will some day draw down a heavy judgment on your head.

*Clé.* This is the usual style of such as you. They would have every one as blind as themselves; to be clear-sighted is libertinism, and those who do not like foolish grimaces, have neither faith nor respect for holy things. All your talk does not frighten me. I know how I speak, and heaven sees my heart. We are not to be slaves to your formalists. There are hypocrites in religion as well as pretenders to courage; and as we never find the truly brave to be such as make much noise wherever they are led by honour, so the good and truly pious, who are worthy of our imitation, are never those who indulge in much show. What, would you make no distinction between hypocrisy and true devotion? Would you address them in the same way, and pay as much regard to a mask as to a face? Would you put artifice on a level with sincerity, and confound the semblance with the reality? Do you value the phantom as much as the person, and bad money as much as good? Men for the most part are strange creatures; they never see nature in its true light; the bounds of reason are too narrow for them. In every character they over-act their parts, and often spoil the noblest things; because they will run into extremes, and push matters too far. This, brother, is by the way.

*Or.* Yes, no doubt you are a very reverend doctor. All the knowledge of the world lies under your cap. You are the only wise and enlightened person of our age: an oracle, a Cato, and all men compared with you are fools!

*Clé.* No, brother, I am none of your reverend doctors, and I

don't profess to have all the knowledge in the world; but I must tell you plainly I have sense enough to distinguish truth from falsehood; and as I see nothing in life more noble or beautiful than the fervour of sincere piety, so I think nothing more odious than the plastered exterior of a false zeal; than those thorough humbugs, those show-off devotees, whose sacrilege and deceitful pretences, with impunity abuse and make sport of what is most venerable and sacred amongst men. These slaves of interest, who make a trade of godliness, and who would purchase honour and reputation by a hypocritical turning up of the eyes, and affected transports, these people, I say, show an uncommon zeal for the next world in order to make their fortunes in this. They recommend every day, with most earnest prayers, that people should live in solitude, while they themselves frequent courts; they know how to make their vices suit their devotion; they are passionate, revengeful, faithless, full of artifice, and to bring about a man's ruin insolently cloak their fierce resentment with the mantle of heaven; being so much the more dangerous in their wrath, as they point against us weapons which men reverence, and because their passions willingly prompt them to destroy us with a consecrated blade. There are too many of this vile character, but the sincerely devout are easily known; and our age, brother, affords us some who may serve as noble examples to us. Look at Aristo, Oronte, Alcidamas, Polidore, Clitandre; no one can contest their title to this honour. These are no braggarts in virtue. We see in them none of this insupportable haughtiness, and their devotion is kindly and large-hearted. They do not censure all we do, but leave corrections of that sort to others, finding therein a subtle kind of pride, and by their own actions they reprove ours. The mere appearance of evil has little weight with them, and they are always willing to judge favourably of others. They have no cabals, and no intrigues to carry on; their chief aim is to live themselves as they should do. They never show fury against a sinner; their anger is reserved for the sin. Nor do they ever show a greater zeal in the interests of heaven than heaven itself does. These are the men for me; this is the true practice, and an example to be followed. To speak plainly, your man is not one of this sort; you cry up his zeal with a good intention, but I believe you are imposed on by a specious appearance.

*Or.* Now, my good brother, have you done?

*Clé.* Yes.

*Or.* (*on the point of going*). Then I am your humble servant.

*Clé.* One word more, brother, if you please. Let us drop this

conversation. You know that you gave your word to Valère that he should be your son-in-law.

*Or.* Yes.

*Clé.* And have appointed a day for the wedding?

*Or.* True.

*Clé.* Why, then, do you put off the ceremony?

*Or.* I don't know.

*Clé.* Have you got some other idea in your head?

*Or.* Perhaps so.

*Clé.* Will you break your word, then?

*Or.* I don't say that.

*Clé.* I hope no obstacle will prevent you from carrying out your promise.

*Or.* That's as may be.

*Clé.* Does the speaking of a single word require so much circumlocution? Valère wished me to see you about it.

*Or.* Heaven be thanked!

*Clé.* But what answer shall I give him?

*Or.* What you please.

*Clé.* But I must know your intentions. What are they?

*Or.* To do what heaven wills.

*Clé.* But let us come to the point. Valère has your promise. Do you mean to keep it or not?

*Or.* Good-bye.

*Clé.* I hope he may not lose his lady-love. I must go and tell him what has taken place.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

ORGON, MARIANE.

*Orgon.* Mariane.

*Mariane.* Yes, father.

*Or.* Come here. I have something to say to you privately (*looking into a closet*).

*Mar.* What are you looking for?

*Or.* I'm looking to see if there's any one there to overhear us. This little place would serve that purpose. But we're quite safe. I've always found you, Mariane, of a very amiable disposition, and you have always been very dear to me.

*Mar.* I am very grateful for your fatherly affection.

*Or.* That is very well said, my child, and to deserve it your chief care should be to please me.

*Mar.* That is the height of my ambition.

*Or.* Very well. Now what do you say of our guest, Tartuffe?

*Mar.* What, I?

*Or.* Yes, and take care how you answer.

(DORINE *enters quietly behind Orgon without being seen.*)

*Mar.* Oh, sir, I will say of him whatever you wish me.

*Or.* A very proper answer. You may say then, my girl, that in every respect he is a most deserving person; that you have a regard for him, and that you would be pleased if, by my choice, he became your husband.

*Mar.* (*in surprise*). What?

*Or.* What's the matter?

*Mar.* What did you say?

*Or.* What did I say?

*Mar.* Yes. Did I mistake you?

*Or.* How?

*Mar.* Whom would you, father, have me say I liked and should be glad if you would choose him for my husband?

*Or.* Tartuffe.

*Mar.* I declare to you, father, there's nothing in it. Why would you make me tell such a story?

*Or.* But I mean it to be true: and it's enough for you that I've chosen him for you.

*Mar.* What, father, would you——

*Or.* Yes, child; I intend by your marriage to bring Tartuffe into our family. I've made up my mind that he shall be your husband, and I charge you on your duty——(*Perceives Dorine.*) What are you doing here? Your curiosity must be very great to bring you to listen in this manner.

*Dorine.* Really, sir, I don't know whether this report is a mere idle rumour, or a guess of somebody's, but I've just been told of this match, and I've treated it as a good joke.

*Or.* Why, is the thing so incredible?

*Dor.* So incredible, that if you were to tell it me yourself I should hardly believe you.

*Or.* I know how to make you believe it.

*Dor.* Ay, ay, you're going to tell some droll tale.

*Or.* I tell you just what will happen in a short time.

*Dor.* Idle talk!

*Or.* I promise you, daughter, that this is no joke.

*Dor.* Go along. Don't believe your father, miss, he's only jesting.

*Or.* I tell you——

*Dor.* No, do what you like, no one will believe you.

*Or.* At last my anger——

*Dor.* Well then, sir, we'll believe you, and so much the worse for you. What, sir, is it possible that, with that air of wisdom and that large beard on your face, you should be foolish enough to wish——

*Or.* Listen to me. You've taken certain liberties lately that I do not approve of. So I tell you, young woman.

*Dor.* Pray, sir, let us speak about this matter quietly. You must be laughing at people, to have made such a scheme. Your daughter is not the sort to marry a bigot. He has other things to think of. And what induces you to make such a match? Why, with all your wealth, do you choose a beggar for a son-in-law?

*Or.* Hold your tongue. If he has nothing, know that we ought to esteem him all the more for it. His poverty is an honourable poverty, which raises him above noblemen, because, in short, he has lost his fortune by neglecting things temporal, in his strong attachment to things eternal. But my aid may put him in the way of getting out of trouble, and of recovering his own. Poor as he is, he's a gentleman; and the estate that he's entitled to is one of renown.

*Dor.* That's what he says; and this vanity does not suit very well with piety. Any one who embraces the simplicity of a holy life, ought not to boast too much of his name and family. The humble life of devotion agrees badly with the glare of ambition. What good purpose does this pride serve?—But this talk offends you—let us leave his quality and come to his person. Can you, without discomfort, hand over such a girl to such a man? Should you not consult propriety and foresee the consequences of such a union? Depend upon it, a young woman's virtue is in some danger when she isn't married to her liking; and her living virtuously afterwards depends on the character of her husband. Those husbands who are pointed at often make their wives what they are. It is no easy task to be faithful to some sorts of husbands, and he who gives his daughter to a man she hates is accountable to heaven for any slips she may make. Consider, then, to what danger your scheme exposes you.

*Or.* I tell you, I must teach her how to live.

*Dor.* You will do better to follow my advice.

*Or.* Don't let us waste time, daughter, with idle tales. I am your father, and know what's to be done. I had indeed promised you to Valère, but besides that he is said to be given to play, I suspect him of being rather wild. I don't find him often at church.

*Dor.* Would you have him run to church at the very same time you do, as people do who only go there to be seen?

*Or.* I am not asking your opinion in the matter. In short, the other is a favourite with heaven, and so his wealth is second to none in this world. This union will crown your desires with every sort of good, and will be a continued succession of pleasure and delight. You will live together in faithful love, like two children, or two turtle-doves. No unhappy quarrel will ever arise between you, and you'll do anything you like with him.

*Dor.* She? She'll never make anything but a fool of him, I can tell you!

*Or.* Oh! what language!

*Dor.* I say that he has the look of it, and that his influence will overbear all the virtue your daughter may have.

*Or.* Stop these interruptions: learn to hold your tongue, and don't interfere where you're not wanted.

*Dor.* Nay, sir, I only speak for your interest. (*She interrupts him always at the moment he is going to speak to his daughter.*)

*Or.* You are too forward; hold your tongue, if you please.

*Dor.* If one did not care for you——

*Or.* Keep your care to yourself.

*Dor.* But I will care for you, sir, in spite of yourself.

*Or.* What next?

*Dor.* Your character is dear to me, and I would not have you scoffed at by every gossip.

*Or.* Won't you hold your tongue?

*Dor.* One's bound in conscience to prevent your making such an alliance as this.

*Or.* Will you be quiet, you serpent, whose impudence——

*Dor.* What! you a saint, and to put yourself into such a rage as that!

*Or.* Yes, my heart rises against all your impertinences, and I'm determined you shall hold your tongue.

*Dor.* Very well. But if I don't speak a word, I think all the more.

*Or.* Think what you like, but take care I hear none of your thoughts. (*Turning to his daughter.*) It is enough that I have carefully considered all things as a wise man should do.

*Dor.* It makes me mad that I cannot speak now (*she is silent when he turns towards her*).

*Or.* Without being a fop, Tartuffe is well made——

*Dor.* (*aside*). Oh, yes, he's got a fine phiz.

*Or.* So that, even though you have no care for his other gifts——

*Dor.* (*aside*). She'll have a fine bargain with him. (*Orgon turns towards Dorine, and looks at her with his arms crossed.*) If I were in her place, no man alive should marry me against my will with impunity. I'd let him see as soon as the ceremony was over that a woman always has a ready means of revenge.

*Or.* (*to Dorine*). Then what I say goes for nothing with you?

*Dor.* What are you finding fault about? I'm not speaking to you.

*Or.* What are you doing, then?

*Dor.* I'm talking to myself.

*Or.* (*aside*). Very well. I must let her feel the weight of my hand, to correct her prodigious insolence. (*He makes as if he would give her a box on the ear; looks at her every time he speaks to his daughter. Dorine, each time he turns, stands upright without speaking.*) Daughter, you must approve of my plan, and believe that the husband whom I have chosen for you—(*To Dorine*) Why don't you talk to yourself now?

*Dor.* Because I've nothing to say to myself.

*Or.* One little word more.

*Dor.* No. I've no mind to it.

*Or.* To be sure I was watching you.

*Dor.* Not such a fool, my word!

*Or.* In short, daughter, you must obey—and show an entire deference to my choice.

*Dor.* (*running off*). I'd scorn to take such a husband myself.

*Or.* (*strikes at her, but misses*). You have about you, daughter, a pestilent hussy, that I can't live in the house with any longer. I'm not in a state now to go on with what I was saying. Her insolence has put my spirits into such a ferment that I must go and take a walk to recover myself a little.

## SCENE II.

DORINE, MARIANE.

*Dorine.* Pray tell me, have you lost your tongue? Must I play your part on this occasion? What! suffer a senseless proposal to be made to you, without saying a word against it!

*Mariane.* What can one do against an absolute father?

*Dor.* Anything to ward off such a threat.

*Mar.* But what?

*Dor.* Why, tell him that hearts are not to be given away by proxy: that you marry for yourself, and not for him: that as all the affair concerns you, and not him, you are the person whom

the husband must please; and if he finds Tartuffe so charming, he had better marry him himself.

*Mar.* I must own that a father has such a command over one, that I could not have courage to make him such a reply.

*Dor.* But let us reason out the matter. Valère has made his advances for you. I beg you to tell me, do you love him or not?

*Mar.* Ah, you do injustice to my love to ask such a question. Ought you, Dorine, to put it to me? Have I not opened my heart to you a hundred times? and you are still unaware of the greatness of my love for him?

*Dor.* How can I tell whether your heart speaks in your words, or whether you really care for this lover or not?

*Mar.* You do me a great wrong, Dorine, to doubt it; and the sincerity of my sentiments has only been too plain.

*Dor.* You really do love him, then?

*Mar.* Yes, passionately.

*Dor.* And, to all appearance, he loves you as well.

*Mar.* I believe so.

*Dor.* And you two have a mutual eagerness to be married?

*Mar.* Assuredly.

*Dor.* What do you intend to do then about this other match?

*Mar.* To kill myself, if they force me to it.

*Dor.* Very good. That's a resource I did not think of. You have only to die to get out of the difficulty. No doubt this is a wonderful remedy. It makes one mad to hear people talk in this way!

*Mar.* Bless me, Dorine, what a temper you get into! You have no pity for other people's misfortunes.

*Dor.* I have no pity for people who talk idly, and give way as you do when you ought to act.

*Mar.* But what can one do who is timid?

*Dor.* But love requires firmness of mind.

*Mar.* But have I not kept my love for Valère? And is it not his business to get me from my father?

*Dor.* But if your father is a regular crusty fellow, who is completely bewitched by this Tartuffe, and fails to carry out a match which had been settled on, is that your lover's fault?

*Mar.* But should I, by a high-handed and contemptuous refusal, let every one know that I am violently in love? Shall I, for him, transgress the modesty of my sex, and the bounds of my duty? Would you have my love for him become a town's talk?

No, no, I would have nothing. I see you wish to

belong to Monsieur Tartuffe; and, now I think of it, I should do wrong to dissuade you from such an alliance. What reason have I for opposing your wishes? The match in itself is an excellent one. Monsieur Tartuffe! Oh, is such a proposal nothing? From a right point of view he's no fool. It will be no small honour to be united to him. Every one already honours him greatly; he is of a noble family, handsome in person, has a red ear, and a fine complexion; in short, you'll be only too happy to have such a husband.

*Mar.* Good heavens!

*Dor.* How delightful it will be to be the wife of such a man

*Mar.* Now I beg of you to leave off talking like this, and rather help me against this match; it is all over now. I give way, and am ready to do whatever you tell me.

*Dor.* No, no; a daughter ought to obey her father, even if he wanted her to marry a monkey. Besides, what cause have you for complaint? You have drawn a prize. You will go by coach to his native town, where you will find a tribe of uncles and cousins, and you will be very pleased to entertain them all. Then Madame Tartuffe will at once be introduced into the best society. You will first call upon the bailiff's wife, and the tax-gatherer's wife, and you will have the honour of a camp-stool. Then at carnival time you may hope for a ball, and a grand concert—that is to say, two bagpipes—not to mention Merry Andrew and the marionettes. If, however, your husband——

*Mar.* You'll be the death of me. Do try and help me by your advice.

*Dor.* Your most obedient servant.

*Mar.* Nay, Dorine, for pity's sake!

*Dor.* No, this match must come off, just to punish you.

*Mar.* My dear girl!

*Dor.* No.

*Mar.* If my declared wishes——

*Dor.* No, Tartuffe's your man, and you shall try him.

*Mar.* You know how much I always confided in you. Be so good——

*Dor.* No, in truth; you shall be Tartuffed.

*Mar.* Well, since my fate can't move you, henceforth leave me entirely to my despair. That shall lend my heart relief; and I know an infallible remedy for all my sufferings. (*Offers to go.*)

*Dor.* Here, here, come back; I'll be friends again. In spite of all, I must take pity on you.

*Mar.* I tell you, if they expose me to this cruel torment, I am sure I shall die of it.

*Dor.* Don't vex yourself; that can easily be prevented. But here comes your lover, Valère.

## SCENE III.

VALÈRE, MARIANE, DORINE.

*Valère.* Madame, I have been told some news which I was unaware of, and which seems very strange to me.

*Mariane.* What's that?

*Val.* That you are to be married to Tartuffe.

*Mar.* My father certainly has such a plan in his head.

*Val.* Your father, madame——

*Mar.* Has altered his mind, and has just now been making the proposal to me.

*Val.* What, seriously?

*Mar.* Yes, seriously. He has declared himself strongly in favour of the match.

*Val.* And pray, what may your determination be in the matter?

*Mar.* I don't know.

*Val.* That's a straightforward answer. You don't know?

*Mar.* No. *Val.* No?

*Mar.* What would you advise me to do?

*Val.* Oh, certainly to accept the offer.

*Mar.* Is that your advice? *Val.* Yes.

*Mar.* In good earnest?

*Val.* Undoubtedly. The choice is good, and well worth attending to.

*Mar.* Well, sir, I shall take your advice.

*Val.* I do not believe you will have much difficulty in following it.

*Mar.* Hardly more than you had in giving it.

*Val.* I gave it, madame, to oblige you.

*Mar.* And I shall follow it to please you.

*Dorine.* Let us see what this will come to.

*Val.* Is this your affection then? It was all deceit when you——

*Mar.* I beg you to say no more about that. You told me frankly that I ought to accept the offer made me. And I tell you I shall do so just because you advise me to it for the best.

*Val.* Don't excuse yourself by my intentions. Your resolu-

tion was taken before, and you now lay hold of a frivolous pretext for breaking your word.

*Mar.* Quite true; very well said.

*Val.* No doubt; and you never had any true love for me.

*Mar.* Ah, well! you may think so if you like.

*Val.* Yes, yes; I may think so. But my offended heart may, perchance, be beforehand with you in the affair, as I know where to offer both my hand and my affections.

*Mar.* I don't doubt it for a moment. The warmth that merit excites——

*Val.* Let us drop merit, if you please. Doubtless I have little of it, and you think so. But I hope that another will treat me in a kinder manner; and I know some one, whose heart, touched by my failure, will not be ashamed to repair my loss.

*Mar.* The loss is not great, and you will be easily consoled by the exchange.

*Val.* You may be sure that I shall do all that lies in my power. A heart that forgets us touches our honour. We must use all our efforts to forget it also; and if we do not succeed, at any rate we must seem to do so, for it is an unpardonable meanness to show an affection to those who forsake us.

*Mar.* The sentiment is doubtless noble and sublime.

*Val.* Very well; it is what every one must approve of. What! would you have me keep a burning affection for you everlastingly in my heart, and see you before my eyes pass into the arms of another, without transferring elsewhere the heart you care so little for?

*Mar.* So far from that, it is what I desire. I only wish it were done already.

*Val.* You wish it done?

*Mar.* Yes.

*Val.* You are insulting me sufficiently, madame; but you shall have the satisfaction you desire. (*He offers to go.*)

*Mar.* Very well.

*Val.* (*returning*). Anyhow, remember at least that it is you who have driven me to this extremity.

*Mar.* I shall not fail to do so.

*Val.* (*retiring again*). And that the plan I have formed is only formed from your example.

*Mar.* Very well, let it be from my example.

*Val.* (*going out*). Enough. You shall be obeyed to the letter.

*Mar.* So much the better.

*Val.* (*returning again*). This is the last time you will ever set eyes on me.

*Mar.* With all my heart.

*Val.* (*goes to the door and returns*). Eh?

*Mar.* What's the matter?

*Val.* Didn't you call me?

*Mar.* Who? I? You must be dreaming.

*Val.* Well, then, I'm off. Farewell, madame. (*He goes off slowly.*)

*Mar.* Farewell, sir.

*Dor.* For my part, I think from this folly that you've both lost your senses. I've let you go on quarrelling all this time to see what it would come to. Now listen to me, Monsieur Valère. (*She goes and takes him by the arm, and he makes a show of resistance.*)

*Val.* Eh! What do you want, Dorine?

*Dor.* Come here.

*Val.* No, no; my vexation overpowers me. Don't hinder me from doing what she wishes.

*Dor.* Stop.

*Val.* No. Do you see, I've made up my mind.

*Dor.* Ah!

*Mar.* (*aside*). He does not like to see me. My presence drives him away; so I had much better leave the place.

*Dor.* (*leaves Valère, and runs to Mariane*). The other one! Where are you going?

*Mar.* Leave me alone.

*Dor.* You must come back.

*Mar.* No, no, Dorine. It is of no use trying to keep me.

*Val.* (*aside*). I see that the sight of me vexes her. I had much better free her from it.

*Dor.* (*leaves Mariane, and runs to Valère*). What, again? Deuce take it! I'll have no more of this nonsense. Come here, both of you. (*Pulls them both forward.*)

*Val.* (*to Dorine*). What are you after?

*Mar.* (*to Dorine*): What do you want to do?

*Dor.* To bring you together again, and get you out of this scrape. (*To Valère.*) Are you mad, to quarrel like this?

*Val.* Didn't you hear what she said to me?

*Mar.* Hav'n't you seen it all, and how he treated me?

*Dor.* (*to Valère*). Folly on both sides! She has no other thought than to be yours. I am witness to it. (*To Mariane.*) He loves no one but you, and has no other wish than to be your husband. I'll answer for it with my life.

*Mar.* (*to Valère*). Why, then, give me such advice?

*Val.* (*to Mariane*). Why consult me on such a subject?

*Dor.* You're a couple of fools. Come and give me your hands, both of you. (*To Valère.*) Come, you.

*Val.* (*giving his hand to Dorine*). What good will my hand do?

*Dor.* Good. (*To Mariane.*) Now then, yours.

*Mar.* (*giving hers*). What's the use of all this?

*Dor.* Good gracious! do make haste. You love each other much bettter than you imagine.

(*Valère and Mariane hold one another's hand for some time without looking at each other.*)

*Val.* (*turning towards Mariane*). Don't do things so unwillingly, but look at people without hating them.

(*Mariane turns towards Valère, and smiles a little.*)

*Dor.* Verily, lovers are foolish creatures!

*Val.* (*to Mariane*). Have not I reason to complain of you? And without lying, was it not wicked of you to amuse yourself by saying such a painful thing to me?

*Mar.* And are not you the most ungrateful man——

*Dor.* Let us leave this debate till another time, and think how we can ward off this wretched marriage.

*Mar.* Tell us, then, what devices we must employ.

*Dor.* All we can. Your father is not in earnest, and is only talking idly. (*To Mariane.*) But for your part the best plan will be to seem to give a gentle compliance to his extravagance, so that if the worst comes to the worst, it will be more easy to put off this proposed marriage. By gaining time, one gains everything. Sometimes you can put them off with some illness, which will come on suddenly, and will cause delay; or you may put them off with ill omens—you unluckily met a funeral, or you broke a looking-glass, or you dreamt of muddy water; but finally, and this is the best of it, they cannot possibly unite you to any one else unless you say, Yes. But in order to succeed in our plan, I think you had better not be seen talking together. (*To Valère.*) Go at once, and set your friends to work, to make him keep his promise to you. We will go and stir up his brother, and gain over the mother-in-law to our side. Farewell.

*Val.* (*to Mariane*). Whatever efforts we may all make, my greatest hope, to say the truth, is in you.

*Mar.* (*to Valère*). I cannot answer for my father's will, but I shall belong to no one but to Valère.

*Val.* How you delight me! And whatever he dares——

*Dor.* Ah! these lovers are never tired of chattering. Go away, I tell you. (*He goes away a step or two, and returns.*)

*Val.* Once more——

*Dor.* What a chatterbox you are. You go this way, and you the other, madame (*pushing each out by the shoulders*).

## ACT III. SCENE I.

DAMIS, DORINE.

*Damis.* May thunder put an end to me at once; may I be treated as one of the greatest scoundrels on earth if any respect or power shall stop me from doing some rash act!

*Dorine.* Moderate your temper, for heaven's sake. Your father barely mentioned the matter. People don't do all they propose, and it is a long way from the project to the execution.

*Dam.* I must put a stop to this coxcomb's designs, and tell him a word or two in his ear.

*Dor.* Gently now. Let your step-mother alone to deal with him as well as with your father. She has some influence with Tartuffe. He is very obliging to her in everything, and perhaps he may have a sneaking kindness for her. I wish to heaven it were so! That would be a fine affair. In short, your interest compels her to send for him; she wishes to sound him with regard to this marriage which troubles you, and to let him know what troubles he will cause if he entertains any hope of this affair. His servant says that he's saying his prayers, and that I can't see him; but he told me that he would soon be coming down. Go then, if you please, and let me wait for him.

*Dam.* I must be present at this conference.

*Dor.* No, they must be alone.

*Dam.* I shall say nothing to him.

*Dor.* You're mistaken. Your impatient temper is well known, and that is the way to spoil everything. Now go.

*Dam.* No, I will see him without putting myself into a passion.

*Dor.* How troublesome you are. He's coming. Be off.

[*Damis goes and hides in a cupboard at the back of the stage.*

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## SCENE II.

TARTUFFE, DORINE.

*Tartuffe* (*seeing Dorine*). Laurent, lock up my sackcloth and scourge, and pray that heaven may always enlighten you. If any

one comes to see me, I have gone to the prisoners to distribute my alms.

*Dorine.* What affectation and boasting!

*Tar.* What do you want?

*Dor.* To tell you——

*Tar.* (*takes a handkerchief out of his pocket*). Before you say any more, take this handkerchief, I beg.

*Dor.* What on earth do you mean?

*Tar.* Cover up your bosom, which I cannot look at. Souls are wounded by such sights, and they give rise to guilty thoughts.

*Dor.* Then you are very open to temptation, if you are so easily led. My word, I don't know what's in your mind, but I'm not so ready to take fire. All *your* charms would not affect me in the slightest.

*Tar.* Be a little modest in your language, or I shall leave the room at once.

*Dor.* No, no. I will leave you. I have only two words to say to you. My lady is coming down into this parlour, and wishes to have a short conversation with you.

*Tar.* With all my heart.

*Dor.* (*aside*). How mild he grows, but I still stand to what I said of him.

*Tar.* Will she come presently?

*Dor.* I think I hear her. Yes, it is she herself. I leave you together.

## Scene III.

Elmire, Tartuffe.

*Tartuffe.* May heaven of its goodness ever give you health both of body and soul, and bestow on you all the blessings that heaven's humble servant desires for you.

*Elmire.* I am greatly obliged to you for your pious wish; but let us take a seat to talk more at our ease.

*Tar.* (*seated*). Do you find yourself quite recovered from your late indisposition?

*El.* Yes, quite so. The feverish symptoms soon left me.

*Tar.* My prayers have not sufficient merit to have drawn down this favour from on high; but I made no supplications to heaven in which your recovery had not a great part.

*El.* Your zeal for me was too solicitous.

*Tar.* Your dear health cannot be made too much of; and to re-establish it I would have sacrificed my own.

*El.* That is carrying Christian charity to a great length, and I am greatly indebted to you for all this kindness.

*Tar.* I do much less for you than you deserve.

*El.* I wished to speak to you privately about a certain matter, and I am glad to do so without any one noticing us.

*Tar.* I am also delighted, and be assured, madame, it is no small satisfaction to find myself alone with you. It is an opportunity that I have often prayed for, but till now it has never been granted me.

*El.* What I want to speak to you about is a matter in which you must be perfectly frank, and hide nothing from me.

(*Damis, unseen, half opens the door of the cupboard to hear the conversation.*)

*Tar.* And I for my part, in return for this great favour, will open my heart to you without any reserve; and I protest to you, that all the talk I made about the visits paid to you did not arise from ill-will, but rather from a passionate zeal, and from a pure motive——

*El.* For my part I like it very well, and believe that you do it for my good.

*Tar.* (*squeezing her hand, and pressing it*). Yes, madame, surely, and such is the fervour of my——

*El.* Oh, you squeeze me too hard.

*Tar.* It is from excess of zeal. I never intended to hurt you. I had much rather—— (*Puts his hand on her knees.*)

*El.* What are you doing?

*Tar.* I'm only feeling the rich stuff your dress is made of.

*El.* Pray leave off, I can't permit that. (*Elmire draws back her chair, and Tartuffe comes still nearer.*)

*Tar.* (*handling her fichu*). Goodness! how wonderful this lace is; there's no such work done nowadays. I never saw anything to equal it.

*El.* Yes, but now let us talk a little about our affair. They say that my husband wishes to break his promise, and give you his daughter. Tell me, is this true?

*Tar.* He did say something about it. But, madame, to tell you the truth, that is not the happiness I sigh after. I behold elsewhere the attractions of that felicity which engages every wish of mine.

*El.* That is, things of this world have no attraction for you.

*Tar.* My heart is not made of stone.

*El.* For my part, I believe that all your sighs rise to heaven, and that nothing below can fix your desires.

*Tar.* The love which leads us to eternal beauties does not extinguish in us the love of temporal ones. Our senses may easily be charmed by the perfect works which heaven has formed. Its reflected charms shine forth in such as you; but in your person it displays its choicest wonders. It has diffused such beauties over your face as surprise the heart, and delight the sight; nor could I look upon you, you perfect creature, without admiring in you the Author of nature, and feeling my heart touched with an ardent love, at the sight of the fairest of portraits in which He has painted Himself. At first I was afraid lest this secret flame might be a subtle surprise of the evil one; and my heart resolved to avoid your eyes as an obstacle to my future happiness; but at length I perceived, most lovely beauty, that my passion could not be guilty; that I could reconcile it with the rules of modesty, and this made me yield my heart to it. It is, I confess, a very great presumption in me to make you the offer of this heart; but in my vows I rely entirely on your goodness, and not on anything in my own weak power. In you is my hope, my happiness, my peace. On you depends my torment, or my bliss; and by your sole decision I am on the point of being, happy if you will, or miserable if you please.

*El.* This declaration is extremely polite, but to tell the truth it is somewhat surprising. It seems to me that you should have fortified your heart against anything of the kind, and have exercised your reason better. Such a devout man as you are, whom every one speaks of——

*Tar.* Ah, being devout does not make me less a man; and when one comes to view your celestial charms the heart surrenders, and thinks no more. I know that this longing seems strange coming from me, but I am not an angel, and if you condemn the declaration I make, you must lay the blame on your attractive charms. From the moment I first set eyes on your more than human splendour, you became the sovereign of my heart. The ineffable sweetness of your divine looks broke through the resistance which my soul obstinately made. It surmounted everything, fastings, prayers, tears, and turned all my desires towards your charms. My eyes and my sight have told you this a thousand times, and the better to explain myself I now make use of words. Now if you contemplate with some benignity the tribulation of your unworthy slave, if your goodness will give me consolation and deign to lower itself to my nothingness, I shall ever entertain for you, miracle of sweetness, a devotion which nothing can equal. Your honour with me runs no risk, and you

need fear no disgrace on my part. All these courtly gallants that the ladies make such a fuss about, make a noise about all they do, and are vain in all they say. We find them always vaunting their success. They never receive favours that they don't divulge, and their indiscreet tongues, which people confide in, dishonour the altar on which their hearts sacrifice. But men of our sort burn with a discreet flame; with us a secret is sure always to remain such. The care we take of our own reputation is an undeniable security to the person beloved; so when they accept our heart they can enjoy pleasure without scandal, and love without fear.

*El.* I hear what you say, and you explain yourself in terms sufficiently strong. Are you not afraid that I may take it into my head to acquaint my husband with your conduct? And don't you think an early account of this amour of yours would greatly alter the friendship he now has for you?

*Tar.* I know that you are too kind, and that you will excuse my temerity; that you will excuse on the ground of human frailty the violent outbreak of a passion that offends you; and remember when you look in the glass that a man is not blind, and is made of flesh and blood.

*El.* Perhaps some people might take this in another way, but I shall make use of my discretion, and not tell my husband of it; but I choose you to do one thing in return, and that is honestly and sincerely to forward the match between Valère and Mariane, and that you renounce the unjust power by which you hope to enrich yourself at the expense of another. And——

*Dam.* (*coming out of the closet, where he had been hiding*). No, madame, no, this must be made public. I was in this place, and overheard it all; and the goodness of heaven seems to have directed me here, to confound the pride of a traitor who wrongs me, to open a way for me to take vengeance of his hypocrisy and insolence; to undeceive my father, and to let him see plainly the true heart of a villain who dares to talk to you of love.

*El.* No, Damis, it will be enough if he becomes more sensible, and endeavours to deserve the favour I do him. Since I have promised him, don't make me break my word. I don't care to make a scandal. A woman laughs at such follies, and never troubles her husband's ears with them.

*Dam.* You may have your reasons for acting so; I have mine for acting otherwise. To spare him would be ridiculous. The insolent pride of his bigotry has triumphed too much over my just anger, and has created too much disorder among us already.

This villain has too long governed my father, and opposed my love as well as Valère's. The perfidy of this wretch should be made clear to him, and heaven offers me an easy way to do this. I am very thankful for the opportunity; it is too favourable to be neglected, and I should deserve to have it taken from me if I were to lose it.

*El.* Damis——

*Dam.* No. If you please, I must follow my own counsel. My heart is overjoyed, and all you could say would be in vain to dissuade me from the pleasure of avenging myself. Without going any further, I will make an end of the affair, and this will just give me satisfaction.

## SCENE IV.

ORGON, DAMIS, TARTUFFE, ELMIRE.

*Damis.* Father, we are about to entertain you with an incident that has just taken place, which will very much surprise you. You are well repaid for all your kindness, and this gentleman makes a fine return for your goodness. He goes so far as to wish to dishonour you by making love to your wife. She is good-natured, and her over-discretion would have kept the secret, but I can't encourage such impudence, and I think that not to tell you of it, is to do you an injury.

*Elmire.* Yes, I am of opinion that one never ought to disturb a husband with such idle stuff. Our honour does not depend on it, and it is enough to know that we can defend ourselves. This is what I think about it, and you would have said nothing, Damis, if you had listened to me. [*Exit Elmire.*

*Orgon.* What have I been hearing? Oh, heavens, is this credible?

*Tartuffe.* Yes, brother, I am a wicked, guilty, wretched sinner, full of iniquity, the greatest villain that ever was. Every instant of my life is stained with wrong. It is one continued series of crimes and defilements, and I see that heaven for my punishment designs to mortify me on this occasion. Whatever great offence they may lay to my charge, I have not sufficient pride to deny it. Believe what they tell you, rouse your anger, and like a criminal drive me out of your house. I cannot have so great a share of shame, but I have deserved more.

*Or.* (*to his son*). Ah, traitor, do you dare, by this falsehood, attempt to tarnish the purity of his virtue.

*Dam.* Do you mean to force her to receive him?

*Or.* Yes, traitor; and this very evening, in order to plague you. Ah! I defy you all, and will show you that I am master and will be obeyed. Come, retract, you rascal, this moment, and throw yourself at his feet and beg his pardon.

*Dam.* Who, I? Of this rogue, who by his impostures——

*Or.* What, you scoundrel, do you rebel and call him names? Bring me a stick here, a stick. (*To Tartuffe.*) Don't hold me. (*To his son.*) Get out of my house this minute, and never dare to enter it again.

*Dam.* Yes, I shall go, but——

*Or.* Leave the place at once! I disinherit you at once, and give you my curse besides.

## SCENE V.

ORGON, TARTUFFE.

*Orgon.* To insult a holy person in such a manner!

*Tartuffe.* O heaven, pardon him, as I do. (*To Orgon.*) If you only knew what a trouble it is to me that they should try to blacken me to my dear brother!

*Or.* Alas!

*Tar.* The mere thought of this ingratitude wounds me terribly. Oh, the horror of it! My heart is so full that I can't speak. I think it will be the death of me.

*Or.* (*in tears, running to the door out of which he had driven his son*). I am sorry my hand spared him, and did not make an end of him on the spot. Compose yourself, brother, and don't be troubled.

*Tar.* By all means let us stop the course of these unhappy debates. I see how much trouble I bring here, and I think, brother, it is necessary that I should leave your house.

*Or.* What! You're joking?

*Tar.* They can't bear me, and I see they are trying to throw suspicion on my good faith.

*Or.* What does that matter? You know that I pay no attention to them.

*Tar.* They won't stop here, you may be sure, and these very tales which you now reject may one day be repeated and listened to.

*Or.* No, brother, never!

*Tar.* Ah, brother, a wife may easily mislead her husband.

*Or.* No, no.

*Tar.* Allow me, by going away at once, to prevent another attack of this kind.

*Or.* No. You must stay. It would cost me my life.

*Tar.* Well, then, I must mortify myself. If you would, however——

*Or.* Ah!

*Tar.* Then let it be so, and we will say no more about it. But I know how to behave on this occasion. Honour is a tender thing, and friendship obliges me to prevent reports and not to give rise to any suspicions. I'll shun your wife, and you shall never see me——

*Or.* No, in spite of every one, you shall constantly be in her company. To vex the world is my greatest delight, and I'll have you seen with her at all hours. This is not all yet. The better to brave them, I'll have no other heir but you, and I am going at once to sign a deed of gift of my whole estate. A true and hearty friend to whom I give my daughter, is far dearer to me than wife or son or kindred. You won't refuse what I propose?

*Tar.* Heaven's will be done in all things.

*Or.* Come, let us get the writings drawn up, and then let envy burst itself with spite.

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

CLÉANTE, TARTUFFE.

*Cléante.* Indeed, every one is talking about it, and you may believe me. The noise caused by this rumour is not much to your credit, and I have met with you, sir, very opportunely, to tell you in two words what I think of the matter. I do not want to go to the bottom of all that is reported; I pass that by, and take the matter at its worst. We'll suppose, then, that Damis has not used you well, and that you have been accused wrongfully. Is it not the part of a good Christian to pardon the offence and to extinguish in his heart all desire of revenge? Ought you to suffer a son, on your account, to be turned out of his father's house? I tell you again, and frankly, that every one, both small and great, is scandalised at it; and if you take my advice, you will make all up and not push matters to extremity. Sacrifice

your resentment to the Almighty, and restore a son to his father's favour.

*Tartuffe.* Ah, as far as concerns myself, I would do it with all my heart. I bear him no ill-will; I forgive him everything; I lay nothing to his charge, and would serve him with all my heart; but the interests of religion cannot permit it, and if he comes here again I must leave. After such an unparalleled action it would be scandalous for me to have anything more to do with him. Heaven knows what the world would immediately think of it; they would put it down to pure policy on my part, and everybody would say that, knowing myself guilty, I pretended a charitable zeal for my accuser, that I dreaded him in my heart, and wanted to arrange matters with him that I might in an underhand way secure his silence.

*Clé.* You are putting us off with feigned excuses; all your reasons, sir, are too far-fetched. Why do you take on yourself the interests of heaven? Has it need of us to help to punish the guilty? Do not trouble yourself about vengeance, but concern yourself only about the pardon of offences which it enjoins. Have no regard for the judgment of men when you follow the sovereign orders of heaven. What! shall the paltry interest of what people may believe, hinder the glory of a good action? No, no, let us always do what heaven has ordered, and trouble our minds with no other matter.

*Tar.* I have told you, sir, already, that I have forgiven him from my heart, and that is doing what heaven ordains; but after the scandal and affront of to-day, heaven does not require me to live with him.

*Clé.* And does it require you, sir, to listen to what mere caprice dictates to the father, and to accept an estate to which you can have no just pretension?

*Tar.* Those who know me will never suppose that it arises from an interested motive. All the riches in the world have few charms for me. I am not dazzled by their false glare, and if I should resolve to accept the gift which the father wishes to make me, it is, to tell you the truth, because I am afraid that this property will otherwise fall into bad hands, and come to those who would make a bad use of it in this world, and not lay it out, as I should do, for the glory of heaven and the good of my neighbour.

*Clé.* Oh, sir, entertain none of these delicate scruples, which may give rise to the complaints of the rightful heir. Don't give yourself any further trouble, but let him keep his estate at his own

risk. Consider that it were better even that he misused it than that you should be accused of depriving him of it. I only wonder that you could have allowed yourself to entertain such a proposal. In short, has true zeal any maxim which would lead it to deprive a lawful heir of his rights? and, if it is a fact that heaven is invincibly opposed to your living with Damis, would it not be better for you, like a prudent man, to quietly retire from here, rather than suffer the eldest son, contrary to all reason, to be turned out of doors for you? Believe me, sir, this would give your discretion——

*Tar.* It is half-past three o'clock, sir. I have to attend to a certain devotional exercise in my room, and I must beg you to excuse me.

*Clé.* (*alone*). Ah!

## SCENE II.

ELMIRE, MARIANE, DORINE, CLÉANTE; *afterwards* ORGON.

*Dorine* (*to Cléante*). For goodness' sake, sir, do all you can to help her as we are doing, for she is in a dreadful state of trouble. The arrangement that her father has decided upon for to-night is driving her every moment to despair. He will be here directly. Let us all unite our efforts, and try either by force or cunning to upset this plan which is causing us such fearful trouble.

*Enter* ORGON.

*Orgon.* Ah, I'm very glad to see you all together. (*To Mariane.*) I bring you something in this contract that will make you smile. You know already what this means.

*Mariane* (*kneeling*). Oh, father, in heaven's name, which knows my grief, by everything that can move your heart, forego something of the right you have over me as your child, and dispense with my obedience in this point! Don't compel me through this hard law to complain to heaven of the duty I owe you. Do not, father, make the life you have given me miserable. If, contrary to the tender hopes I might have formed, you will not suffer me to be the wife of the man I venture to love; at least out of your goodness, which I beg for on my knees, save me from the torment of wedding a man whom I detest, and drive me not to despair by exercising your full power over me.

*Or.* (*feeling himself relent*). Be firm, my heart. Yield to no natural weakness.

*Mar.* Your attachment to him causes me no pain. Show it

as much as you like; give him your property; and, if that is not enough, add mine to it. I consent with all my heart, and give it up to you; but at least spare my person, and allow me to pass the mournful days that heaven may allot me in the austere life of a convent.

*Or.* Why, these are the sort of girls who turn nuns when their fathers thwart them in their love affairs. Get up. The more the matter goes against your inclinations, the greater will be your merit in accepting it. Mortify your senses about this marriage, and don't worry me any more about it.

*Dor.* But what——

*Or.* You hold your tongue. Mind your own business. I absolutely forbid you to venture to say a single word.

*Cléante.* If you would only allow me to give you one word of advice.

*Or.* Brother, your advice is the best in the world. It is very rational, and I have a great value for it. But you must not take it ill if I do not make use of it now.

*Elmire* (*to her husband*). Seeing what I see, I don't know what to say, except that I wonder greatly at your blindness. You must be marvellously bewitched and prepossessed in his favour to deny the fact we told you of to-day.

*Or.* I am your humble servant, and believe appearances. I know your weakness for my rascal of a son, and you were afraid to disavow the trick he would have played the poor man. But you were too calm to gain credit, else you would have been moved quite differently.

*El.* Ought our honour to take up arms and bluster so vehemently at the simple avowal of an amorous transport? Can there be no reply to what offends us, without fury in our eyes, and invectives in our mouth? For my part, I only laugh at such overtures, and the disturbance made about them by no means pleases me. I like that we should show our discretion with gentleness, and I have no fancy for those savage prudes, whose honour is armed with teeth and claws, and who for the least word would tear out a man's eyes. Heaven keep me from such discretion. I like a virtue that is not a she-dragon, and believe that a denial given with proper coldness is no less powerful than a stronger rebuff.

*Or.* In short, I know the whole affair, and shall not alter my mind.

*El.* I still wonder at your strange weakness. But what would your incredulity say if I proved to you that you had been told the truth?

*Or.* Prove it to me?

*El.* Yes.

*Or.* Nonsense.

*El.* But supposing I could find some means of showing it to you very clearly?

*Or.* Idle talk.

*El.* What a man you are! At least give me an answer. I don't speak of your giving credit to us, but supposing a place could be found where you could see and overhear all, what would you then say of your good man?

*Or.* In that case I should say—I should say nothing, for the thing can't be.

*El.* You have been too long deluded, and it is too much to charge me with imposture. It is necessary by way of diversion, and without going any farther, that I should make you witness all that has been told you.

*Or.* Do so. I take you at your word. We will see your cleverness. Let us see how you will make good your promise.

*El.* (*to Dorine*). Tell him to come to me.

*Dor.* (*to Elmire*). He has a crafty soul of his own, and perhaps it would be a difficult matter to surprise him.

*El.* (*to Dorine*). No, people are easily duped by what they like; and self-love helps them to deceive themselves. Call him down to me, and do you go away (*speaking to Cléante and Mariane*).

## SCENE III.

ELMIRE, ORGON.

*Elmire.* Now come, and get under the table.

*Orgon.* What for?

*El.* Because it is absolutely necessary that you should be concealed.

*Or.* But why under this table?

*El.* Good gracious! Do as I tell you. I have a plan in my head, and you shall be the judge of it. Place yourself there, I tell you, and take care that no one either sees or hears you.

*Or.* I must say that this is going a long way, but I must see the end of your enterprise.

*El.* (*to her husband under the table*). I believe you will have no reason to complain of me. However, as I am going to enter upon

a strange affair, you must not be shocked at anything. You must allow me to say what I like, as it is to convince you according to my promise. Since I am reduced to it, I am going by coaxing speeches to make this hypocritical fellow drop his mask, to flatter the impudent desires of his love, and give full scope to his boldness. Since it is for your sake alone, and to confound him, that I feign a compliance with his wishes, I shall leave off the moment you appear, and things need go no farther than you wish them. It lies with you to stop his mad infatuation, when you think the affair is carried far enough, so as to spare your wife and not expose me more than is necessary to undeceive you. This is in your interest, you will control it, and —But he's coming; keep close, and take care not to show yourself.

SCENE IV.

TARTUFFE, ELMIRE, ORGON (*under the table*).

*Tartuffe.* I was told you desired to speak to me here.

*Elmire.* Yes, I have some secrets to tell you; but, first, shut that door, and look well about for fear of a surprise. We certainly must not make such a mess of it as we did just now. I never was so surprised in all my life. Damis put me into a terrible fright for you, and you saw very well that I did my best to baffle his designs and moderate his anger. It is true, I was in such trouble that I did not think of contradicting him, but thank heaven things have been all the better for that, and are now on a safer footing. The esteem in which you are held dispelled that storm, and my husband can have no suspicion of you. The better to set the rumour of evil tongues at defiance, he desires that we should be always together, and so it is that I can without fear of blame find myself closeted alone here with you, and this it is which justifies me in laying open to you a heart perhaps a little too ready to allow your ardent addresses.

*Tar.* This language, madame, is rather difficult to understand; you spoke to me just now in quite another strain.

*El.* Ah! If such a refusal makes you angry, how little do you know the heart of woman! How little do you know what it means when we make so feeble a defence! At such times our modesty always fights against those tender sentiments you may inspire us with. Whatever gratification we may find for the passion that subdues us, we shall always be rather ashamed to own it. We

defend ourselves at first, but by the air that we put on, it is always easy to know that our heart surrenders, that our words oppose our wishes for the sake of honour, and that such refusals promise everything. No doubt this is a very frank avowal to make to you, and it pays little regard to our modesty; but in short, since the word has escaped me, should I have been so much bent on restraining Damis? Should I, think you, have listened to the offer which you made me of your heart? Should I have taken the matter as you saw I did, if the offer of your heart had had nothing in it to please me? And when I myself would have forced you to refuse the match which had just been proposed, what did that show but the interest one was inclined to take in you, and the trouble that one would have if the knot that was resolved on should divide a heart which one would have only one's own?

*Tar.* It is no doubt, madame, an extreme pleasure to hear these words from the lips one loves; their honey diffuses copiously through all my senses a sweetness I never before tasted. My supreme study is the happiness of pleasing you, and my heart counts your affection its beatitude; but my heart demands the liberty of daring to doubt a little of its felicity. I can fancy these words to be only a sort of decent artifice to make me break off the match that is almost concluded. And if I must explain myself freely to you, I shall not rely on this tender language till some of the favours I sigh after assure me of the sincerity of what has been said, and fix in my mind a firm belief in your charming goodness.

*El.* (*after coughing to warn her husband*). What! do you wish to go so fast? Would you exhaust the tenderness of one's heart all at once? One does violence to oneself in making you the most melting declaration, but this is not enough for you, and, to satisfy you, one must push matters to the farthest extreme?

*Tar.* The less one deserves a blessing, the less one presumes to hope for it; our love can scarcely rest satisfied with mere words; one easily suspects a lot overflowing with happiness, and one desires to enjoy it before believing in it. For my part, who know how little I deserve your favours, I doubt the success of my rashness, and I shall believe nothing, madame, till you have by realities convinced my ardent flame.

*El.* Good gracious! Your love plays the very tyrant. What a strange confusion it throws me into! With what a furious sway it rules hearts! and with what violence it will have what it desires. What! is there no getting away from your pursuit?

Will you not give one time to take breath? Is it well to persist with so much severity? To insist on what you demand without any quarter? To take advantage thus, by your insistence, of the weakness which you see one has for you.

*Tar.* But if you regard my addresses with a favourable eye, why do you refuse to give me convincing proofs of it?

*El.* But how can one comply with your wishes without offending that heaven which you are always talking of?

*Tar.* If it is only heaven that obstructs my wishes, it is a small matter with me to remove such an obstacle, and that need be no restraint on your heart.

*El.* But the judgments of heaven with which they terrify us so much!

*Tar.* I can dissipate these ridiculous fears, madame; and I have the art of removing scruples. Heaven, it is true, forbids certain gratifications;[1] but there are ways of compounding these matters. There is a science of stretching the strings of our conscience, according to different exigencies, and of rectifying the wrongness of the action by the purity of our intention. In these secrets, madame, I know how to instruct you, and all you have to do is to let me guide you. Satisfy my wishes, madame, and have no fear. I will answer for you, and take any wrong on myself. (*Elmire coughs more loudly.*) You cough a great deal, madame.

*El.* Yes, I am in torture.

*Tar.* Take a morsel of this liquorice.

*El.* No doubt it is an obstinate cough, and I am sure that all the liquorice in the world will not cure it.

*Tar.* It is certainly very troublesome.

*El.* Yes, more than one can express.

*Tar.* In short, madame, your scruple is easily overcome. You are sure of absolute secrecy here, and the evil only consists in the noise that is made about it; the world's scandal makes the offence, and to sin in private is no sin at all.

*El.* (*after having coughed again and knocked on the table*). In short, I see that I must resolve to yield, that I must consent to grant you everything, and that with less than this I ought not to expect you to be satisfied or to give over. No doubt it is very hard to go that length, and I get over it very much against my will; but since you are so obstinately bent on reducing me to it, and will not believe all that one can say, but still insist on more convincing proof, one must even resolve on it, and satisfy people. And if this consent

[1] *Note by Molière,* "It is a villain who speaks."

carries any offence with it, so much the worse for him who forces me to do this violence to myself, and the fault ought not to be laid at my door.

*Tar.* Yes, madame, I take the blame on my own shoulders, and the thing in itself——

*El.* Open the door a little, and pray look if my husband is not in the gallery.

*Tar.* Why need you take so much trouble about him? Between us two, he's a man to be led by the nose. He'll take pride in all our intercourse, and I've brought him to the point of seeing everything and believing nothing.

*El.* Never mind that. Pray go out a little and look carefully all round.

*Orgon* (*coming from under the table*). What an abominable fellow! I can't recover myself; this perfectly stuns me.

*El.* What! are you coming out so soon? You make fools of people; get under the tablecloth again—stay to the end to make sure, and do not trust to mere conjecture.

*Or.* No, nothing more wicked ever came from hell!

*El.* Good heavens! You must not believe too lightly. Be fully convinced before you yield, and don't be too hasty, for fear of a mistake. (*She makes her husband go behind her.*)

*Tar.* (*not seeing Orgon*). Everything conspires, madame, to my satisfaction. I have looked all round; there is no one there, and my ravished soul——

(*While Tartuffe advances with open arms to embrace Elmire, she draws back, and Tartuffe perceives Orgon.*)

*Or.* (*taking hold of Tartuffe*). You are too eager in your love affairs; you should not be so passionate. So, good man, you thought to get over me, did you? How you allow yourself to give way to temptation! So you were going to marry my daughter, and coveted my wife? I was a long time in doubt whether this was genuine, and quite thought you'd change your tone. But this is pushing the proof far enough; I am satisfied now, and for my part want no further conviction.

*El.* (*to Tartuffe*). The part that I have played was contrary to my inclination, but they reduced me to the necessity of treating you so.

*Tar.* (*to Orgon*). What! Do you believe——

*Or.* Come, no noise, pray; turn out from here, and without ceremony.

*Tar.* My design——

*Or.* These speeches are unseasonable. You must leave the house at once.

*Tar.* It is you who must be off, though you talk as if you were the master. The house is mine, and I'll make you know it, and shall plainly show you that it is useless for you to try and pick a quarrel with me by these base tricks. When you injure me, you don't think where you are. I have means wherewith to confound and punish imposture, to avenge an offended heaven, and make those repent it who talk of turning me out of doors.

[*Exit.*

*El.* What language is this, and what does it all mean?

*Or.* In truth I'm quite confused, and have no inclination to laugh.

*El.* How so?

*Or.* I see my fault by what he says, and the deed of gift is what perplexes my mind.

*El.* The deed of gift?

*Or.* Yes, it's actually done; but there is something else, too, that disturbs me.

*El.* What's that?

*Or.* You shall know all. But let us go upstairs at once, and see if a certain casket is still there.

## ACT V. SCENE I.

ORGON, CLÉANTE; *afterwards* DAMIS.

*Cléante.* Where would you run to?

*Orgon.* Alas! How can I tell?

*Clé.* I think we ought first to consult together as to what is best to be done in this state of affairs.

*Or.* This casket troubles me greatly. It even gives me more vexation than all the rest.

*Clé.* This casket, then, is a secret of some importance?

*Or.* It is a deposit that Argas, my friend whom I pity, himself placed in my hands as a great secret. When he fled he pitched on me for this purpose, and it contained papers, as he told me, on which his life and fortune depended.

*Clé.* Why then did you let them pass into other hands?

*Or.* It was from a scruple of conscience. I went straight to this traitor to take him into my confidence; and his casuistry persuaded me to give him the casket so that, in order to deny

having it in case any inquiry might be made, I might deny it with a ready excuse, by which my conscience would be quite at ease in taking an oath contrary to the truth.

*Clé.* You are in a bad position, at least, to judge from appearances; both the deed of gift and this trust are, in my view, inconsdierate steps. You might be led into great trouble by such pledges; and this man having these advantages over you it would be still more imprudent on your part to drive him to extremities, and you ought to think of some gentler method of dealing with him.

*Or.* Under the appearance of so moving a zeal, to think of his concealing so treacherous a heart and so wicked a soul! And that I, who took him in when he was a penniless beggar——It is over, and I will have no more to do with pious people. For the future I shall have an utter detestation of them, and shall become worse than a devil towards them.

*Clé.* Extremely well! More of your extravagant notions! You never can be moderate in anything. You never keep the straight path of reason, but you must always be rushing from one extreme to the other. You see your fault, and perceive that you have been imposed on by a hypocritical zeal; but to mend matters, what reason can you have for a worse mistake, and for seeing no difference between the heart of a perfidious, worthless wretch, and those of all good people? What! because a rascal has impudently imposed on you under the pompous appearance of an austere countenance, will you needs have it that every one is like him, and that there are no truly devout people in the world nowadays? Leave these foolish ideas to libertines; distinguish between virtue and its counterfeit; never venture to give your regard too suddenly, and in order to this, keep the mean as you should do. Beware, if you can, of paying honour to imposture; but at the same time don't injure true zeal, and because you have gone to one extreme, don't think you must offend again on the other.

*Damis.* What, father, is it true that that rascal threatens you? That he has quite forgotten all the favours he has received from you, and that his cowardly pride, but too deserving of your anger, arms itself against you with your own benefits?

*Or.* Yes, my son, and it gives me inconceivable vexation.

*Dam.* Let me alone. I'll cut off both his ears. There's no putting up with such insolence as his. I'll undertake to settle the matter at once; and to get you clear out of it, I'll beat his brains out.

*Clé.* There now, you speak just like a young fellow. Calm these violent transports, pray. We live in an age and under a government when violence is the worst way to settle affairs.

## SCENE II.

MADAME PERNELLE, MARIANE, ELMIRE, DORINE, DAMIS, ORGON, CLÉANTE.

*Mdme. Pernelle.* What's all this? I've been told that there have been some strange revelations here.

*Orgon.* They are some novelties, of which I have been an eye-witness. You see how dearly I pay for my kindness. I pick up a man in misery, I take him into my house, and treat him like my own brother; heap favours on him every day; give him my daughter, and my whole fortune; when at the same time the perfidious, infamous wretch makes base proposals to my wife. And not content with these vile attempts, he dares to threaten me with my own favours, and would employ, for my own ruin, the advantages which my indiscreet kindness placed in his hands. He would turn me out of the estate which I made over to him, and reduce me to the condition from which I rescued him.

*Dorine.* Oh, the poor man!

*Mdme. Per.* My son, I can never believe that he could commit so base an action.

*Or.* Why not?

*Mdme. Per.* Good people are always envied.

*Or.* What do you mean, mother, by such language?

*Mdme. Per.* Why, that there are strange doings at your house, and the ill-will they bear him is only too evident.

*Or.* What has this ill-will to do with what you have been told?

*Mdme. Per.* I used to tell you, again and again, when you were a child—

*Virtue here is persecuted ever;*
*The envious will die, but envy never.*

*Or.* But what has this to do with the matter in hand?

*Mdme. Per.* Why, they've trumped up a hundred idle tales about him.

*Or.* I've told you already, that I saw it all with my own eyes.

*Mdme. Per.* Ah! the malice of scandal-mongers is very great.

*Or.* You'll make me swear, mother; I tell you I myself witnessed his audacious attempt.

*Mdme. Per.* Tongues never lack venom to spread about. Nothing in this world can be proof against them.

*Or.* You are keeping up a very senseless argument. I've seen it, I tell you, seen! What people term "seen!" Must I din it into your ears a hundred times, and shout as loud as four people?

*Mdme. Per.* Good gracious! Appearances often deceive us. You must not always judge by what you see.

*Or.* I shall go out of my mind!

*Mdme. Per.* Nature is liable to false suspicions, and good is often turned into evil.

*Or.* Am I to put a charitable construction on his wish to embrace my wife.

*Mdme. Per.* You never ought to accuse any one except on good grounds, and you should have waited till you had been quite certain.

*Or.* How the devil, mother, could I have seen anything more certain? Should I have waited till he actually had, before my eyes——You'll make me say something foolish.

*Mdme. Per.* His soul burns with too pure a flame, and I cannot allow myself to think that he would have made any such attempt.

*Or.* Go away. If you were not my mother, I do not know what I might say to you, my anger is so great.

*Dor.* (*to Orgon*). This is the just recompense of this world. There was a time when you would not believe, and now you are not believed yourself.

*Cléante.* We are wasting time in mere trifles, which should be spent in taking measures; we ought not to sleep when a knave threatens.

*Damis.* What! can his impudence come to this pitch?

*Elmire.* I can scarce believe it possible for my part—his ingratitude would be too flagrant.

*Clé.* (*to Orgon*). Don't count on that. He will be cunning enough to give the colour of reason to what he does against you; and for a less matter than this the weight of a conspiracy has involved people in dismal labyrinths. I tell you again, that with the weapons he has you ought not to have pushed him so far.

*Or.* True, but what was I to do? Before the insolence of the traitor, I was not master of my resentment.

*Clé.* I wish with all my heart that some show of a peace could be patched up between you two.

*El.* If I had only known what power he held in his hands, I should never have made so much fuss about the matter, and my——

*Or.* (*to Dorine, seeing M. Loyal enter*). What does that man want? Go quickly and ask. I'm in a fine state to have people come to see me!

## SCENE III.

MONS. LOYAL, MDME. PERNELLE, ORGON, DAMIS, MARIANE, DORINE, ELMIRE, CLÉANTE.

*Mons. Loyal* (*to Dorine at the back of the stage*). Good-day, my girl; I want to speak with your master.

*Dorine.* He has company, and I don't think he can see any one just now.

*Loy.* Nay, I have no wish to be troublesome here. I believe that my coming will have nothing in it to displease him. I come on a matter that he will be very glad of.

*Dor.* Your name, please?

*Loy.* Only tell him that I come from Mons. Tartuffe, for his good.

*Dor.* (*to Orgon*). He says he comes in a civil way from Mons. Tartuffe, on business which he says you will not dislike.

*Cléante* (*to Orgon*). You must see who this man is, and what he wants.

*Orgon.* Perhaps he wants to make friends again. How shall I behave to him?

*Clé.* You must not let your resentment break out, and if he speaks of an arrangement you must listen to him.

*Loy.* (*to Orgon*). Your servant, sir. Heaven judge the man who would injure you, and may it be as favourable to you as I wish.

*Or.* (*aside to Cléante*). This kindly opening favours my conjecture, and seems to open the way to some settlement.

*Loy.* I always had a great regard for your family, and I served your good father.

*Or.* Sir, I must ask your pardon if I don't know you or your name.

*Loy.* My name, sir, is Loyal, a Norman by birth, and I am sheriff's officer to the court, in spite of envy. For forty years, by the grace of heaven, I have filled that office with great honour. I come now, sir, by your leave, to signify to you the execution of a certain decree.

*Or.* What! here——

*Loy.* Sir, without any excitement, it is nothing but a summons to remove from here, you and yours, to take out your goods, without remission or delay, as it is necessary——

*Or.* I! go from here?

*Loy.* Yes, sir, if you please. The house at present, as you are perfectly aware, belongs to my good Mons. Tartuffe, without dispute. He is lord and master of the estate from this time forward, by virtue of a contract I have in my charge. It is in due form, and incontestable.

*Dam.* (*to Loyal*). Certainly this is great impudence, and I marvel at it.

*Loy.* (*to Dam.*). Sir, my business is not with you, but with this gentleman (*pointing to Orgon*), who is mild and reasonable, and knows the duty of an honest man too well to oppose the law.

*Or.* But——

*Loy.* Yes, sir, I know that a million would not tempt you to rebel, and that, like an honourable gentleman, you will allow me to execute the orders I have received.

*Dam.* It may chance, Mr. Sheriff's officer, that you may get your coat dusted here.

*Loy.* (*to Orgon*). Sir, I must ask you to make your son hold his tongue or else withdraw. I should be very sorry to have to write a declaration, and to find your name in it.

*Dor.* This Monsieur Loyal has a very disloyal sort of look with him.

*Loy.* I feel very kindly towards all honest people, and should not have taken the office of serving these writs except to oblige you; and thus to prevent another from being chosen who, not having the same regard for you, might have proceeded in a rougher manner.

*Or.* And what can be worse than to order people out of their houses?

*Loy.* Why, you are allowed time; and till to-morrow, sir, I shall suspend the execution of the writ. I shall only come and pass the night here, with ten of my men, without any noise or scandal. For form's sake, if you please, the keys of your door

must be brought me, before you go to bed. I'll take care your rest is not disturbed, and will allow nothing improper to be done. But to-morrow morning you must be ready to clear the house of everything, even the smallest utensil. My people shall help you and I have chosen a set of strong fellows, that they may be of more use to you in moving out. No one can use you better, in my opinion, and as I am treating you with great indulgence, I beg of you, sir, to act in the same manner, and give me no trouble in anything.

*Or.* (*aside*). I'd give now, with all my heart, a hundred louis of what I have left, to strike the soundest blow I could on your muzzle.

*Clé.* (*aside to Orgon*). Leave off; don't make things worse.

*Dam.* This impudence is too great. I can hardly restrain myself; I had best walk off.

*Dor.* With so broad a back, Mr. Loyal, some good blows with a stick would do you no harm.

*Loy.* These scandalous words are punishable, and there's law against women too.

*Clé.* (*to Loyal*). Let us end this, sir; it is enough. Give us your paper, pray, and leave us.

*Loy.* Good-bye. Heaven bless you all together.

*Or.* And confound both you and him who sent you.

## SCENE IV.

ORGON, CLÉANTE, MARIANE, ELMIRE, MADAME DORINE, DAMIS.

*Orgon.* Well, mother, you see whether I am right or not, and you can judge of the rest by this writ. Do you perceive his treachery at last?

*Mdme. Pernelle.* I feel stunned, and as if I had fallen from the clouds.

*Dorine* (*to Orgon*). You are complaining without reason, and blame him wrongfully. This does but confirm his pious intentions. His virtue is consummated in the love of his neighbour. He knows that very often riches are the ruin of men, and out of pure charity he would take from you everything that might hinder your salvation.

*Or.* Hold your tongue. Must I always be repeating the same thing?

*Cléante* (*to Orgon*). Come, let us consult what's best to be done.

*Elmire.* Go and expose the audacity of the ungrateful wretch. This proceeding invalidates the deed of gift: his perfidy must needs appear too black for him to have the success we apprehend.

## SCENE V.

VALÈRE, ORGON, CLÉANTE, ELMIRE, MARIANE.

*Valère.* It is with regret, sir, that I come to afflict you; but I am forced to do so by the very imminence of the danger. A very intimate friend of mine, who knows the interest I take in you and in all that concerns you, has for my sake, by a most delicate action, broken through the secrecy due to affairs of state, and has just sent me notice, in consequence of which you must take refuge in sudden flight. The rascal who has so long imposed on you, about an hour ago thought fit to accuse you to your Prince, and to put into his hands (among other blows he aims at you), the important casket of a state criminal, whose guilty secret, he says, you have kept in contempt of your duty as a subject. I do not know the detail of the crime of which you are accused, but a warrant has been issued against your person, and he himself, for greater certainty, is ordered to accompany the person appointed to arrest you.

*Cléante.* Now we see his rights armed; and this is how the traitor seeks to make himself master of your estate.

*Orgon.* I must own that man is a wicked creature.

*Val.* The least delay may be fatal to you. I have my carriage at the door, ready to take you off, with a thousand louis which I here bring you. Don't let us lose any time; the stroke is terrible, and these blows are only parried by flight. I offer to conduct you myself to a place of safety, and to accompany you in your escape to the last.

*Or.* Ah! what do I not owe to your obliging care! I must take another time to thank you, and I pray heaven to be so propitious to me that I may one day acknowledge this generous service. Farewell; and the rest of you take care——

*Clé.* Go quickly. We will take care, brother, to do what is necessary.

## SCENE VI.

TARTUFFE, A POLICE-OFFICER, VALÈRE, ORGON, ELMIRE, MARIANE.

*Tartuffe* (*taking hold of Orgon*). Softly, sir, softly, don't run so fast; you sha'n't go far to find a lodging. We make you a prisoner in the King's name.

*Orgon.* Traitor! you have kept this bolt to the last. It is the stroke by which you desire to despatch me, and this crowns all your perfidies.

*Tar.* Your abuse has no power to enrage me. Heaven has taught me how to suffer everything in its cause.

*Cléante.* His moderation is great, I must own.

*Damis.* How impudently the vagabond sports with heaven!

*Tar.* All your raving can't move me. I think of nothing but doing my duty.

*Mariane.* You have much glory to expect from this, and your employment is most honourable.

*Tar.* An employment cannot but be honourable when it comes from the power that sent me here.

*Or.* But do you remember, you ungrateful wretch, that my charitable hand raised you from a miserable condition?

*Tar.* Yes, I know what help I have received from you; but the interest of my Prince is my first duty, my first obligation, which stifles in my heart any other claim of gratitude, and to so powerful a tie I would sacrifice friend, wife, kindred, even myself.

*Elmire.* Listen to the hypocrite!

*Dorine.* How artfully he knows the way to make a cloak of all one holds sacred.

*Clé.* But if the zeal that urges you, and with which you cloak yourself, is so perfect as you say, how did it not show itself till he caught you in the act of making proposals to his wife? How was it that you never thought of informing against him till his honour obliged him to drive you out of his house? I don't say that his making all his property over to you as he did lately should draw you from your duty; but intending to treat him as a criminal, why did you consent to take anything from him?

*Tar.* (*to the Police-Officer*). I beg you, sir, to free me from all this clatter, and be good enough to carry out your orders.

*Police-Officer.* Yes, no doubt I am waiting too long before executing my orders, which you yourself desired me to carry out at once. So I beg you to follow me immediately to the prison, which we are going to give you for a dwelling-place.

*Tar.* Who, I, sir?

*Pol.-Off.* Yes, you.

*Tar.* Why to prison, if you please?

*Pol.-Off.* It is not to you that I must give an account of my conduct. (*To Orgon.*) But I beg you, sir, to compose yourself after so great an alarm. We live under a Prince who is an enemy to fraud, a Prince whose eyes can penetrate the heart, and whom all the cleverness of impostors cannot deceive. His great soul has a fine discernment, and he takes a right view of all things. Nothing drives him into too great a transport, and his solid reasoning falls into no excess. He bestows on men of worth immortal glory; but he dispenses his favours without blindness, and his love for them does not close his heart to the horror which the false inspire. Even this person was not able to take him in, for he can keep clear of the most subtle snares. By his acuteness he soon pierced through all the baseness of his heart. Coming to accuse you, he betrayed himself, and by a just stroke of Divine justice he proved himself to be a most noted rogue, who had been accused under another name. The detail of his black actions would fill volumes. Our monarch, in short, detested his ingratitude and disloyalty to you. To his other misdoings he has added this, and he has only sent me to see how far his assurance would carry him, and to compel him to give you full satisfaction. He wishes further that I should strip the traitor of all the papers to which he pretends to have a right, and give them to you. By his sovereign power he dissolves the contract which gives him your property, and he pardons the misdeed in which the flight of your friend involved you; and this reward he grants for the zeal which you formerly showed in maintaining his rights. He desires to show that his heart knows how to reward a good action, even when least expected; that merit with him is never lost, and that he remembers the good much more than he does the evil.

*Dor.* May heaven be praised!

*Mdme. Pernelle.* I breathe freely again.

*El.* All turns out for the best.

*Mar.* Who could have foreseen this?

*Or.* (*to Tartuffe, as the officer is taking him off*). Well, traitor, now you are——

*Clé.* No, brother, stop, don't descend to indignities; leave the wretch to his evil fate, and don't add to the remorse which oppresses him. Rather wish that he may now return to virtue; that he may reform, and hate his crimes, and may appease the justice of a glorious Prince—for whose goodness you must

go on your knees, to thank him for his kindly treatment of you.

*Or.* Yes, that is well said. Let us gladly throw ourselves at his royal feet, to praise the goodness which his heart displays to us. And then, having acquitted ourselves of this first duty, we must attend to another, and with Hymen's tenderest joy must crown Valère, the generous lover, and the sincere friend

# THE BLUE-STOCKINGS

## (*LES FEMMES SAVANTES*).

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CHRYSALE, *a citizen.*
PHILAMINTE, *Chrysale's wife.*
ARMANDE, } *daughters of Chry-*
HENRIETTE, } *sale & Philaminte.*
ARISTE, *Chrysale's brother.*
BÉLISE, *Chrysale's sister.*
CLITANDRE, *lover of Henriette.*
TRISSOTIN, *a wit.*
VADIUS, *a savant.*
MARTINE, *a kitchenmaid.*
L'ÉPINE, *a footman.*
JULIEN, *servant of Vadius.*
A NOTARY.

SCENE—PARIS, IN CHRYSALE'S HOUSE.

### ACT I. SCENE I.

ARMANDE, HENRIETTE.

*Armande.* What! is the lovely name of maid a title, sister, the charming sweetness of which you would abandon? Dare you rejoice in the thought of marriage? Can this vulgar idea enter your head?

*Henriette.* Yes, sister.

*Ar.* Ah, can one support that "*yes*," or hear it without being sick?

*Hen.* What has marriage in it that constrains you, sister—

*Ar.* Oh, good heavens, for shame!

*Hen.* What's the matter?

*Ar.* Oh, for shame, I tell you! Don't you understand what a disgusting idea such a word offers to one's imagination whenever one hears it; what a strange notion it shocks one with; to what a disagreeable prospect it leads the mind? Don't you shudder at it? And can you bring yourself to endure the consequences of that word, sister?

*Hen.* The consequences of that word, when I consider them, bring before my eyes a husband, children, and a family. I see nothing in these, if I am capable of speaking rationally on it, to shock the mind or make one shudder.

*Ar.* Oh, heavens! can you be pleased with such attachments?

*Hen.* And what can one do better at my age than bind a man to one's self under the title of husband, who loves one and is loved by one, and from this union of affection to secure the delights of innocent life? Has such a union, when well matched, no charms?

*Ar.* Good gracious! What a grovelling mind is yours! What a mean part do you act in the world, to immure yourself in family affairs, and not to find more sensible pleasures than an idol of a husband and brats of children! Leave the low amusements of such affairs to gross creatures, to vulgar people. Raise your desires to more lofty objects, endeavour to get a taste for more noble pleasures, and, treating sense and matter with contempt, give yourself up, like us, entirely to understanding. You have our mother for an example before your eyes, who is everywhere honoured with the title of a "*learned*" woman. Endeavour like me to show yourself her daughter; aspire to the intellect which is in the family, and appreciate the charming pleasures which the love of study pours into the heart. Far from being in servile bondage to the will of a man, wed philosophy, sister, which raises you above all human kind, and gives the sovereign empire to reason, subjecting to its laws the animal part, the gross appetite of which debases us to the level of the beasts. These are the delightful flames, the sweet attachments which ought to occupy life; and the cares which I see so many women afflicted with, appear in my eyes most horrible meannesses.

*Hen.* Heaven, whose order we own to be almighty, forms us at birth for different occupations, and every mind is not composed of the stuff to make a philosopher. If yours is created for those heights which the speculations of the learned mount to, mine is made, sister, to crawl upon earth, and its weakness confines it to trifling cares. Let us not upset the just regulations of heaven, but follow the instigations of our several instincts. Do you by the flight of a great and fine genius inhabit the lofty regions of philosophy, whilst my imagination, keeping itself here below, tastes the terrestrial delights of matrimony; thus in our contrary ways we shall both imitate our mother—you in your mind and noble desires, I with regard to the senses and the commonplace pleasures; you in the productions of genius and light, I in those of matter.

*Ar.* When we pretend to model ourselves on any one, it is their best points that we ought to imitate, and it is not at all taking her for a model, sister, merely to cough as she does.

*Hen.* But you would not have been what you boast yourself to be if my mother had had only these fine parts; and it was well for you, sister, that her genius did not always apply itself to philosophy. Pray allow to me, out of kindness, that vulgarity to which you owe the light; and don't, by desiring that I should imitate you, suppress a little savant who might come into the world.

*Ar.* I see your mind can't be cured of the foolish infatuation to be married. But let us know, if you please, whom you think of taking. Surely you're not aiming at Clitandre?

*Hen.* And why should I not? Is he without merit? Is it a low choice?

*Ar.* No, but it would be a very dishonourable plan to try and take away another's conquest; and it is not unknown in the world that Clitandre has deeply sighed for me.

*Hen.* Yes, but all those sighs are vain things in your eyes, as you don't condescend to human weaknesses. Your mind has renounced matrimony for ever, and philosophy has all your affection. So having no design in your heart upon Clitandre, what does it concern you if another makes any pretensions to him?

*Ar.* This empire that reason holds over the senses does not make one renounce the sweets of praise; and one may refuse a man of merit for a husband whom one would willingly have in the train of one's admirers.

*Hen.* I did not hinder him from continuing his devotion to your perfections. I only accepted one who came to offer me the homage of his love after you had refused him.

*Ar.* But do you think that entire confidence should be placed in the vows of a disappointed lover? Do you believe his passion for your charms can be so strong, and that love for me is quite dead in his heart?

*Hen.* He tells me so, sister, and for my part I believe him.

*Ar.* Don't have so strong a faith, sister; but be assured that when he says he quits me and loves you, he does not really mean it, but deceives himself.

*Hen.* I don't know; but in short, if you like, it is very easy for us to learn the truth of the matter. I see him coming, and he can thoroughly enlighten us about it.

## SCENE II.

CLITANDRE, ARMANDE, HENRIETTE.

*Henriette.* To free me from a doubt which my sister has

plunged me in, pray, Clitandre, explain your feelings as between her and myself. Lay open your heart, and be so good as to let us know which of us may rightly lay claim to your addresses.

*Armande.* No, no, I will not impose on your passion the hardship of an explanation. I spare people, and I know how embarrassing such an open confession must be.

*Clitandre.* No, my heart, which seldom dissembles, feels no constraint in making a free avowal; such a step does not cause me any embarrassment, and I own openly, with a frank and clear heart, that the tender cords with which I am bound (*pointing to Henriette*), my love, and my devotion are all on this side. Do not let this avowal cause you any emotion; you desired that things should be so. Your attractions caught me, and my tender sighs sufficiently proved to you the warmth of my desires. My heart vowed an eternal attachment to you, but your eyes did not think their conquest great enough. I suffered a hundred different slights under their yoke. They reigned like proud tyrants over my heart, till, tired with so much torment, I sought more humane conquerors and chains less cruel. (*Pointing to Henriette.*) I have found them, madame, in these eyes, and their attractions will always be precious to me. With one compassionate look they dried up my tears, and did not disdain your cast-off lover. Such rare kindness touched me so deeply, that nothing can ever deliver me from my bonds; and now I make bold, madame, to implore you not to seek to win my love back again, nor ever endeavour to recall a heart resolved to die in this soft warmth of love.

*Ar.* Good gracious, sir! who told you that I had such a desire, or, in short, cared so much for you? I think you're ridiculous to suppose it, and very impertinent to tell me so.

*Hen.* Oh, gently, sister. Where, then, is the moral sense which knows so well how to control the animal parts, and to bridle outbreaks of rage?

*Ar.* But how do you, who talk to me of it, practise it yourself in answering a declaration of love made without the leave of your parents? You must know duty subjects you to their rule, that you are only permitted to love according to their choice, that they have a supreme authority over your heart, and you have no right to dispose of it yourself.

*Hen.* I thank you for your kindness in teaching me so well what belongs to my duty; my heart will regulate its conduct by your instructions, and to show you, sister, that I profit by them, take care, Clitandre, to support your love by the concurrence

of my parents. Obtain a lawful power over my affections, and enable me to love you without doing wrong.

*Cli.* I'll go and employ all my efforts to obtain it, as I only waited this kind permission from you.

*Ar.* You triumph, sister, and look as if you thought this vexed me.

*Hen.* I, sister? Not at all; I know very well that the dictates of reason always have the mastery over your senses, and that, through the lessons of wisdom which you learn, you are above such weakness. So far from suspecting you of being vexed, I believe that you'll deign to employ your interest for me, to second his request, and, by your approval, to hasten the happy moment of our marriage. I beg it of you, and to work for it——

*Ar.* Your small mind sets up to jest; you seem very proud of a heart one throws away to you.

*Hen.* Thrown away as the heart may be, you don't much dislike it, and if by a look you could pick it up from me, you'd readily take the pains to stoop for it.

*Ar.* I won't condescend to answer that, and these are foolish speeches I ought not to listen to.

*Hen.* That's very well done of you, and you show inconceivable moderation.

## SCENE III.

CLITANDRE, HENRIETTE.

*Henriette.* Your sincere confession has not a little surprised her.

*Clitandre.* She well deserves such plain-speaking, and all the haughtiness of her proud folly at least deserves my straightforwardness. But since I have your permission, madame, I am going to your father.

*Hen.* The surest way is to gain my mother. My father is of a nature that will consent to everything; but he does not attach much importance to what he resolves on. Heaven has given him a certain gentleness which makes him submit at once to whatever his wife wills. It is she who governs, and with absolute authority lays down as law whatever she has resolved on. I could heartily wish, I must own, that you were a little more complaisant to her and my aunt, and that by yielding to their fancies you might win their warm regard.

*Cli.* My heart is naturally so sincere that it could never flatter their character, even in your sister. These female philosophers are not to my taste. I allow that a woman should have a certain knowledge of everything, but I would not have her indulge in the

monstrous desire to make herself learned for the sake of being learned. I would like her often to appear ignorant of things that she knows, when questions are put to her. I would have her hide her studies, and possess knowledge without letting all the world know it; without quoting authors, without using big words, and showing off her wit on the slightest occasion. I have a great respect for your mother, but I cannot approve of her chimerical notions, and echo all the incense she offers to her hero of wit. Her Mons. Trissotin vexes and enrages me, and I'm wild to see her esteem such a man, and to place in the rank of great and fine geniuses a blockhead whose writings are condemned everywhere; a pedant whose facile pen furnishes waste paper to the whole market.

*Hein.* His writings and conversation are in my opinion both very tiresome, and I find myself quite in accord with your taste and ideas; but since he has great influence over my mother, you ought to force yourself to tolerate him to some extent. A lover pays his court where his heart is engaged, and to that end would willingly gain everybody's favour; and in order to have no one opposing his love, he compels himself to please even the very house-dog.

*Cli.* Yes, you are right; but Mons. Trissotin inspires my soul with an overwhelming dislike. I cannot consent to dishonour myself by praising his works, in order to gain his approbation. It is by them that he first attracted my notice, and I knew him before I had seen him. I perceive in the trash of those writings what his personal pedantry everywhere displays: his constant haughty presumption; his invincible good opinion of himself; his indolent assurance which renders him always so satisfied with himself; which makes him incessantly smile at his own merit; which keeps him in such good-humour with everything he writes, that he would not change his renown for all the honours of a commander-in-chief.

*Hen.* You must have good eyes to see all this.

*Cli.* Nay; it went further, even to his very figure. I saw by the verses he throws at our heads what must be the air of the poet; and I so well guessed every point about him, that, meeting a man one day in the Law Courts, I made a bet that it was Trissotin, and I was right.

*Hen.* What a story!

*Cli.* No. I tell it just as it happened. But I see your aunt; allow me to tell her our secret now, and bespeak her good offices in our behalf with your mother.

## SCENE IV.

BÉLISE, CLITANDRE.

*Clitandre.* Permit a lover, madame, to take this happy moment to speak to you, and to declare to you the sincere devotion——

*Bélise.* Ah! gently, take care not to open your heart too much to me. If I have placed you in the ranks of my lovers, be content that your eyes be my only interpreters, and don't explain to me by any other language desires which I could only look upon as an affront. If you will, love me, sigh, burn for my charms, but you must allow me to be ignorant of it. I can shut my eyes to your secret ardours, so long as you keep yourself to dumb interpreters; but if the mouth dares to interfere, I must banish you for ever from my sight.

*Cli.* Take no alarm, madame, at my intentions. Henriette is the object which charms me; and I ardently implore your goodness to second the love which I have for her beauty.

*Bél.* Ah! I own this is a very witty turn. This clever evasion deserves to be praised, and in all the romances I ever read, I never met with anything more ingenious.

*Cli.* This is no stroke of wit, madame, but a pure confession of what I have in my breast. Heaven has bound my heart to Henriette's by ties of a changeless affection; Henriette holds me in her amiable sway, and to marry her is the happiness I aspire to. You can do a great deal in the matter, and all I desire is that you would condescend to favour my addresses.

*Bél.* I see what this demand would gently aim at, and I know what to understand by that name. The figure of speech is clever, and not to depart from it to answer you according to what my heart offers, I must tell you that Henriette rebels against matrimony, and that you must burn for her without expecting anything more.

*Cli.* Ah, madame, of what use is this confusion, and why will you fancy what does not exist?

*Bél.* Good heavens! no ceremony. Leave off denying what your looks have so often given me to understand. It is enough that we are content with the turn which your love has artfully conceived, and that, under the form to which respect compels us, we will gladly resolve to accept of its homage, provided that its transports, illumined by honour, offer only pure vows at my altar.

*Cli.* But——

*Bél.* Farewell. This ought to satisfy you for this time, and I have said more than I wished.

*Cli.* But your mistake——

*Bél.* Enough. I'm blushing now, and my modesty has endured a surprising attack.

*Cli.* I'll be hanged if I love you, and wise——

*Bél.* No, no! I'll hear nothing more. [*Exit.*

*Cli.* (*alone*). Deuce take the fool with her fancies! Did any one ever see anything like her prepossessions? I'll go and find some one else to undertake this business, and seek the assistance of some wiser person.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

ARISTE (*leaving Clitandre, but continuing to speak to him*).

*Ariste.* Yes, I'll bring you the answer presently. I'll insist, I'll press, I'll do all that is needed. How much a lover has to say just for one word! and how impatient he is for what he desires. Never——

## SCENE II.

CHRYSALE, ARISTE.

*Ariste.* God bless you, brother.

*Chrysale.* And you too, brother.

*Aris.* Do you know what brings me here?

*Chr.* No; but I'm ready to learn it, if you will.

*Aris.* You have known Clitandre for some time past?

*Chr.* Undoubtedly; and he comes often to our house.

*Aris.* And how do you esteem him?

*Chr.* As a man of honour, wit, courage and conduct. I know very few people of equal merit.

*Aris.* A certain desire of his brought me here, and I rejoice that you esteem him highly.

*Chr.* I was acquainted with his late father in my journey to Rome.

*Aris.* That's very well.

*Chr.* He was, brother, a very excellent gentleman.

*Aris.* So they say.

*Chr.* We were then only twenty-eight years old, and indeed we were a couple of lively young fellows.

*Aris.* I quite believe it.

*Chr.* We had fine times with the Roman ladies, and every one talked of our goings on. We made some people jealous.

*Aris.* That was well enough; but let's come to the matter that brought me here.

---

## SCENE III.

BÉLISE (*entering softly and listening*), CHRYSALE, ARISTE.

*Ariste.* Clitandre makes me his messenger to you; his heart is smitten with Henriette's charms.

*Chrysale.* What, my daughter?

*Aris.* Yes. Clitandre is enamoured with her, and I never saw a more devoted lover.

*Bélise* (*to Ariste*). No, no! I hear you. You don't know the story. The affair is not what you suppose.

*Aris.* What, sister?

*Bél.* Clitandre deceives you both. His heart is smitten with another object.

*Aris.* You jest! What, is it not Henriette that he's in love with?

*Bél.* No; I'm sure it's not.

*Aris.* He told it me himself.

*Bél.* Ay, ay!

*Aris.* You see me here, sister, commissioned by him to ask her from her father this very day.

*Bél.* Very well.

*Aris.* And his love made him urge strongly that I should hasten the time for such an alliance.

*Bél.* Better still. Nobody could have made use of a more gallant description. Henriette, between ourselves, is a deception, an ingenious cloak, a pretext, brother, to cover another flame of which I know, and I'm anxious to undeceive you both.

*Aris.* But since you know so much, sister, pray tell us who is this other object he loves.

*Bél.* You wish to know it? *Aris.* Yes. Whom?

*Bél.* It is I. *Aris.* You?

*Bél.* Yes; I myself. *Aris.* Ah, sister!

*Bél.* What does that "Ah" mean? And what is there surprising in what I say? I have sufficient attractions, I think, to be able to say that I have not one heart only in subjection to my empire; and Dorante, Damis, Cléonte, and Licide plainly show that I have some charms.

*Aris.* These men love you?

*Bél.* Yes, with all their hearts.

*Aris.* Have they ever told you so?

*Bél.* No one ever took that liberty; they have hitherto so

much revered me that they have never said a word to me of their love; but the dumb interpreters have all done their duty in offering me their hearts and devoting their service to me.

*Aris.* Why, Damis is seldom or never here.

*Bél.* That's to show me a more submissive respect.

*Aris.* Dorante is always affronting you with satirical speeches.

*Bél.* Those are the transports of a jealous rage.

*Aris.* Cléonte and Lycidas have both of them taken wives.

*Bél.* That was done through a despair to which I had reduced their love.

*Aris.* In truth, my dear sister, all this is entirely imagination.

*Chr.* (*to Bélise*). You ought to lay aside these idle fancies.

*Bél.* Ah, idle fancies! So these are what you call fancies! Idle fancies, I! Very good idle fancies! I amuse myself greatly with fancies, brothers; I was not aware that I had any idle fancies.

## SCENE IV.

CHRYSALE, ARISTE.

*Chrysale.* Our sister is mad, surely!

*Ariste.* This grows upon her every day. But let us resume our conversation. Clitandre asks Henriette of you in marriage. Consider what answer you should make to his request.

*Chr.* Need you ask? I consent to it with all my heart, and consider his alliance a singular honour.

*Aris.* You know that he has not great wealth, that——

*Chr.* That's of no great consequence; he is rich in virtue, and that is worth treasures. And besides, his father and I were but one soul in two bodies.

*Aris.* Let us speak to your wife, and persuade her——

*Chr.* It's enough; I accept him for a son-in-law.

*Aris.* Yes, but to support your consent, brother, it is not amiss to have her cordial consent. Come——

*Chr.* You are jesting. It is not necessary. I will answer for my wife, and will take the affair on myself.

*Aris.* But——

*Chr.* Let me alone, I say, and don't fear. I'll go at once and make all right.

*Aris.* Good! I'll go and sound Henriette on the matter, and will return to know——

*Chr.* The matter's settled, and I'll go to my wife to talk to her of it without delay.

## SCENE V.

CHRYSALE, MARTINE.

*Martine.* I'm very unlucky. Alas, that's a true saying, If you want to drown a dog, say he is mad. Another's service is no inheritance.

*Chrysale.* What's the matter, Martine? What ails you?

*Mar.* What ails me?

*Chr.* Yes.

*Mar.* What ails me is that I'm turned off to-day, sir.

*Chr.* Turned off?

*Mar.* Yes. Madame has turned me away.

*Chr.* I don't understand that. How is it?

*Mar.* They threaten me with a sound beating, if I don't go away.

*Chr.* No, you shall stay. I am satisfied with you; my wife is often a little hot-headed; and I will not——

## SCENE VI.

PHILAMINTE, BÉLISE, CHRYSALE, MARTINE.

*Philaminte* (*seeing Martine*). What! do I see you, you hussy? Quick, be off, you jade; go, leave this place and never come into my sight again!

*Chrysale.* Gently.

*Phi.* No, there's an end of it.

*Chr.* Eh?

*Phi.* I'll have her gone.

*Chr.* But what has she done, that you choose to act in this manner——

*Phi.* What, do you uphold her?

*Chr.* By no means.

*Phi.* Do you take her part against me?

*Chr.* Good gracious me! No; I only ask what her crime is.

*Phi.* Am I one to turn her away without just cause?

*Chr.* I don't say that; but we must, with regard to our servants——

*Phi.* No, but I tell you she shall go out of our house.

*Chr.* Well, yes. Does any one say anything to you to the contrary?

*Phi.* I'll have no resistance to my desires.

*Chr.* We're agreed.

*Phi.* And, if you were a reasonable husband, you would take my part against her, and join in my anger.

*Chr.* (*turning towards Martine*). So I do. Yes, my wife is quite right in sending you away, you hussy, and your crime is unworthy of pardon.

*Mar.* What is it that I have done then?

*Chr.* (*aside*). Indeed I don't know.

*Phi.* She's in a temper still to make very light of it.

*Chr.* Has she incurred your displeasure by breaking a looking-glass or some china?

*Phi.* Do you suppose I should turn her away or put myself in a passion for so small a matter?

*Chr.* (*to Martine*). What does this mean? (*To Philaminte.*) It's something serious then?

*Phi.* Undoubtedly. Am I an unreasonable woman?

*Chr.* Has she through carelessness allowed some silver ewer or dish to be stolen?

*Phi.* Oh, that would be nothing.

*Chr.* (*to Martine*). Oh, oh! Plague on you, you hussy! (*To Philaminte.*) What, have you surprised her in some dishonesty?

*Phi.* Worse than all that.

*Chr.* Worse than all that?

*Phi.* Worse.

*Chr.* (*to Martine*). What the deuce? The wretch! (*To Philaminte.*) What, has she committed——

*Phi.* She has, with unparalleled insolence, after thirty lessons about it, insulted my ear with the impropriety of a vulgar, rough word which Vaugelas decisively condemns.

*Chr.* Is that——

*Phi.* What! In spite of my remonstrances, continually to strike at the foundation of all the sciences—grammar, which even rules over kings, and with a high hand makes them obey its laws!

*Chr.* I thought she had been guilty of a much greater offence.

*Phi.* What, don't you think this crime unpardonable?

*Chr.* Yes, indeed.

*Phi.* I very much wish you'd excuse her.

*Chr.* I'll take care not to.

*Bélise.* It certainly is a pity. All the principles of construction are destroyed by her, yet she has been instructed in the laws of language a hundred times.

*Mar.* All you preach is fine and good, I believe, but I can't talk your jargon, not I.

*Phi.* Oh, impudence! to call language founded on reason, and polite custom, jargon.

*Mar.* One always speaks well when one makes oneself understood, and all your fine terms are not of no use.

*Phi.* There now. She keeps to her own style still, "*are not of no use.*"

*Bél.* Oh, unteachable animal! Shall we never be able to teach you to speak suitably, with all the pains we incessantly take? *Not* put with *No*, makes a recidivation, and it is, as I have told you, one negative too much.

*Mar.* Good gracious! I aren't no scollard like you. I speaks just as they do in our parts.

*Phi.* Now, can this be endured?

*Bél.* What a dreadful solecism!

*Phi.* It is enough to destroy any sensitive ear.

*Bél.* Your mind, I must own, is very dense. *I* is singular, *are* is plural. Will you go on all your life offending grammar in this way?

*Mar.* Who talks of offending Gammer or Gaffer?

*Phi.* Oh, heavens!

*Bél.* You take grammar in a wrong sense. I have already told you where the word comes from.

*Mar.* I don't care whether it comes from Pontoise, Mantes, or Versailles, it's all the same to me.

*Bél.* What a country clod, to be sure! Grammar teaches us the rules of the Nominative case, and the Verb, as well as of the Adjective and Substantive.

*Mar.* I must tell you, madame, I don't know those people.

*Phi.* What a martyrdom!

*Bél.* These are the names of words, and you ought to take notice how they ought to agree with each other.

*Mar.* What does it matter, whether they agree with each other or quarrel?

*Phi.* (*to Bélise*). Oh, heavens! let us put an end to this style of conversation. (*To Chrysale.*) Won't you send her away from me then?

*Chr.* Yes, yes. (*Aside.*) I must yield to her fancies. Go, and don't provoke her, Martine; leave us.

*Phi.* What! you are afraid of offending the hussy? You speak in a very obliging tone.

*Chr.* I? not at all. (*Roughly.*) Go, be gone! (*More mildly.*) Go away, my poor girl.

SCENE VII.

PHILAMINTE, CHRYSALE, BÉLISE.

*Chrysale.* You are satisfied, I hope, now she's gone; but I don't approve of her going in this manner. She's a girl fit for her work, and you turn her out of my house for a trifling cause.

*Phi.* Would you have me keep her always in my service, to torture my ears incessantly? To break every law of custom and reason, by a barbarous mass of faulty language, of lame expressions, mixed at times with sayings picked up from the market gutters.

*Bélise.* It is true that it throws one into a perspiration to hear her talk. She pulls Vaugelas to pieces every day, and the least blunders of her gross ignorance, are either pleonasm or cacophony.

*Chr.* What does it matter if she fails in the laws of Vaugelas, so long as she does not fail in the kitchen? For my part, I had much rather that in picking her herbs she made the nouns and the verbs agree wrongly and repeated some outrageous word a hundred times, than have her burn my meat or oversalt my broth. I live by good soup, and not by fine language. Vaugelas does not teach how to make good soup; and Malherbe and Balzac, so learned in fine words, would possibly have been fools in the kitchen.

*Phi.* How terribly this gross conversation shocks me. And how unworthy it is of any one who calls himself a man, to be continually bent on material cares, instead of raising himself towards spiritual ones. Is this body, this rag, of sufficient importance or value to deserve a single thought? And ought we not to leave that far behind?

*Chr.* Ay, but my body is myself, and I'll take care of it. A rag, if you please, but my rag is dear to me.

*Bél.* The body, together with the mind, brother, makes a figure; but if you believe all the learned world in the case, the mind ought to have precedence over the body, and our greatest care, our first concern, should be to feed it with the juice of science.

*Chr.* In truth, if you think of feeding your mind, it's with very airy food, according to what every one says, and you have no care, no solicitude for——

*Phi.* Ah, the word solicitude seems rough to my ear; it sounds strangely of antiquity.

*Bél.* It is true the word is of high date.

*Chr.* Will you let me speak? I must be plain, pull off the mask, and discharge my spleen. People call you mad, and I'm heartily troubled——

*Phi.* How now?

*Chr.* (*to Bélise*). It is to you that I'm speaking, sister. The least solecism in speech provokes you, but you make strange ones yourself in conduct. Your eternal books don't please me, and except a big Plutarch that I put my bands in, you ought to burn all this useless lumber, and leave science to the learned men of the city; and to be in the right, you should remove from the garret upstairs that long spyglass which is enough to frighten people, and a hundred trifles the sight of which is offensive. It would be better not to trouble about what is being done in the moon, but to look a little after what is being done in your house, where everything is topsy-turvy. It is not right, for a great many reasons, that a wife should study and know so much. To form the minds of her children to good manners, to make her household go well, to have an eye over her servants, and to regulate her expenditure with economy, ought to be her study and philosophy. Our fathers were very sensible on this point when they said that a wife always knew enough when her genius raised her to distinguish between a doublet and a pair of breeches. Their wives did not read, but they lived well; their households were all their learned discourse, and their books a thimble, thread, and needles, with which they worked at their daughters' wedding outfits. But the women of this age are far from such manners; they must write and turn authors. No science is too profound for them; and in my house more than in any other place, the profoundest secrets are conceived, and everything is known but what ought to be known. They know the motions of the moon, the polar star, Venus, Saturn, and Mars, which do not concern me, and with all this vain knowledge which they go so far to look for, they do not know how my dinner is being cooked, which I need. My servants, too, aspire after learning in order to please you, and they do nothing less than what they ought to do. Reasoning is the business of all the house, and reasoning drives reason out of it. One burns the joint while she reads some history, another is spouting poetry when I want something to drink. In short, I perceive they follow your example, and though I have servants I am not served. One poor girl remained to me, the only one who was not infected with these senseless airs, and she's dismissed with a great outcry, because she does not speak according to Vaugelas. I tell you, sister, for it is to you, as I said, that I address myself, all this

way of going on displeases me. I don't like all your Latin scholars coming to my house, and specially this Monsieur Trissotin. He it was who lampooned you in verse, and his discourses are foolish trash. After he has spoken, one asks what it has all been about, and for my part I believe that he's got a tile loose.

*Phi.* Good heavens, what meanness both of soul and language!

*Bél.* Can there be a duller assemblage of corpuscles? or a mind composed of more vulgar atoms? Is it possible that I'm of the same blood? I hate myself for being of your race, and I leave the place in confusion.

## SCENE VIII.

PHILAMINTE, CHRYSALE.

*Philaminte.* Have you still another arrow to shoot?

*Chrysale.* I? No. Let us have no more dispute; that's ended. Let us talk of another matter. As for your eldest daughter, one can see her dislike to the ties of marriage; in short, she's a philosopher, and I say nothing more of her; she's well managed, and you do very right. But her younger sister is quite of another disposition, and I believe it will be well to provide Henriette with a husband.

*Phi.* That is what I have been thinking about, and I will tell you what my intention is. This Monsieur Trissotin, who is thrown in our teeth, and who has not the honour to meet with your approbation, is the person who I think will prove a suitable husband for her; and I know better than you how to judge of his merit. Dispute in the matter is needless, as I have fully made up my mind. At least, don't say a word about this choice of a husband, as I wish to speak to your daughter about it before you. I have reasons which will make my conduct approved of, and I shall know very well if you have been instructing her.

## SCENE IX.

ARISTE, CHRYSALE.

*Ariste.* Well? Your wife's gone, brother, and I see that you have just been having some conversation together.

*Chrysale.* Yes.

*Aris.* With what success? Shall we have Henriette? Has she consented? Is the business done?

*Chr.* Not quite yet.

*Aris.* Does she refuse?
*Chr.* No.
*Aris.* Does she hesitate?
*Chr.* Not at all.
*Aris.* What then?
*Chr.* She offers me another man for a son-in-law.
*Aris.* Another man for a son-in-law?
*Chr.* Another.
*Aris.* What's his name?
*Chr.* Monsieur Trissotin.
*Aris.* What! that Monsieur Trissotin——
*Chr.* Yes, who's always talking Latin and poetry.
*Aris.* Have you accepted him?
*Chr.* I? No. Heaven forbid.
*Aris.* What answer did you make?
*Chr.* None. And I am very glad I did not speak, so as not to commit myself.
*Aris.* That's a very fine reason, and you've taken a grand step. However, did you at least propose Clitandre to her?
*Chr.* No; for, finding she was talking of another son-in-law, I thought it better not to make any advances.
*Aris.* Certainly your prudence is to the last degree extraordinary. Are you not ashamed of such effeminacy? Is it possible a man can be so weak as to let his wife have absolute power, and not dare to oppose what she has resolved on?
*Chr.* Good heavens, brother, you talk in a very off-hand way, and don't know how noise depresses me! I love repose, peace, and tranquillity very much, and my wife has a terrible temper; she makes a great fuss about the name of philosopher, but she is none the less passionate for that; and her morality, which despises wealth, has no effect in lessening the sharpness of her anger. At the slightest opposition to what comes into her head we have a terrible storm for a week. She makes me tremble whenever she takes that tone. She's such a perfect dragon, that I don't know where to hide myself, and yet with all her devilish temper, I'm obliged to call her My Heart, and My Love.
*Aris.* Come, this is joking. Between us, your wife is, through your cowardice, absolute mistress over you. Her power is based upon nothing but your weakness. It is from you that she takes the title of mistress. You give yourself up to her haughty command, and allow yourself to be led by the nose like an ass. What! can't you for once resolve to be a man—seeing you are called one—and make a wife yield to your wishes, and take heart

to say, "I will have it so." Can you, without shame, let your daughter be sacrificed to the foolish visions your family are possessed with, and invest an idiot with all your wealth for six words of Latin, which he extols to them? A pedant whom your wife compliments at every turn as a wit and a great philosopher, a man unequalled for polite verses, when every one knows he's nothing of the kind. Come, come, once more, the whole thing's a jest, and your cowardice deserves to be laughed at.

*Chr.* You are right, and I find that I am in the wrong. Come now, brother, I'll show a stouter heart.

*Aris.* That's well said.

*Chr.* It's a disgraceful thing to be so subject to the power of a wife.

*Aris.* Very well.

*Chr.* She has gained too much by my mildness.

*Aris.* True.

*Chr.* Has played too much on my easy disposition.

*Aris.* Certainly.

*Chr.* And I'll show her this very day that my daughter *is* my daughter, and that I am her master, and will choose a husband for her who shall be after my mind.

*Aris.* Now you are reasonable, and as I would have you.

*Chr.* You are all for Clitandre, brother, and know where he lives. Bring him to me at once.

*Aris.* I'll run and do it at once.

*Chr.* I've put up with it too long. I mean now to be a man in the face of the world.

## ACT III. SCENE I.

PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, BÉLISE, TRISSOTIN, L'ÉPINE.

*Philaminte.* Ah, let us sit down here, to hear at our ease these verses, which should be weighed word by word.

*Armande.* I'm dying to hear them.

*Bélise.* And so are we.

*Phi.* (*to Trissotin*). Whatever comes from you charms me.

*Ar.* To me it is an unparalleled pleasure.

*Bél.* It is a delicious repast to my ear.

*Phi.* Don't make us languish under such pressing desires.

*Ar.* Pray make haste.

*Bél.* Be quick, and hasten our pleasure.

*Phi.* Offer your epigram to our impatience.

*Trissotin* (*to Philaminte*). Ah, madame, it is quite a new-born babe. Its fate certainly ought to touch you, for it was in your court-yard that I brought it forth.

*Phi.* Its father is sufficient to make it dear to me.

*Tris.* Your approbation may serve it for a mother.

*Bél.* How witty he is!

## SCENE II.

HENRIETTE, PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, BÉLISE, TRISSOTIN, L'ÉPINE.

*Philaminte* (*to Henriette, who is going away*). Ho, Henriette! are you running away again?

*Henriette.* It is for fear of disturbing so sweet a conversation.

*Phi.* Come near, and come, all attention, to share the pleasure of hearing wonders.

*Hen.* I know very little about literary beauties, and matters of genius are not in my province.

*Phi.* No matter. I have a secret besides to tell you afterwards, which it is necessary you should know.

*Trissotin* (*to Henriette*). The sciences have nothing in them to inflame you; you only pique yourself on how to charm.

*Hen.* One as little as the other, and I have no desire——

*Bél.* Come, let us think of the new-born babe, pray.

*Phi.* (*to L'Épine*). Now, boy, make haste and bring us chairs. (*L'Épine falls down.*) Look at the clumsy fellow. Ought you to fall after having learned the equilibrium of things?

*Bél.* Don't you see, you stupid boy, what caused your fall? It came from your deviating from the fixed point, which we call the centre of gravity.

*L'Épine.* I perceived that, madame, when I was on the ground.

*Phi.* (*to L'Épine, who goes out*). What a booby.

*Tris.* Lucky for him he wasn't made of glass.

*Ar.* Ah! wit for ever.

*Bél.* That's never dried up.

*Phi.* (*all sit down*). Serve us up your delightful repast as quickly as possible.

*Tris.* To satisfy such hunger as you show me, a course of only eight verses seems to me little enough, and I think I should not do wrong if I added to the epigram, or rather madrigal, the relish of a sonnet in which a certain princess found some delicacy of taste. It is seasoned with Attic salt throughout, and you'll find it, I think, in very good taste.

*Ar.* Oh, I don't doubt it.

*Phi.* Let us give attention at once.

*Bél.* (*interrupting Trissotin as often as he begins to read*). I feel my heart leap for joy beforehand. I love poetry to distraction, and especially when the verses are gallantly turned.

*Phi.* If we talk continually, he can say nothing.

*Tris.* So——

*Bél.* (*to Henriette*). Silence, niece.

*Ar.* Now let him read.

*Tris.* A SONNET TO THE PRINCESS URANIE, ON HER FEVER.[1]

*Asleep your prudence sure must be,*
*Magnificently thus to treat,*
*And sumptuously lodge in state,*
*Your most pernicious enemy.*

*Bél.* Oh! what a lovely beginning!

*Ar.* What a charming turn it has!

*Phi.* He alone possesses the talent of making smooth verses.

*Ar.* We must give the palm to *prudence asleep*.

*Bél.* *Lodge her enemy* is full of charms to me.

*Phi.* I like *sumptuously* and *magnificently*. Those two adverbs are joined so admirably.

*Bél.* Now let's listen to the rest.

*Tris.* *Asleep your prudence sure must be,*
*Magnificently thus to treat,*
*And sumptuously lodge in state,*
*Your most pernicious enemy.*

*Ar.* *Prudence asleep!*

*Bél.* *Sumptuously lodge her enemy!*

*Phi.* *Sumptuously! Magnificently!*

*Tris.* *Whate'er is said, the serpent send*
*From your apartment rich and great;*
*Where insolently the ingrate*
*Your precious life attempts to end.*

*Bél.* Ah, gently! Let us take breath.

*Ar.* Pray give us time to admire.

*Phi.* On hearing these verses, one feels something run at the very bottom of one's heart, so that one feels faint.

*Ar.* *Whate'er is said, the serpent send,*
*From your apartment rich and great.*

How finely said is, *Apartment rich and great!* And with what wit is the metaphor introduced!

[1] Quoted from the works of Charles Cotin, 1663.

*Phi.* *What'er is said* is admirable for taste. In my opinion it is an invaluable passage.

*Bél.* I am of your opinion, *What'er is said* is a happy expression.

*Ar.* I wish I had written it.

*Bél.* It's worth a whole piece.

*Phi.* But do you really understand the refinement of it, as I do?

*Ar.* and *Bél.* Oh, oh!

*Phi.* *What'er is said, the serpent send.*

Though they should take the fever's part, don't regard it, but laugh at their babbling, *What'er is said, the serpent send, What-e'er is said, What'er is said.* This *What'er is said* says a great deal more than any one thinks; for my part, I don't know if every one is like me, but I understand a million of words beneath it.

*Bél.* It is true. It says more things than it seems to do.

*Phi.* (*to Trissotin*). But when you wrote that charming *What-e'er is said*, did you yourself comprehend all its force? Did you really imagine all that it says to us? And did you then think you were putting so much wit into it?

*Tris.* Aha, aha!

*Ar.* I have likewise *the ingrate* running in my head: the ingrate of a fever, unjust, uncivil, to treat people ill who entertained it.

*Phi.* In short, both the quatrains are admirable. Pray let us come quickly to the triplets.

*Ar.* Ah, once more, *What'er is said*, if you please.

*Tris.* *What'er is said, the serpent send.*

*Phi.*, *Ar.*, and *Bél.* *What'er is said!*

*Tris.* *From your apartment rich and great.*

*Phi.*, *Ar.*, and *Bél.* *Apartment rich and great.*

*Tris.* *Where insolently the ingrate.*

*Phi.*, *Ar.*, and *Bél.* That "ingrate" of a fever!

*Tris.* *Your precious life attempts to end.*

*Phi.* *Your precious life!*

*Ar.* and *Bél.* Ah!

*Tris.* *Who, not respecting your high rank,*
*Your noble blood has basely drank.*

*Phi.*, *Ar.*, and *Bél.* Ah!

*Tris.* *And hourly plays some cruel prank.*
*The next time to the bath you go,*
*There take it without more ado,*
*And with your own hands drown it so.*

*Phi.* I can bear no more.
*Bél.* I am actually fainting.
*Ar.* I am dying with pleasure.
*Phi.* One finds oneself seized with a thousand gentle thrillings.
*Ar.* *The next time to the bath you go.*
*Bél.* *There take it without more ado,*
*Phi.* *And with your own hands drown it so.*
*Drown it with your own hands, there.*
*With your own hands drown it in the bath.*
*Ar.* At every step in your verses one meets with charming beauty.
*Bél.* One goes through it all with rapture.
*Phi.* One cannot help treading upon beautiful things.
*Ar.* They are paths strewn with roses.
*Tris.* The sonnet, then, you think is——
*Phi.* Admirable, new; no one ever made anything so fine.
*Bél.* (*to Henriette*). What! no emotion during the reading? You make a strange figure there, niece.
*Hen.* Every one here below, aunt, makes what figure they can; and one cannot be a wit at will.
*Tris.* Perhaps my verses annoy you.
*Hen.* No; I don't listen.
*Phi.* Now let us hear the epigram.
*Tris.* It is, *On a carriage of an amarant colour, presented to a lady of his acquaintance.*[1]
*Phi.* His titles have always something uncommon in them.
*Ar.* The novelty of them prepares one for a hundred strokes of wit.
*Tris.* *Love has so dearly sold to me his band,*
*Bél.*, *Ar.*, and *Phi.* Ah!
*Tris.* *Already it has cost me half my land.*
*And when this lovely carriage you behold,*
*Wherein there lies embossed so much gold,*
*That it amazeth all the country round,*
*And makes my Laïs' triumph far resound*——
*Phi.* Ah, "My Lais!" There's erudition!
*Bél.* The disguise is pretty, and is worth a million.
*Tris.* *And when this lovely carriage you behold,*
*Wherein there lies embossed so much gold,*
*That it amazeth all the country round,*
*And makes my Laïs' triumph far resound,*

[1] Also from Cotin's works.

*No longer say that it is amarant,*
*But much, much rather say 'tis of my rent.*[1]

*Ar.* Oh, oh, oh! That was quite unexpected.

*Phi.* No one but he can write with such taste.

*Bél.* *No longer say that it is amarant,*
*But much, much rather say 'tis of my rent.*

This may be declined, *My rent, of my rent, to my rent* (*à ma rente*).

*Phi.* I don't know whether my mind was prepossessed in your favour from the moment I knew you; but I admire your verse and prose throughout.

*Tris.* (*to Philaminte*). If you would show us something of yours, we too could admire it in our turn.

*Phi.* I have done nothing in verse, but I have reason to hope that I may be able shortly to show you as a friend eight chapters of the plan of our academy. Plato foolishly stopped at the mere plan when he wrote his "Republic," but I'll carry out the idea, which I have on paper, to its full extent. For indeed I am greatly vexed at the wrong done to us as regards our intelligence, and I'll avenge every one of us for the inferior place men assign to us, limiting our talents to trifling things, and shutting against us the door of the highest knowledge.

*Ar.* It is insulting to our sex to limit our intelligence to the judging of a petticoat, or the sit of a mantle, or the beauty of lace, or a new brocade.

*Bél.* We must raise ourselves above this shameful condition, and raise our genius to independence.

*Tris.* My respect for the ladies is everywhere known; and if I pay homage to the brilliancy of their eyes, I likewise honour the brightness of their wit.

*Phi.* Our sex likewise does you justice in those things; but we would show certain authors whose pride of intellect treats us with contempt that women are likewise equipped with knowledge; that, like them, they can hold learned assemblies, regulated by better rules, can unite there what's separated elsewhere, join fine language to sublime knowledge, unveil nature in a thousand experiments, and upon any question that may be proposed, bring forward every view of it, and espouse none.

*Tris.* For order, I hold to Peripateticism.

*Phi.* For abstractions, I hold to Platonism.

*Ar.* Epicurus pleases me, for his dogmas are strong.

*Bél.* For my part, I agree altogether with the atomic philo-

[1] The play on the words in the original cannot be exactly rendered.

sophy; but I think the vacuum too difficult to be allowed, and relish the theory of subtle matter much better.

*Tris.* Descartes leans much to my opinion, in the matter of magnetism.

*Ar.* I love his vortices.

*Phi.* And I, his falling worlds.

*Ar.* I long to see our assembly opened, and to signalise ourselves by some discovery.

*Tris.* We expect much from your lively intelligence; and there's not much obscurity in nature for you.

*Phi.* For my part, without flattering myself, I've made a discovery already, and have plainly seen men in the moon.

*Bél.* I have not yet seen men, I think; but I have seen steeples as plain as I see you.

*Ar.* We will likewise dive into the profundity of grammar, history, poetry, morals, and politics, as well as of physics.

*Phi.* Morality has charms that take my fancy, and it was formerly the delight of great geniuses; but I give the preference to the Stoics, and think nothing can be finer than their Wise Man.

*Ar.* As for language, we will soon make our rules known about that, as we intend to make great changes in it. Either by a just or natural antipathy, we have each taken a mortal hatred to a number of words, either verbs or nouns, which we shall mutually abandon; we are preparing deadly sentences against them, and design to open our learned conference by the proscription of all those words from which we would purge both prose and verse.

*Phi.* But the finest project of our Academy, which is a noble enterprise, and with which I am transported—a design full of glory, and which will be extolled among all the geniuses of posterity—is the cutting off those filthy syllables which produce scandals in the finest words; those eternal jests of the fools of all times, those nauseous commonplaces of our wretched buffoons, those sources of a heap of infamous *double-entendres* with which they insult the modesty of women.

*Tris.* These are certainly admirable projects.

*Bél.* You shall see our statutes when they are all made.

*Tris.* They can't fail of being all beautiful and wise.

*Ar.* We shall judge works by our laws; all prose and verse will both be submitted to us; no one will have any wit but ourselves and our friends; we shall search everywhere to find something to blame; and no one will know how to write well but ourselves.

## SCENE III.

TRISSOTIN, PHILAMINTE, BÉLISE, ARMANDE, HENRIETTE, L'ÉPINE; *afterwards* VADIUS.

*L'Épine* (*to Trissotin*). Sir, there's a man there who wishes to speak to you; he's dressed in black, and speaks in a gentle voice. (*They rise up.*)

*Trissotin.* It is that learned friend who pressed me so much to procure him the honour of an introduction to you.

*Philaminte.* You have full liberty, sir, to introduce him. (*Trissotin goes to meet Vadius.*) (*To Armande and Bélise.*) Let us do well the honours of our intelligence. (*To Henriette, who is going out.*) I told you plainly enough that I wanted you.

*Henriette.* But what for?

*Phi.* Come here, and I will tell you presently.

*Tris.* (*presenting Vadius*). This is the man who is dying to see you. When I introduce him I am not afraid of being blamed for admitting an outsider to you, madame; he can hold his place among our best wits.

*Phi.* The hand that presents him sufficiently speaks his value.

*Tris.* He has a perfect knowledge of the ancient authors, and understands Greek, madame, as well as any man in France.

*Phi.* (*to Bélise*). Greek! good heavens! Greek! He understands Greek, sister?

*Bélise* (*to Armande*). Ah, niece, Greek.

*Armande.* Greek! Oh, what a delight!

*Phi.* What! does monsieur understand Greek? Ah! pray let me embrace you, sir, for Greek's sake. (*Vadius embraces both Bélise and Armande.*)

*Henriette* (*to Vadius, who would embrace her too*). Excuse me, sir, I don't understand Greek. (*They sit down.*)

*Phi.* I have a wonderful respect for Greek books.

*Vadius.* I am afraid of being troublesome through the great desire which induced me to pay you my homage to-day. I fear, madame, I have disturbed some learned conversation.

*Phi.* Sir, with your Greek you can disturb nothing.

*Tris.* He likewise does wonders in verse as well as prose, and might, if he would, show you something.

*Vad.* The fault of authors is that of tyrannising over conversation with their productions, being never tired of reading their tiresome verses at the Law Courts, promenades, by-streets, and at table. For my part, there is nothing more ridiculous, in my opinion, than an author who goes everywhere touting for praise;

who, seizing the ears of the first comers, most frequently makes them martyrs to his effusions. I never had this foolish infatuation; and in this I'm of the opinion of a certain Greek, who, by an express dogma, forbids to all his wise men the unbecoming eagerness to read their works to others. Here are some little verses for young lovers, on which I would gladly have your opinions.

*Tris.* Your verses have beauties which all others lack.

*Vad.* Venus and all the graces reign in all yours.

*Tris.* You have a free expression, and a fine choice of words.

*Vad.* We see everywhere that you have the *Ethos* and the *Pathos*.

*Tris.* We have heard eclogues from you in a style that surpasses Virgil and Theocritus for sweetness.

*Vad.* Your odes have a noble, gallant, and tender air, which leaves your own Horace far behind.

*Tris.* Is there anything so amorous as your lays?

*Vad.* Can one find anything to equal your sonnets?

*Tris.* Anything more charming that your rondeaux?

*Vad.* Anything so full of wit as all your madrigals?

*Tris.* At ballads especially you are admirable.

*Vad.* And I think you adorable in *bouts-rimés*.

*Tris.* If France could only know your worth!

*Vad.* If the age did but render justice to men of wit!

*Tris.* You'd ride through the streets in a gilt carriage.

*Vad.* We should see the public erect statues to you. Hm —(*to Trissotin*). Here's a ballad, and I desire that you'll frankly——

*Tris.* (*to Vadius*). Have you seen a certain little sonnet on the Princess Uranie's fever?

*Vad.* Yes; it was read to me yesterday in company.

*Tris.* Do you know the author?

*Vad.* No; but I know very well that, not to flatter him, his sonnet's worth nothing.

*Tris.* A great many people, however, think it admirable.

*Vad.* That doesn't hinder it from being wretched, and if you had seen it, you would have been of my opinion.

*Tris.* I know I shall not at all agree in that; for few are capable of such a sonnet.

*Vad.* Heaven preserve me from making such!

*Tris.* I maintain that a better cannot be made, and my chief reason is because I am the author of it.

*Vad.* You? *Tris.* I.

*Vad.* I can't tell then how the thing was.

*Tris.* It was that I was so unhappy as not to be able to please you.

*Vad.* I must have had my mind wandering when I heard it; or else the reader spoilt the sonnet. But let us leave this discussion and hear my ballad.

*Tris.* A ballad in my opinion is an insipid thing; it is no longer in fashion, it savours of antiquity.

*Vad.* A ballad, however, charms a great many people

*Tris.* That doesn't hinder its displeasing me.

*Vad.* It may be none the worse for that.

*Tris.* It has a wonderful attraction for pedants.

*Vad.* And yet we see it does not please you.

*Tris.* You foolishly attribute your qualities to others. (*They all rise.*)

*Vad.* You very impertinently cast yours on me.

*Tris.* Be off, you school-boy, you paper-blotter!

*Vad.* Be off, you pitiful rhymer, a shame to your profession!

*Tris.* Go, you second-hand verse-maker. You impudent plagiarist!

*Vad.* Go, you pedant——

*Phi.* Oh, gentlemen, what are you going to do?

*Tris.* (*to Vadius*). Go, go and restore all the shameful thefts which the Greeks and Latins claim back from you!

*Vad.* Go, go and do penance on Parnassus for having lamed Horace in your verses.

*Tris.* Remember your book, and the little impression it made.

*Vad.* Remember your bookseller reduced to the workhouse.

*Tris.* My fame is established; it is in vain that you endeavour to tear it to pieces.

*Vad.* Yes, yes, I send you back to the author of the Satires.[1]

*Tris.* And I send you to him too.

*Vad.* I have the satisfaction of knowing that people can see he has treated me more honourably. He gives me a slight touch in passing, as he does to many authors that are well thought of at the Courts; but as for you he never leaves you at peace with his verses, and you are throughout the butt of his sarcasms.

*Tris.* I hold all the more honourable rank there for that. He puts you among the crowd, like a mere wretch; thinks it sufficient to crush you with one blow, and never does you the honour to repeat it; but he attacks me apart as a noble adversary, against

[1] Boileau.

whom he thinks all his strength necessary, and his redoubling his blows against me in all places, shows that he never thinks himself victorious.

*Vad.* My pen shall teach you what sort of a man I am.

*Tris.* And mine shall make you know your master.

*Vad.* I defy you in verse, prose, Greek and Latin.

*Tris.* Well, well, we shall meet alone at Barbin's.[1]

## SCENE IV.

TRISSOTIN, PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, BÉLISE, HENRIETTE.

*Trissotin.* Do not blame my passion. It is your judgment that I defend, madame, in the sonnet he had the boldness to attack.

*Philaminte.* I will endeavour to reconcile you. But let us talk of another affair. Come here, Henriette. I have been a long time disturbed in my mind because I could never discover any genius in you; but I have found a method of giving some to you.

*Henriette.* You take an unnecessary care for me. Learned discourses do not interest me; I like to live at ease; and it is too much trouble to be always trying to say witty things. It is an ambition which I lack. I am quite content, mother, to be stupid, and would rather have only a common way of talking than torment myself to make fine speeches.

*Phi.* Yes, but I am offended by it, and it is not my intention to suffer such a stain in my family. Beauty of face is a frail ornament, a fading flower, a moment's brightness, which is only skin deep; but that of the mind is inherent and firm. I have therefore sought a long time some one to bestow on you that beauty which time cannot harvest, to inspire you with the love of learning, to make you long after knowledge; and the resolution I have at last come to is to unite you to a man who is full of cleverness. And this (*pointing to Trissotin*) is that gentleman whom I order you to look on as the husband I have chosen for you.

*Hen.* For me, mother?

*Phi.* Yes, for you. Play the fool a little, do.

*Bélise* (*to Trissotin*). I understand you. Your eyes beg my consent to engage elsewhere a heart which I possess. Well, I will give it. I yield you to this union. It is a match that will give you an establishment.

*Tris.* (*to Henriette*). I know not what to say to you in my transport, madame; and this match that I see myself honoured with, puts me——

[1] A well-known bookseller in the Grand Hall of the Palais de Justice.

*Hen.* Gently, sir. It is not yet concluded. Don't be in such a hurry.

*Phi.* How you answer! Do you know that if——That is enough. You understand me. (*To Trissotin.*) She'll become sensible. Come, let us leave her.

## SCENE V.

HENRIETTE, ARMANDE.

*Armande.* You can see how brightly our mother's care shines for you; she could not have chosen a more illustrious husband——

*Henriette.* If the choice is so charming, why don't you take him?

*Ar.* It is to you, not to me, that his hand is given.

*Hen.* I yield him entirely to you as my elder sister.

*Ar.* If matrimony appeared as charming to me as it does to you, I should accept your offer with rapture.

*Hen.* If I had pedants on the brain as you have, I should think it a very good match.

*Ar.* However different our tastes may be, sister, we ought to obey our parents. A mother has absolute power over us, and in vain you think by your resistance——

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## SCENE VI.

CHRYSALE, ARISTE, CLITANDRE, HENRIETTE, ARMANDE.

*Chrysale* (*to Henriette, presenting Clitandre*). Come, daughter, you must approve of my design. Pull off your glove. Give this gentleman your hand, and consider him henceforth in your heart as the man whose wife I intend you to be.

*Armande.* On this side, sister, your inclination is strong enough.

*Henriette.* We ought to obey our parents, sister, a father has absolute power over our wishes.

*Ar.* A mother has her share in our obedience.

*Chr.* What do you mean by this?

*Ar.* I say that I apprehend that you and my mother will not agree in this, and there's another husband——

*Chr.* Hold your tongue, you silly girl. Go and philosophise as much as you like with her, but don't concern yourself with my actions. Tell her my mind, and warn her strongly not to come and worry me. Make haste! [*Exit Armande.*

*Ariste.* Very well, indeed, you are doing wonders.

*Clitandre.* What transport, what joy! How kind is fortune to me.

*Chr.* (*to Clitandre*). Come, take her hand, and go before us; lead her to her room. Ah! What sweet caresses! (*To Ariste.*) Ah, my heart is moved by all this tenderness; this cheers up my old age wonderfully, and I begin to remember my youthful love-making.

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE.

*Armande.* Yes, she did not in the least hesitate, but made a vain show of her obedience. Her heart scarcely gave itself time to receive the order, but seemed less to follow the will of a father than to defy the commands of a mother.

*Philaminte.* I'll let her see to whose orders of us two the laws of reason will make her submit her wishes; and who ought to govern, her father or her mother, mind or body, form or matter.

*Ar.* At least they owed you a compliment in the affair. This little gentleman uses you strangely, in resolving to be your son-in-law in spite of you.

*Phi.* He is not so now in the way his heart might have aspired to. I thought him handsome, and I approved of his love for you; but he always displeased me by his actions; he knew that, thanks to heaven, I was an authoress, and yet he never desired me to read anything to him.

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## SCENE II.

CLITANDRE (*entering quietly, and listening unseen*), ARMANDE, PHILAMINTE.

*Armande.* If I were you I would not permit him ever to be Henriette's husband. It would be doing me a great wrong to suppose that I speak from interested motives, or that the base trick which he has played me has raised any secret indignation in my heart. The soul is fortified against such blows by the solid help of philosophy, and by means of that one can raise oneself above everything, but to treat you in this manner is to push matters to an extremity. Your honour obliges you to act contrary to his wishes, and, in short, he's not a man you should be pleased with.

I never found when we were talking together, that at the bottom of his heart he had any regard for you.

*Philaminte.* Poor fool!

*Ar.* Notwithstanding the noise your fame makes he always appeared like ice as to praising you.

*Phi.* The brute!

*Ar.* And I have twenty times read some of your verses as novelties, which he did not think fine.

*Phi.* What impertinence!

*Ar.* We often quarrelled about it, and you would not believe how much abuse——

*Clitandre* (*to Armande*). Oh, gently, if you please. A little charity, madame, or at least a little honesty. What harm have I done you? And what is my offence that you should arm all your eloquence against me? Why should you wish to ruin me, and take so much pains to render me odious to those I have need of? Speak, and tell me whence comes this terrible anger? I should like this lady to be an impartial judge in the case.

*Ar.* If I were as angry as you say, I should have good reason. You deserve it only too well: for first love fixes itself by such sacred rights on the heart, that one ought to renounce fortune, and even the very light of day, rather than burn with the fires of a second love; no horror is equal to changing one's love, and every faithless heart is a moral monster.

*Cli.* Do you call that infidelity which the pride of your soul enjoined on me? I only obey the laws it imposes, and if I offend you that alone is the cause of it. Your charms at first had full possession of my heart, it burnt for two years with a constant fire; there was no assiduous care, duty, respect, service, which it did not lovingly sacrifice to you. But all my ardour, all my care, could prevail nothing with you; I found you still opposed to my softest addresses. What you refused I offer to another. Consider, madame, is that my fault or yours? Did my heart hasten to change, or did you drive it thither? Is it I that leave you or do you turn me away?

*Ar.* Do you call it, sir, opposing your addresses to deprive them of all that was vulgar in them, and to endeavour to reduce them to that purity in which consists the beauty of pure love? You could not for me keep your thoughts clear and disentangled from matters of sense; nor could you feast on the greatest of all charms, the union of souls, in which the body is not concerned. You can only love with a gross passion, with all the train of material ties; and to feed the fires that arise in you, there must be

marriage and all its consequences. Ah, what strange love! How far are great souls from burning with these terrestrial flames! The senses have no share in all their ardours; this pure passion would marry nothing but the heart, and leaves the rest behind as worthless; it is a fire pure and clear as the celestial fire; with this they breathe only virtuous sighs, and never incline to base desires. Nothing impure has to do with the end they propose. They love for the sake of loving and for nothing else; their transports are only of the soul, and they never remember that they have a body.

*Cli.* Unluckily for me, madame, I perceive that, with your leave, I have a body as well as a soul, and they hold together too closely to be parted; I don't understand the art of these separations; heaven has denied me this philosophy. My body and soul go together. There is nothing finer, as you have observed, than these purified desires which regard the soul only, that union of hearts, and those tender thoughts so thoroughly disentangled from things of sense. But love of this sort is too refined for me. I am somewhat gross, as you accuse me of being; I love with my whole self, and I desire, I must own, to have the love that is given to me given to my entire person. This is not a matter worthy of any great punishment, and without wronging your fine sentiments, I see that my method is very much followed in the world, and that marriage is sufficiently in fashion, and passes for a tie virtuous and tender enough to warrant the desire I had of becoming your husband, without giving you cause to appear offended at the liberty of the thought.

*Ar.* Ah, well, well, sir, since your vulgar sentiments must needs be satisfied without listening to me, since there must be carnal ties and corporeal bonds to bring you to love faithfully, if my mother consents to it, I'll bring my mind to agree with you in what we were discussing.

*Cli.* It is too late, madame, another has taken your place, and by such a return I should basely abuse the refuge and wrong the goodness to which I fled from your haughtiness.

*Phi.* But indeed, do you reckon on my consent, sir, when you promise yourself this other match? In your vain imaginings, do you know that I have another husband ready for Henriette?

*Cli.* I pray you, madame, to consider your choice, and expose me, I beg of you, to less disgrace; and do not condemn me to the shameful fate of being a rival of Mons. Trissotin. The love of genius which makes you oppose me could not match me against a less noble adversary. There are many whom the perverted taste of the age has accounted wits, but Mons. Trissotin

has not been able to deceive anybody, and every one does justice to his writings. Everywhere, except here, they take him for what he is worth, and twenty times I've been astonished to hear you praise to the skies some silly verses that you would have disowned if you had made them yourself.

*Phi.* If you judge of him quite differently from what we do, it is because we see him with other eyes.

## SCENE III.

TRISSOTIN, PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, CLITANDRE.

*Trissotin* (*to Philaminte*). I've come to tell you a great piece of news, madame. We've had a very narrow escape. A world has passed along just by us, and is fallen across our vortex; had it met our earth on the way, it would have been dashed to pieces like so much glass.

*Philaminte.* Let us postpone this conversation to another time, since this gentleman finds neither rhyme nor reason in it. He professes to cherish ignorance, and to hate wit and learning above everything.

*Clitandre.* This truth wants some explanation. I must explain myself, madame; I only hate that wit and learning which spoil people. These are things which in themselves are fine and good; but I would prefer to rank myself among the ignorant, rather than see myself learned like some people.

*Tris.* For my part, I don't hold, whatever may be supposed, that learning can spoil anything.

*Cli.* And it's my opinion that learning often makes very great fools, both in word and deed.

*Tris.* That's a great paradox.

*Cli.* The proof of it would be easy enough, I believe, without being very wise. If reasons should fail, I am sure that famous examples will not be wanting.

*Tris.* Cite some, and that will end the matter.

*Cli.* I need not go very far to find one for my purpose.

*Tris.* For my part I don't see these famous examples.

*Cli.* I see them so plainly that they almost strike me blind.

*Tris.* I thought hitherto that it was ignorance which made great fools, not learning.

*Cli.* You have thought very wrong, and I assure you that a learned fool is more foolish than an ignorant one.

*Tris.* Common opinion is against your maxims, since ignorant and fool are synonymous terms.

*Cli.* If you wish to go by the use of words, the alliance is closer between pedant and fool.

*Tris.* Folly in the one appears perfectly pure.

*Cli.* And study in the other adds to nature.

*Tris.* Learning in itself has eminent merit.

*Cli.* Learning in a blockhead becomes impertinent.

*Tris.* Ignorance must have great charms for you, since you take up arms so eagerly in its defence.

*Cli.* If ignorance has very great charms for me, it is because certain learned people offer themselves to my view.

*Tris.* Those certain learned people might, if we knew them, be as good as certain other people whom we see before us.

*Cli.* Yes, if it were left to those learned people; but the others would not agree to this.

*Phi.* (*to Clitandre*). I think, sir——

*Cli.* Oh, madame, if you please, monsieur is strong enough without your coming to his assistance. I have already too rough an assailant, and I can only defend myself by retreating.

*Armande.* But the offensive bitterness of each repartee which you——

*Cli.* Another second! I have done, then.

*Phi.* One can put up with controversies in conversation, provided there are no personal attacks.

*Cli.* Oh, good gracious! there's nothing in all this to offend him. He understands raillery as well as any man in France; he has felt himself pricked by many other darts without his vanity having done anything but make a jest of them.

*Tris.* I don't wonder in this combat at seeing the gentleman take up the thesis he maintains. He's much at court, that's enough; the court, it is well known, does not go in for wit; it has an interest in supporting ignorance, and it is as being a courtier that he undertakes its defence.

*Cli.* You wish very ill to the poor court, and its unhappiness is very great at seeing you wits declaim against it every day: when anything vexes you, you scold it; and arraigning its taste, accuse it alone of your ill success. Give me leave, Mons. Trissotin, to tell you, with all the respect your name inspires, that you and your brethren would do well to speak a little more gently of the court; and at bottom it is not so stupid as you gentlemen imagine; that it has common sense to judge of everything; that a little good taste may be formed there, and that, without flattery, the knowledge of the world there is worth all the obscure learning of pedantry.

*Tris.* We see the effects of its good taste, sir.

*Cli.* Where do you see, sir, its taste is so bad?

*Tris.* What do I see, sir? That Rasius and Baldus for learning do honour to France; and that all their merit, which is very visible, does not attract either the eyes or the gifts of the court.

*Cli.* I see your vexation, and that it is through modesty you don't place yourself, sir, with them. Not to bring your name into the discourse, What do your clever heroes do for the State? What service do their writings do it, that they accuse the court of horrible injustice, and complain everywhere that it fails to pour down its gifts upon their learned names. Their learning is very necessary to France, and the court is much concerned with the books they write! Three beggarly fellows get it into their pitiful heads that if they are but printed and bound in calf they are important persons in the State; that the fate of crowns depends on their pen; that at the least rumour of their productions they should see pensions flying about them; that the eyes of the universe are fixed upon them; that the glory of their name is spread everywhere; and that they are famous prodigies in learning, because they, knowing what others have said before them, having had ears and eyes for thirty years, have employed nine or ten thousand nights' labour in perplexing themselves with Greek and Latin, and loading their minds with an unintelligible booty of all the old trash that lies scattered in books: men that appear always drunk with their learning; their only merit an abundance of importunate babble; unskilful in everything, void of common sense, and full of ridicule and impertinence to decry true wit and learning everywhere.

*Phi.* Your warmth is very great, and this anger shows the strivings of nature in you. It is the word rival that excites in your breast——

## SCENE IV.

TRISSOTIN, PHILAMINTE, CLITANDRE, ARMANDE, JULIEN.

*Julien.* The learned person that paid you a visit just now, madame, and whose humble servant I have the honour of being, exhorts you to read this letter.

*Philaminte.* However important this may be, learn, friend, that it is a piece of rudeness to interrupt a conversation; and that a servant who knows how to behave should have recourse to the people of the house to be introduced.

*Julien.* I'll note, that, madame, in my book.

*Phi. Trissotin boasts, madame, that he's to marry your daughter. I give notice that his philosophy wants nothing but your wealth, and that you would do well not to conclude the match till you have seen the poem which I am composing against him. While you are waiting for this picture in which I intend to portray him in all his colours, I send you Horace, Virgil, Terence, and Catullus, where you'll see all the passages he has pilfered, marked in the margin.*

Here's merit attacked by a great many enemies on account of this marriage I had proposed. And this outbreak invites me to take action this very day, which will confound envy and make him feel that this endeavour of his has hastened what it thought to have broken off. (*To Julien.*) Relate all this to your master directly, and tell him that, to show him what great value I set on his noble advice, and how worthy I think it to be followed, I'll marry my daughter to this gentleman (*pointing to Trissotin*) this very night. [*Exit Julien.*] (*To Clitandre.*) You, sir, as a friend of all the family, may assist at the signing of the contract, and I invite you to it. Armande, take care to send to the notary, and to go and tell your sister that the matter is arranged.

*Armande.* There's no occasion to give my sister any notice; that gentleman will take care to run and carry her this news immediately, and dispose her heart to be rebellious to you.

*Phi.* We shall see who has most power over her, and whether I am able to bring her back to her duty. [*Exit.*

*Ar.* I am very sorry, sir, to see that things are not arranged as you wished.

*Cli.* I'll be off, madame, and labour with diligence, that this great sorrow may not remain long at your heart.

*Ar.* I'm afraid that your labour will not have a very good result.

*Cli.* Perhaps you may find your fear mistaken.

*Ar.* I hope I shall.

*Cli.* I am persuaded of it, and that I shall be seconded by your assistance.

*Ar.* Yes, I'm going to serve you with all my might.

*Cli.* And that service shall have my gratitude.

## SCENE V.

CHRYSALE, ARISTE, CLITANDRE, HENRIETTE.

*Clitandre.* Without your support, sir, I shall be unfortunate.

Your wife has rejected my addresses, and her prejudiced heart will have Trissotin for a son-in-law.

*Chrysale.* What absurd fancy has possessed her? Why the deuce does she want this Monsieur Trissotin?

*Ariste.* It is because he has the honour to make Latin rhymes, that he gains the advantage over his rival.

*Cli.* She'll have the wedding this very evening.

*Chr.* This evening?

*Cli.* This evening.

*Chr.* And this evening, in order to thwart her, I'm resolved that you two shall be married.

*Cli.* She's sending for a notary to draw up the contract.

*Chr.* And I'll fetch him to do what he ought to do.

*Cli.* (*pointing to Henriette*). And madame is to be informed by her sister of the match she must prepare her heart for.

*Chr.* And I command her, with full power, to prepare her hand for this other alliance. I'll let them see whether there's any other master in my house but myself. (*To Henriette.*) We'll return presently, be sure you wait for us. Come, follow me, brother, and you, son-in-law.

*Henriette* (*to Ariste*). Oh, if you could only keep him always in this humour!

*Aris.* I'll do everything to serve your love.

*Cli.* However powerful the help promised to my love, my surest hope is in your heart, madame.

*Hen.* As to my heart, you may assure yourself of that.

*Cli.* I cannot help being happy when I have its support.

*Hen.* You see to what ties they intend to compel it.

*Cli.* As long as it is on my side I see nothing to fear.

*Hen.* I'll go and try everything in favour of our tenderest wishes; but if all my endeavours fail to give me to you, there is one retreat which my heart is resolved on, which will prevent me from belonging to any one else.

*Cli.* Just heaven defend me from ever receiving from you that proof of your love.

## ACT V. SCENE I.

HENRIETTE, TRISSOTIN.

*Henriette.* It is about this marriage, sir, which my mother is preparing, that I wished to talk to you in private, thinking that in the confusion the house is in I might be able to get you to

listen to reason. I know that you think I may bring you a considerable fortune as my marriage portion; but money, which so many people esteem, has charms unworthy of a true philosopher; and the contempt of wealth and empty grandeur ought not to shine in your words alone.

*Trissotin.* It is not that which delights me in you; your sparkling charms, your eyes soft and yet piercing, your gracefulness and air, are the wealth and riches which have attracted my tender attentions to you; it is with these treasures alone that I am enamoured.

*Hen.* I am much indebted to you for your generous warmth. This kind affection confounds me, and I am grieved, sir, that I am not able to respond to it. I esteem you as much as I can esteem any one, but I find an obstacle that prevents me from loving you. A heart, you know, cannot be possessed by two, and I feel that Clitandre is master of mine. I know that he has much less merit than you, that I have bad eyes for choosing a husband, and that you have a hundred fine talents that ought to please me. I see plainly that I'm in the wrong, but I can't help it, and all the effect reasoning has on me is to make me think ill of myself for being so blind.

*Tris.* The gift of your hand, which I am encouraged to make pretensions to, will give over to me that heart which Clitandre now possesses, and I have reason to hope that by a thousand tender attentions I shall discover the art of making myself beloved.

*Hen.* No, sir, my heart is fixed to its first vows, and cannot be touched by any tenderness from you. I dare explain myself freely here to you, and my confession has nothing in it that should shock you. This ardour of love which springs up in the heart is not, you know, the effect of merit. Caprice has a share in it; and when any one pleases us we are often at a loss to say why he does so. If people loved, sir, through choice and wisdom, you would have my whole heart and my whole affection, but one sees that love directs itself otherwise. I beg you to leave me to my blindness, and not to make use of the violence which, for your sake, is attempted to be done to my obedience. A gentleman will owe nothing to the power which parents have over us; he refuses to let what he loves be sacrificed to him, and will not gain a heart from any but itself. Don't urge my mother to exercise by her choice her extreme rights over my wishes. Take away your love from me, and bear to some other the homage of a heart so valuable as yours.

*Tris.* In what way can this heart satisfy you? Impose on it

any commands that it can execute. Can it be capable of not loving you, madame, unless you cease to be amiable, and to display in your eyes celestial charms——

*Hen.* Nay, sir, let us leave this idle stuff. You have so many Irises, Phyllises, and Amarants, whom you everywhere depict so charmingly in your poems, and for whom you vow such warmth of love——

*Tris.* It is my talent that speaks, not my heart. I'm only in love with them as a poet, but I love the adorable Henriette in earnest.

*Hen.* Oh, pray, sir——

*Tris.* If this offends you, I am not likely to put an end to my offence. This devotion, hitherto ignored by you, swears eternal fidelity to you. Nothing can stop its transports of love; and, notwithstanding your beauty may condemn my endeavours, I cannot refuse the aid of a mother who intends to crown so dear a flame; and provided I obtain so great a happiness, provided I have you, it is no matter how.

*Hen.* But do you know that people run a greater risk than they imagine in using violence to a heart? Let me tell you plainly it is not very safe to marry a woman against her will, and that finding herself compelled, she may be driven to feelings which her husband may have reason to fear.

*Tris.* Such language has nothing in it to make me alter my purpose. The wise man is prepared for all events. Cured, by reason, of vulgar weaknesses, he sets himself above all things of this sort, and has not the least shadow of anxiety about anything that is not to depend on himself.

*Hen.* In truth, sir, I am delighted with you; and I did not think that philosophy was so fine a thing as it is, to teach people to bear such accidents with constancy. This firmness of soul so singular in you deserves to have an illustrious subject given it; is worthy to find one who may delightedly take continual pains to bring it into full light; and as I dare not, to say the truth, think myself very fit to give it the whole lustre of its glory, I leave it to some other person, and swear to you, between ourselves, that I refuse the happiness of seeing you my husband.

*Tris.* (*going*). We shall see by and by how the affair will go off, for they have got the Notary within already.

## SCENE II.

CHRYSALE, CLITANDRE, HENRIETTE, MARTINE.

*Chrysale.* Daughter, I am glad to see you. Come, come and do your duty, and submit your wishes to the will of your father. I mean to teach your mother how to behave; and to defy her more thoroughly, here I bring back Martine, and will settle her in the house again, in the teeth of your mother's will.

*Henriette.* Your resolutions are praiseworthy. Take care, father, that this mood does not change. Be firm in resolving what you wish, and don't let yourself be seduced from your good intentions. Don't relax, but act so as to hinder my mother from getting the better of you.

*Chr.* What! do you take me for a booby?

*Hen.* Heaven forbid.

*Chr.* Am I a simpleton?

*Hen.* I don't say so.

*Chr.* Am I thought incapable of the firm sentiments of a reasonable man?

*Hen.* No, father.

*Chr.* At my age, have I not sense enough to be master in my own house?

*Hen.* Certainly.

*Chr.* Have I such a weakness of soul as to suffer myself to be led by the nose by my wife?

*Hen.* Oh, no, father!

*Chr.* How now? What do you mean, then? I think you're making very free in talking to me thus.

*Hen.* If I have offended you, it was not my intention.

*Chr.* My will ought to be followed entirely in this house.

*Hen.* Very well, father.

*Chr.* No one besides myself has a right to govern in the house.

*Hen.* True; you are in the right.

*Chr.* It is I that hold the place of chief of the family.

*Hen.* Agreed.

*Chr.* It is I who ought to dispose of my daughter.

*Hen.* Yes.

*Chr.* Heaven gives me full authority over you.

*Hen.* Who says the contrary?

*Chr.* And I'll let you see that in taking a husband, you must obey your father not your mother.

*Hen.* Ah! In that you flatter my dearest wishes. All I desire is to obey you.

*Chr.* We shall see if my wife proves rebellious to my wishes.

*Cli.* Here she is, bringing the Notary with her.

*Chr.* Second me, all of you.

*Martine.* Let me alone. I'll take care to encourage you, if there is any occasion for it.

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## SCENE III.

PHILAMINTE, BÉLISE, ARMANDE, TRISSOTIN, A NOTARY, CHRYSALE, CLITANDRE, HENRIETTE, MARTINE.

*Philaminte* (*to the Notary*). Can't you change your savage style, and draw up a contract in good language.

*Notary.* Our style is very good, madame, and I should be a fool if I attempted to change a word in it.

*Bélise.* Ah! What barbarism in the centre of France! But however, sir, for learning's sake instead of crowns, livres, and francs, let the dowry be expressed in minas and talents; and date by the word ides and kalends.

*Not.* I? Why if I were to agree to your demand, all my fellows would hiss me.

*Phi.* In vain we complain of this barbarism. Come, sir, take the table and write. (*Seeing Martine*). What, what? Does that impudent creature dare to show her face again? Pray why do you bring her to my house again?

*Chr.* We will tell you that by and by, when we have time. We have something else to settle now.

*Not.* Let us proceed to the contract. Where's the bride that is to be?

*Phi.* The one I am marrying is the younger daughter.

*Not.* Good.

*Chr.* (*pointing to Henriette*). Ay, here she is, sir. Her name is Henriette.

*Not.* And where's the bridegroom?

*Phi.* (*pointing to Trissotin*). The husband I give her to is this gentleman.

*Chr.* (*pointing to Clitandre*). And I myself intend she shall marry this gentleman.

*Not.* Two husbands! That's too many, according to present custom.

*Phi.* (*to the Notary*). What are you stopping for? Set down, set down Mons. Trissotin, for my son-in-law.

*Chr.* For my son-in-law set down, set down, Mons. Clitandre.

*Not.* Agree then among each other; and after mature judgment, see and settle between yourselves on a bridegroom.

*Phi.* Follow, sir, follow the choice I have fixed on.

*Chr.* Do, sir, do what I have resolved on.

*Not.* Tell me first which of the two I must obey.

*Phi.* (*to Chrysale*). What! Do you dispute my will, then?

*Chr.* I can't bear that my daughter should be sought after only for the wealth that is in my family.

*Phi.* Truly, your riches are much thought of here; and it is a very worthy suspicion for a wise man.

*Chr.* In short, I have made choice of Clitandre for her husband.

*Phi.* And here's the person (*pointing to Trissotin*) I have pitched on for her husband, and my choice shall be followed; that's a settled point.

*Chr.* Indeed! You fix on him in a very absolute manner.

*Martine.* It is not for the wife to prescribe, and I am for giving the upper part in everything to the men.

*Chr.* That's well said.

*Mar.* My discharge was given me a hundred times, that's certain; but the hen ought not to crow before the cock.

*Chr.* Certainly.

*Mar.* And we see that people jeer at a man, when his wife wears the breeches.

*Chr.* True.

*Mar.* If I had a husband, I must needs say I would have him to be master of the house. I should not love him if he played the simpleton; but if I contested a point with him out of caprice, or spoke too loud, I should think it right if he lowered my tone with a few stripes.

*Chr.* She speaks very suitably.

*Mar.* My master is in the right to choose a proper husband for his daughter.

*Chr.* Yes.

*Mar.* Why should he refuse Clitandre for her, young and handsome as he is? And why, pray, should he give her a scholar, who is always criticising? She wants a husband, not a schoolmaster; and as she does not desire to understand Greek or Latin, she has no need of Mons. Trissotin.

*Chr.* Very well.

*Phi.* We must let her prate at her ease.

*Mar.* Scholars are good for nothing but to preach, and I have said a thousand times that I would never have a man of learning

for my husband. Learning is not at all what is wanted in a family; books agree ill with matrimony, and if ever I plight my troth, I'll have a husband that has no other book but me; who, no offence to my mistress, knows neither A nor B, and in one word is a professor only to his wife.

*Phi.* (*to Chrysale*). Have you done? And have I listened quietly long enough to your worthy interpreter?

*Chr.* She has spoken the truth.

*Phi.* To cut short all this dispute, I will absolutely have my design carried out. (*Pointing to Trissotin*) Henriette and this gentleman shall be joined immediately. I have said it, and I'll have it so; make me no reply. If you have given your word to Clitandre, offer him her elder sister for a match.

*Chr.* Here's a way to settle this affair. See (*to Henriette and Clitandre*), do you give your consent?

*Hen.* What, father?

*Cli.* (*to Chrysale*). How, sir?

*Bél.* She might easily have proposals made to her which would please her much better; but we establish a kind of love which must be as refined as the Morning Star; the thinking substance may be admitted into it, but we banish from it the extended substance.

## SCENE IV.

ARISTE, CHRYSALE, PHILAMINTE, BÉLISE, HENRIETTE, ARMANDE, TRISSOTIN, NOTARY, CLITANDRE, MARTINE.

*Ariste.* I am sorry to disturb these joyful rites by the grief I am forced to bring here. These two letters make me the bearer of two pieces of news, on account of which I have felt very great concern for you. (*To Philaminte*) One, for you, came to me from your lawyer; (*to Chrysale*) the other, for you, came from Lyons.

*Philaminte.* What misfortune can we be informed of thus that ought to trouble us?

*Aris.* This letter contains one, as you may read.

PHILAMINTE,—*Madame, I have desired your brother to deliver you this letter, which will inform you of what I durst not come to tell you. Your great negligence in your affairs has caused the clerk of your judge not to give me notice; and you have absolutely lost your at, which you might have gained.*

*Chr.* (*to Philaminte*). Your suit lost!

*Phi.* (*to Chrysale*). You are too much concerned! My heart is not at all shaken by this blow. Show me, show me a less common soul, which can brave like me the strokes of fortune.

*Your want of care costs you forty thousand crowns; and it is to pay that sum with the cost that you are condemned by the order of Court.*

Condemned! Ah, that word is shocking, and was made for criminals only.

*Aris.* He's in the wrong, indeed, and you justly exclaim against him. He ought to have said, that you are desired by order of the Court to pay only forty thousand crowns, and the necessary costs.

*Phi.* Let us see the other letter.

CHRYSALE,—*The friendship which binds me to your brother makes me interest myself in all that concerns you. I know that you have put your money into the hands of Argante and Damon, and I must acquaint you that they both became bankrupt on the same day.*

Oh, heavens; to lose all my money thus at once!

*Phi.* (*to Chrysale*). Ah! what a shameful outbreak. Fie! All this is nothing; to a truly wise man no reverse of fortune is fatal; and though he lose everything, he still remains firm to himself. Let us leave your trouble, and finish our affair. His wealth (*pointing to Trissotin*) may suffice both for us and himself.

*Trissotin.* No, madame; forbear to press this affair. I see that every one is averse to this match, and I have no intention of exercising compulsion.

*Phi.* This reflection has come very suddenly to you. It follows very closely, sir, upon our misfortune.

*Tris.* At last I am tired of so much resistance. I had rather renounce all this embarrassment. I do not wish for a heart that won't surrender itself.

*Phi.* I see, I see in you, not to your credit, what I have hitherto refused to believe.

*Tris.* You may see in me what you please, and I little care how you take it. But I am not a man to put up with the infamy of an injurious refusal, which I must have undergone here. I would have people set a greater value on me, and make my bow to those who will not. [*Exit.*

*Phi.* How plainly he discovered his mercenary soul, and how little philosophical is this action of his.

*Clitandre.* I don't pretend to belong to that class; but yet, madame, I cling to your destiny, and venture to offer you with

my person whatever wealth fortune is know to have given me.

*Phi.* You charm me, sir, by this generous act, and I will, therefore, crown the desire of your love. Yes; I grant Henriette to the eager devotion——

*Henriette.* No, mother; I now change my mind. Allow me to resist your intention.

*Cli.* What! Do you oppose my happiness? when I find every one agree to my love——

*Hen.* I know the smallness of your fortune, Clitandre, and I always desired you for a husband, when I found that my marrying you would settle your affairs at the same time that it satisfied my dearest wishes; but since the fates are so contrary to us, I love you so much in this extremity as not to burden you with our adversity.

*Cli.* Any destiny with you would delight me, and without you none would be supportable.

*Hen.* Love always talks thus in its transports, but let us avoid the disquiet of vexatious reflections. Nothing so chafes the knot that ties us as the grievous want of necessaries, and people often charge one another with the dire sorrows that comes from such engagements.

*Aris.* (*to Henriette*). Is what we have just now learnt, the only motive which makes you refuse to marry Clitandre?

*Hen.* Otherwise you would see me fly to him with all my heart, and I only refuse to take him because I love him too well.

*Aris.* Suffer yourself then to be bound by such pleasant chains. The news I brought you was false; it was a stratagem, a surprising device which I resolved to try, in order to serve your love, to undeceive my sister, and let her see what her philosopher would prove on trial.

*Chr.* Heaven be praised!

*Phi.* I'm glad at heart for the vexation which the base deserter will feel. To see this match concluded in a splendid manner, will be the greatest punishment to his sordid avarice.

*Chr.* (*to Clitandre*). I knew very well that you would have her.

*Armande* (*to Philaminte*). Will you sacrifice me, then, in this manner to their wishes?

*Phi.* It will not be you that I sacrifice to them: you have the support of philosophy, and can see their ardour crowned with a contented eye.

*Bél.* Let him take care, however, to retain me in his heart. People often marry through a sudden despair, which they afterwards repent of as long as they live.

*Chr.* (*to the Notary*). Come, sir, follow the order I gave you, and draw up the contract as I said.

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