

Mc WILLIAMS

Translation of Molière's
Les Femmes Savantes
and
Les Précieuses Ridicules

French
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1901

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A TRANSLATION
OF
MOLIÈRE'S LES FEMMES SAVANTES
AND
LES PRÉCIEUSES RIDICULES

BY
HELEN LOUISE McWILLIAMS, B.A., 1900

THESIS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1901

1901
A2

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

May 30, 1901

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Helen Louise McWilliam

ENTITLED *a Translation of Voltaire's "Les femmes savantes" sub "Les précieuses ridicules"*

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF *Master of Arts*

Geo. Fairfield

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF *Romanic Languages*

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MOLIERE'S

LES FEMMES SAVANTES

Personnages

Chrysale, bon bourgeois

Philaminte, wife of Chrysale

Armande

Henriette

} daughters of Chrysale and Philaminte

Ariste, brother of Chrysale

Belise, sister of Chrysale

Trissotin, bon esprit

Vadius, savant

Martine, servant

L'Epine, lackey

Julien, valet of Vadius

The Notary

The scene is in Paris in the house of Chrysale.



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LES FEMMES SAVANTES

ACT I

Scene 1

Armande, Henriette

Armande

What! Sister, is it possible that you are thinking of marrying, and thereby renouncing the charming title of maiden? Can you really entertain such an ordinary thought?

Henriette

Yes, sister.

Armande

Ah! That "yes" is intolerable! Could any one hear it without being sick at heart?

Henriette

My dear sister, what in the world is there about marriage which causes you...

Armande

Goodness gracious, for shame!

Henriette

Why, what do you mean?

Armande

For shame! I tell you. Do you not understand how distasteful such a word sounds as soon as I hear it? How it shocks the imagination! What a low trend it gives to the thoughts! Doesn't it fairly make you shudder? Has the word no effect upon your feelings?

Henriette

I see the effect of that word when I think of a husband, children, a household. If I may reason about it, I see nothing in it which can shock your sense of right and cause you to shudder.

Armande

Mercy, could you be satisfied with such attachments?

Henriette

And, at my age, what better can one do than marry a man who loves you and whom you love; and from this union, filled with happiness, enjoy the pleasures of an innocent life? Hasn't a suitable marriage some attractions?

Armande

Good gracious! What inferior ideas you have! What a small part you play in the world when you confine yourself to household affairs, and catch a glimpse of no more pleasures more touching than an idol of a husband and brats of children! Leave such base pleasures as that to lower, more common people; lift your desires to something higher; partake of more elevating enjoyments; and by treating contemptuously your feelings and all material things, devote yourself entirely to the cultivation of your mind. Right before you you have your mother as an example of how a savant is honored everywhere. Try, as I have, to prove yourself worthy of being her daughter; aspire to the brilliancy which is in our family; be sensitive to the delightful charms which the love of study pours into our soul. Instead of being a slave to the authority of a man, my dear sister, marry philosophy, which elevates one far above the human race and gives absolute authority to reason, putting the animal in us under its laws and suppressing our coarser instincts. These are the lofty inspirations, the

delightful attractions which ought to occupy the moments of our lives. The cares with which so many women are preoccupied seem to me the worst of folly.

Henriette

Heaven, whose command we see is omnipotent, appoints each of us for a different service. Every human being is not destined to be a philosopher. Even though your mind is fitted for the noble speculations to which savants aspire, mine is made to go slowly and to confine itself to lesser cares. Let us not disturb Heaven's righteous laws, but let each of us follow her own instinct. Through the impulses of your great and noble nature, you may live in the lofty regions of philosophy, whilst I, remaining here below, will taste of Hymen's joys. Thus, in our different purposes, both of us may imitate our mother; you on the part of the mind and noble aspirations; I, on the part of feelings and ordinary pleasures; you in the working of intellect and knowledge I, dear sister, in those things which are material.

Armande

When one pretends to follow the example of another, it is the noble characteristics that must be imitated. Sister, you must not take your mother for a model in every little detail.

Henriette

You would not be what you boast of if my mother had had only these lofty characteristics. It is fortunate for you that her noble nature has not always applied itself to philosophy. Pray, tolerate me, by a little kindness, the low traits to which you are indebted for your existence; in wishing others to imitate you, do not crush some little savant who wants to come into the world.

Armande

I see that you cannot be cured of your foolish obstinacy to marry; but, I beg of you, let us know whom you are considering; you surely can not mean Clitandre?

Henriette

And why not? Is he lacking in any merit? Is he not a worthy choice?

Armande

Maybe: but it would be dishonest to want to carry off another's conquest; and, besides, people are not ignorant of the fact that Clitandre has openly aspired to my hand.

Henriette

Yes, but all this aspiring for your hand is in vain; you do not stoop to human coarseness; you are renouncing marriage forever, and philosophy has possession of all your affections. So, having no liking for Clitandre yourself, what difference can it make to you if some one else does care for him?

Armande

A person may be high minded and yet enjoy the sweet things of life. You may refuse to marry a meritorious man whom you are very glad to have as an admirer.

Henriette

I have not prevented him from continuing to admire you. I have simply taken at your refusal, the love which he has just offered to me.

Armande

But, tell me, pray, do you feel perfect confidence in the vows of a piqued lover? Do you believe his ardor for you to be very fervent; that all his love for me is dead?

Henriette

He tells me so and I believe him.

Armande

My dear sister, be not so confident; be assured that when he forsakes me and adores you, he is not considering it well and may be deceiving himself.

Henriette

I do not know, I am sure, but if you wish, it is very easy to obtain light on the subject. I see him coming now; he will be able to give us full information about the matter.

Scene II

Clitandre, Armande, Henriette

Henriette

To relieve me of a doubt in which my sister casts me, unfold your heart to her and to me, Clitandre. Reveal its depths and let us know which of us has the right to claim your affections.

Armande

No, no, I do not want to demand an explanation from you. I spare people for I know how embarrassing such an open confession would be.

Clitandre

No, miss, my heart, which conceals little, feels no restraint in making a frank confession; such a step causes me no embarrassment. I will admit, freely and sincerely, that the tender ties by which I am bound, my love and my vows all belong to Henriette. Do not let this confession disturb you in the least; because you have willed it so. I was captivated by your charms; my tender longing has well proved to you the fervor of my love. I was consecrating an immortal love to you; you did not believe your triumph sufficiently great.

I have endured much scorn under the subjection of your eyes; they used to reign in absolute tyranny over my soul. But, wearied by so much torture, I sought for more humane conquerors and less rigid claims. Madam, I have found them in these eyes whose flashes will ever be dear to me; with a look of pity they have dried my tears and scorned not the refusal of your charms. Such unusual kindness has so touched my heart that there is nothing which can loose me from their bonds. I beseech you, Madam, make no effort to recall a heart that would rather die than break a bond so sweet.

Armande

Ah! Sir, how do you know that I have any such desire, and that after all, any one cares so much for you? I think you very amusing to imagine such a thing. Indeed, you are very impertinent to say it to me.

Henriette

Gently, dear sister, Pray where is the ethics which knows so well how to control the animal nature and to withhold anger?

Armande

Since you speak to me of it, tell me wherein you practice it, in responding to an affection without the permission of your parents? Know that duty submits you to their laws; that by their consent only are you permitted to love; that they have absolute authority over your heart and that it is wicked to dispose of it yourself.

Henriette

Thank you very much for teaching me the ways of duty so well. I wish to act according to your teaching, and to convince you that I profit by it, you will please take care, Clitandre, to support your affection for me by my parents' consent; obtain rightful power over my love and thereby give me the means of loving you.

Clitandre

I am going to them resolved to do my best. I was only waiting for your sweet consent.

Armande

You glory in it, sister, and seem to imagine that I am displeased.

Henriette

I ? Not at all. I know that the laws of justice are always all-powerful in your mind; that by the lessons which prudence teaches, you are far above such a weakness. Far from suspecting you of any displeasure, I think that in this case you will be willing to use your influence in my behalf by supporting his request (by your) and with a few words hasten the happy moment of our marriage. I beseech you to do it...

Armande

Your little mind is inclined to joke, and you seem very proud of a heart which is thrust upon you.

Henriette

Thrown away, though it be, this heart, you fain would have it, and if your eyes could win it back, they would easily take the trouble.

Armande

I shall not deign to answer that. I shall not listen to such stupid talk.

Henriette

It is very kind in you, and you certainly show great moderation

Scene III

Clitandre, Henriette

Henriette

Your sincere avowal surprised her very much.

Clitandre

She well deserves such frankness; her foolish pride at least, merits my sincerity. But, since I may, I am going to your father...

Henriette

The surest way is to win over my mother. My father is very easy tempered; he does not rely much on his own decision. Heaven has bestowed on him a certain kindness of soul, which undeniably subjects him to whatever his wife wishes. It is she who rules. In an absolute tone she dictates as law what she herself has decided upon. I confess I should like you to be a little more complaisant toward her and to my aunt; by flattering their extravagant ideas you might attract to yourself the warmth of their esteem.

Clitandre

My heart is naturally so frank that I never was able to flatter their nature as seen in your sister. Learned women are not to my taste. I approve of a woman having some knowledge of everything, but I do not want her to have the disagreeable desire to make herself learned, simply to be learned. When questions are asked I like her to know how to be ignorant of things which she really does know. In fact by her study I want her to conceal herself and to have the learning without wishing others to know it, without quoting authors; without making use of big words and without trying to be witty in every trifling remark. I respect your mother very much, but I cannot entirely approve of her fanciful ideas and make myself her echo in the

praises which she sings to her clever heroes. Her friend, Trissotin, vexes me, and bores me. It makes me angry that she esteems such a man that she ranks among great and fine minds, a simpleton, whose writings are hissed at every where; a pedant whose liberal pen kindly furnishes paper for the entire market.

Henriette

All of his writings and remarks are tiresome to me. I, too, am of your opinion, but since he influences my mother so much you must force yourself to be complaisant. Where his heart is there a lover does homage; he tries to win the favor of everybody; in order that nothing may oppose his passion, he even endeavors to make a friend of the house dog.

Clitandre

Yes, you are right; but this man Trissotin deeply angers me. Even to gain her approval, I cannot consent to dishonor myself by lauding his works. It is through them that he first appeared to me. I knew him before I ever saw him. I saw everywhere in the jumble of writings which he gives to us that which reveals his pedantic self: the constant height of his presumption, his bold conceit, that idle state of extreme confidence, which renders him so selfsatisfied at all times and which causes him constantly to appreciate his own merit so that he is so pleased himself with everything that he writes. He would not wish to change his fame for all the honors of an army general.

Henriette

You must have good eyes to see all that.

Clitandre

It extended even to his very face. By the verses which he hurls

at us, I saw how he must appear. I had guessed all of his features so well that one day meeting a man in the Palais I wagered that it was Trissotin himself, and I actually found that I was not mistaken.

Henriette

What a story!

Clitandre

No, I am telling the truth. But here comes your aunt. Pray, let me now tell our secret to her, and win her favor.

Scene IV

Clitandre, Belise

Clitandre

Permit a lover to take the opportunity of this happy moment to speak to you, madame, and to declare to you his sincere love.....

Belise

Ah! take care; be careful to confess to me too freely. If I have succeeded in putting you in the ranks among my lovers be content to let your eyes interpret for you: explain in no other language the desires which are repulsive to me; love me; sigh for my charms, but never let me know it. So long as you confine yourself to sweet looks, I can be blind to your hidden love; but if you ever attempt to mention it, you must leave my presence forever.

Clitandre

Do not be alarmed at my heart's desire: Henriette is the one who charms me. I ardently come to beseech your kindness in seconding my love for her attractions.

Belise

Ah! certainly the ruse is very clever I confess. This cunning

evasion deserves my praise; in all the novels which I have read, I have encountered nothing more ingenious.

Clitandre

Madame, this is not a subterfuge at all; it is the true confession of what is in my soul. Heaven has bound my heart to the charms of Henriette with the ties of immutable ardor. She holds me under her gentle control and to wed her is the blessing to which I aspire. But you can help me; and all that I desire is that you may please befriend my vows.

Belise

I see clearly whither your proposal tends; I know what I must understand. The figure is a clever one; not to depart from it, among the things which my heart suggests in reply to you, I will say that Henriette is indifferent to matrimony and without hope of success you must sigh for her.

Clitandre

Oh, of what use of all this misunderstanding? Why will you think what is not so?

Belise

Goodness gracious! No ceremony; cease defending yourself from what your looks have often made me understand. It is sufficient to be content with the ruse which you have so skilfully contrived; under the figure to which respect assigns it, I gladly resolve to suffer its homage provided these joys lighted up by honor, offer only purified vows at my altar.

Clitandre

But.....

Belise

Adieu: this must suffice for now; I have said more than I wanted to to you.

Clitandre

But, your mistake...

Belise

Hush, I am blushing now; modesty made a surprising effort.

Clitandre

I'll be hanged, if I love you.

Belise

No, no, I will hear nothing more of it.

Clitandre

The deuce take the simpleton with her fanciful ideas! Did one ever see anything like her prejudices? I will go and entrust another with the errand given me and take the advise of some wise person.

ACT II

Scene I

Ariste

Yes, I will bring you the answer as soon as possible. I will support it; urge it on; do all that can be done. How many things a lover has to say for a single word! How impatiently he wants what he longs for!

Scene II

Ariste, Chrysale

Ariste

Ah! Heaven protect you , brother.

Chrysale

And you, too, brother.

Ariste

Do you know what brings me here?

Chrysale

No, but if you are willing, I am ready to learn.

Ariste

You have been acquainted with Clitandre for some time?

Chrysale

Certainly, I see him frequently at our house.

Ariste

Well, what do you think of him, brother?

Chrysale

He is an honorable, a bright, good-hearted, well behaved young

fellow. I know very few who are as deserving as he.

Ariste

I came here for an especial purpose; therefore I am very glad that you esteem him.

Chrysale

I met his deceased father during my voyage to Rome.

Ariste

That is good.

Chrysale

He was a very fine gentleman.

Ariste

So they say.

Chrysale

We were only twenty-eight then; and really both of us were dashing ladies' men.

Ariste

I can believe it.

Chrysale

We called upon the Roman ladies. Every one there was talking of our pranks. We even made men jealous.

Ariste

That is the best yet. But let us come to the subject which brings me here.

Scene III

Belise, Chrysale, Ariste

Ariste

I am acting as Clitandre's interpreter. He is captivated with

the charms of Henriette.

Chrysale

What, with my daughter?

Ariste

Yes, he is in love with her. I never saw a more passionate lover.

Belise

No, no; I understand you; you do not know the facts. It is not what you think it is.

Ariste

How so, sister?

Belise

Clitandre is deceiving both of you. He loves another.

Ariste

Why, you are joking. Is it not Henriette whom he loves?

Belise

No, I am certain of it.

Ariste

He told me so himself.

Belise

Oh, yes.

Ariste

Sister, you see me sent by him today to ask her father for her hand.

Belise

Very well.

Ariste

He has entreated me to hasten the moments for their marriage.

Belise

This is better still. One could not deceive more skilfully than he has. Brother, between you and me, Henriette is only a pretext, a clever means of hiding another love of which I know the secret. I am glad to free both of you from your error.

Ariste

Well, since you know so many things, pray tell us the other person whom he loves.

Belise

You really want to know?

Ariste

Certainly. Why?

Belise

It is I.

Ariste

You!

Belise

Myself.

Ariste

Oh! My sister!

Belise

What do you mean by that "oh"? What is there so surprising in what I have just said? I think I can say that I have more than one lover. Dorante, Damis, Cleonte and Licidas show that I have some attractions.

Ariste

These persons love you?

Belise

Yes, with all their hearts.

Ariste

They have told you so?

Belise

No one has taken that liberty. Up to this time they have so well succeeded in revering me that they have never mentioned their love to me. But their sweet looks have been their means of offering their hearts and confessing their adoration.

Ariste

You almost never see Damis come to the house.

Belise

That is to show me even a more submissive respect.

Ariste

Dorante insults you everywhere with his satire.

Belise

They are fits of his jealous rage.

Ariste

Cleonte and Licidas are both married.

Belise

They despaired of winning my affection.

Ariste

Upon my word, that is pure imagination, dear sister.

Chrysale

You must get rid of these chimeras.

Belise

Ah! These are chimeras, you say? Chimeras. I, Truly chimeras are very good. I rejoice greatly in chimeras. I was not aware that I had chimeras.

Scene IV

Chrysale, Ariste

Chrysale

Surely our sister is crazy.

Ariste

She gets worse every day. But once again let us take up our conversation. Clitandre asks you for Henriette. Let us see what answer can be given him.

Chrysale

Do you ask that? I freely consent. I should be much honored by such an alliance.

Ariste

You know that he is not well off.....

Chrysale

That is an unimportant consideration: he is rich in virtue—that is worth treasures; especially since his father and I were very intimate friends.

Ariste

Let us speak to your wife and try to gain her favor...

Chrysale

It is sufficient that I accept him as a son-in-law.

Ariste

Yes, brother; but to add weight to your approval, it is not a bad idea to have her approval, too. Let us go and see her.

Chrysale

Are you joking? It is unnecessary. I speak for my wife. I will take the responsibility upon myself....

Ariste

But....

Chrysale

Let it alone, I say. Have no fear. I am going to arrange the affair with her right away.

Ariste

So be it. I am going to sound Henriette about it, then I will return.

Chrysale.

Agreed. I will speak of it to my wife immediately.

Scene V

Martine, Chrysale

Martine

Well. I am lucky! Alas! The proverb is true; give a dog a bad name and hang him; and working for others is no bonanza.

Chrysale

Pray, what is it? What is the matter with you, Martine?

Martine

What is the matter with me?

Chrysale

Yes.

Martine

I have been discharged today; that is what is the matter with me, sir.

Chrysale

Discharged!

Martine

Yes, your wife is driving me away.

Chrysale

I don't understand that. Why is it?

Martine

She threatens me with a hundred blows if I don't leave here.

Chrysale

No, you shall stay. I am satisfied with you. My wife often becomes slightly angry, and I do not want....

Philaminte

*Scene VI Philaminte
Belise, Chrysale, Martine*

What? I see you here, rascal? Out of here, quickly; come, leave this house and never let me see you again.

Chrysale

Gently.

Philaminte

No, it is decided.

Chrysale

What!

Philaminte

I insist that she go.

Chrysale

Why, what has she done that you insist this way.

Philaminte

What? You uphold her?

Chrysale

By no means.

Philaminte

Do you take her part against me?

Chrysale

For mercy sake, no. I simply asked what her offense was.

Philaminte

Would I drive her away without a good cause?

Chrysale

I do not say that. But with our servants we must...

Philaminte

No, she will leave here I say.

Chrysale

Of course she will. Did any one say anything to the contrary?

Philaminte

I want no objections to my wishes.

Chrysale

Of course.

Philaminte

You should, like a reasonable husband, share my anger against her.

Chrysale

I do, indeed. Yes, you rogue, my wife has cause to drive you away. Your offense is unpardonable.

Martine

Pray, what have I done?

Chrysale

Upon my word, I don't know.

Philaminte

She still does not consider it important.

Chrysale

Did she make you angry by breaking a mirror or some china?

Philaminte

Do you imagine that would anger me? That I would drive her away for such a trifle?

Chrysale

What then? The offense must be very grievous.

Philaminte

Of course. Do you think I am an unreasonable woman?

Chrysale

Has she negligently allowed a ewer or some silver plate to be stolen ?

Philaminte

That would amount to nothing.

Chrysale

Oh! The deuce take the pretty creature. What is it? Did you surprise her in some dishonesty ?

Philaminte

It is worse than that.

Chrysale

Worse than that?

Philaminte

Worse.

Chrysale

The rascal! Well, what did she do, then?

Philaminte

With an incomparable impudence, after having had thirty lessons she insulted me by the impropriety of a low, common word, which Vaugelas condemns in decisive terms.

Chrysale

And is that it?...

Philaminte

What? Always in spite of my remonstrance, shock the foundation of all learning - the grammar by which kings are governed, and whose laws they strictly obey?

Chrysale

I believed her guilty of the worst of crimes.

Philaminte

What! You do not consider this crime unpardonable?

Chrysale

Of course I do.

Philaminte

I should like to see you excuse her.

Chrysale

I will take good care not to.

Belise

Indeed, it is pitiful, for she has destroyed all construction, notwithstanding that she has been taught the laws of the language a hundred times.

Martine

I think all that you preach about is well and good, but I can't talk your jargon.

Philaminte

You impertinent! to call a language based on reason and common usage jargon!

Martine

If you can make yourself understood, that is all that is necessary. All of your fine words don't serve nothing.

Philaminte

Well! Isn't that just like her? "Don't serve nothing."

Belise

Oh, you weak-minded creature! With all the trouble that we constantly take, can you never be taught to speak properly? Don't with nothing is your old mistake.

Martine

Heavens! I ain't studied like you have. I talk like the folks at home.

Philaminte

Dear me! can we endure it?

Belise

What terrible solecism.

Philaminte

It is enough to ruin a sensitive ear.

Belise

You are stupid, I must confess. "I" is first person singular and "talks" is third. Are you going to insult the grammar all your life?

Martine

Who is talking of insulting their "grand-mere" or "grand-pere"?

Philaminte

Oh, Heavens!

Belise

You have taken "grammaire" in the wrong sense. I have told you where that word came from.

Martine

Well, what do I care whether it comes fromChaillot, Hauteuil or Pontoise? It's all the same to me.

Belise

You country creature! "La grammaire" teaches us the laws of verbs and nominatives, as well as adjectives with substantives.

Martine

Miss, I tell you I don't know those there folks.

Philandre

What martyrdom!

Belise

They are names of words. You must notice with what they agree.

Martine

What's the difference whether they agree or cuff each other?

Philandre (to her sister)

Oh, gracious goodness! finish a conversation of that kind;

(To her husband) Will you not send her away?

Chrysale

Of course. I must consent to her whim. Go, do not anger her. Go
Martine.

Philaminte

How's that? You are afraid of offending the wretch? You speak to her in an absolutely yielding tone of voice.

Chrysale

I ? Not at all. Hurry, along, go. Away my poor child.

Scene VII

Chrysale, Philaminte, Belise

Chrysale

I hope you are satisfied, now that she is gone. But I do not approve of such a dismissal. She is well suited for her work.

It seems to me that you have a very poor excuse for driving her away.

Philaminte

Would you have me still keep her in my employ, when her language constantly grates on my ear? When she breaks every law of usage and of reason by a barbarous agglomeration of imperfections of speech of mutilated words, interspersed at intervals by proverbs dragged in from the market place?

Belise

Indeed we have tried to endure it. She shatters Vaugelas every day. Either pleonasm or cacophony are the least defects of that uncouth mind.

Chrysale

What is the difference if she doesn't follow the laws of Vaugelas, provided she is faithful in the kitchen? As for myself, I prefer, while she is preparing her vegetables, that her nouns and verbs do not agree. I would rather she would repeat a common or incorrect word a hundred times than burn my beefsteak or salt my porridge too much. I live on good soup and not on fine language. Vaugelas does not teach how to make soup. Malherbe and Balzac, as versed as they were in fine words, would have been fools in the kitchen.

Philaminte

How terribly boorish this talk sounds. What a shame for a human being to be constantly engrossed with material things instead of rising to the spiritual. Is this worthless thing called the body so important that we must think only of it? Should it not be the least of our thoughts?

Chrysale

Yes, my body is myself and I want to take care of it. It may seem worthless to you, but it is dear to me.

Belise

Body and mind together make the man, dear brother. Believe what the learned say of it; that the spirit must come before the body; that our greater care, our first urgent need must be to nourish it with the juice of science.

Chrysale

Well, if you wish to nourish your mind, must it be with unsubstantial food? Do you have no care, no solicitude....

Philaminte

Oh! "Solicitude" sounds coarse. It savors of antiquity.

Belise

It is true that the word is very stilted.

Chrysale

Do you want me to speak out? At last I must burst out, lift the mask and vent my spleen. People call you women fools and it grieves me much.

Philaminte

What do you mean?

Chrysale

Sister, I am speaking to you. You become angry at the least solecism. You yourself have very queer mannerisms. Your everlasting books do not satisfy me. Except a large volume of Plutarch in which I may put my collars, you ought to burn all of this useless rubbish. Leave science to the doctors of the town. You would do well to take away from our garret that long telescope, and besides a hundred other

knickknacks, the sight of which bores me to death. Instead of taking care of your own domestic affairs, where everything is going topsy-turvy, you try to find out what they are doing in the moon. For various reasons it is not fitting for a woman to study and to know too much. Her philosophy and her study should be; to form good morals in the minds of her children, to manage her household, to keep watch over her family and to economically regulate the expenditure. On this subject our forefathers wisely said that a woman always knew enough when the capacity of her mind permitted her to distinguish a jacket from a pair of breeches. Their wives could not read, nevertheless they lived well. Their households formed their learned subjects of conversation. Their books were; the thimble, thread and needles with they fashioned the trousseaux of their daughters. The women of today are far from possessing these morals; their desire is to write, to become authors. No science is too deep for them. Here in this house much more than any other place the greatest secrets of science are understood. You know everything save what you should know. You know the movements of the moon and the polar stars, Venus, Mars and Saturn with which I have nothing to do. In going so far to obtain this useless knowledge you neglect the food which I need. My servants aspire to learning simply to please you. They do nothing more than is necessary. To discourse is the employment of every member of my household and this reasoning banishes all reason. One of them will burn my roast while reading some story; another is dreaming of poetry when I ask for a drink. In short, I see your example followed by all of them I have servants but I am not served. I had at least one poor servant left, who was uncorrupted by this evil atmosphere. Now she is driven away with a great fuss, because she fails to speak the language of

Vaugelas. Sister (for as I said it is you to whom I am talking) I tell you all this style of living is repugnant to me. I dislike to have all of your Latin friends come here, especially this Trissotin. It is he who ridicules you in all his verses. All of his remarks are nonsense; he talks, but he says nothing after all. I really believe he is crazy.

Philaminte

Merciful heavens! What baseness of soul and language!

Belise

He is a gross combination of smaller bodies! His mind is composed of common atoms! Can I be of this same blood? I am furious at myself for being of your family! Filled with confusion I retire.

Scene VIII

Philaminte, Chrysale

Philaminte

Have you still something to say ?

Chrysale

I ? No. Let us not mention the quarrel any more. It is all over. Let us talk about something else. Your eldest daughter, apparently, has no inclination to marry. In short, she is a philosopher. I will attempt no discussion, for you have trained her well. On the other hand, her younger sister is differently inclined; therefore I think it wise to provide for Henriette, to choose a husband for her.

Philaminte

That is just what I have been thinking. I want to tell you my idea about it. This Monsieur Trissotin whom you make out such a

criminal because he has not the honor of your esteem is the one whom I have chosen for a suitable husband for her. I am more capable of judging of his worth than you. I have firmly decided, therefore any further argument is unnecessary. At least have nothing to say of the choice of this husband; before talking to you I wish to speak to our daughter. I have some reasons for confirming my action. I will know indeed, if you have talked with her.

Scene IX

Ariste, Chrysale

Ariste

Well! Your wife is going away; I see that you have just been having a chat with her.

Chrysale

Yes.

Ariste

How did you succeed? Is Henriette ours? Did she consent?
Is the affair settled?

Chrysale

Not entirely yet.

Ariste

Does she refuse?

Chrysale

No.

Ariste

Does she hesitate?

Chrysale

Not at all ?

Ariste

Well, what then?

Chrysale

She offered me another for a son-in-law.

Ariste

Another?

Chrysale

Another.

Ariste

Who can it be?

Chrysale

Trissotin.

Ariste

What? That Trissotin.....

Chrysale

Yes, who is continually talking of poetry and of Latin.

Ariste

Did you accept him?

Chrysale

I, no indeed. Heaven forbid!

Ariste

What did you say?

Chrysale

Nothing. I am glad I did not say anything, so that I did not pledge myself.

Ariste

That is a fine reason, for it would be running a great risk. However, did you have sense enough to propose Clitandre to her?

Chrysale

No, I thought it wiser not to push the subject.

Ariste

Aren't you ashamed of your weakness? Can any man be weak enough to allow his wife absolute control and not to oppose what she has decided upon?

Chrysale

Good Heavens, brother, it is easy enough for you to talk about it, but you don't know how this fussing wears on me. I love quiet, peace, mildness. My wife has a terrible temper. She is none the less irascible even if she does attach great importance to the name of philosophy. Her ethics, made to scorn wealth, have no effect upon her temperament. However slight may be the thing which she wants, if you oppose it, you must endure a frightful storm for a week to come. The very sound of her voice makes me tremble. I do not know where to hide myself. She is a veritable dragon. Yet with all her deviltry I must call her "my dear" and "my darling".

Ariste

Come, this is joking. Between you and me, through your cowardice your wife tyrannizes over you; her authority is only based on your weakness. She takes the authority right out of your hands and you yield to her arrogance; let yourself be led about by the nose. What? Seeing how people regard you, can't you make up your mind once for all to be a man? Can't you make a woman submissive to your wishes? Can't you be brave enough to say for once "I will". Shamelessly you allow your daughter to be sacrificed to all the foolish ideas that the rest of the family have. With your wealth endow a simpleton who can speak six words of Latin; a pedant whom at every turn your wife apostrophizes as a wit, a great philosopher and a man who has never

been equaled in gallant verse, and who is, so far as we can learn, nothing less than all that? Come, once more, I tell you, this is ridiculous, and your cowardice deserves to be laughed at.

Chrysale

Yes, you are right. I see that I am in the wrong. Come, I must be more brave.

Ariste

Well said.

Chrysale

It is shameful to be so submissive to a woman's will.

Ariste

Indeed it is.

Chrysale

She has profited too much by my mildness.

Ariste

How true.

Chrysale

Played upon my easy disposition too much.

Ariste

Doubtless.

Chrysale

She must understand today, that my daughter is my daughter, that I have the right to choose a husband whom I see fit.

Ariste.

Now, you are talking sensibly as I want you to.

Chrysale

Brother, you like Clitandre and know where he lives, send him to me immediately.

Ariste

I will hasten there this instant.

Chrysale

I have yielded too long; henceforth I shall be a man in spite of her.

ACT III

Scene I

Philaminte, Armande, Belise, Trissotin, L'epine

Philaminte

Ah! Let us sit here, so that we may comfortably listen to these verses which must be weighted word by word.

Armande

I am burning to hear them.

Belise

I am fairly perishing for them.

Philaminte

They charm me as everything which you do.

Armande

To me it is a sweetness which has no equal.

Belise

They delight me exceedingly.

Philaminte

Gratify our urgent desire.

Armande

Hasten.

Belise

Act quickly; hasten our pleasure.

Philaminte

We are impatient; read your epigram.

Trissotin

Alas! Madam, it is a new born babe. Its fate will assuredly touch you. I have just written it in your presence.

Philaminte

Its father suffices to make it precious to me.

Trissotin

Your approval may be its mother.

Belise

How witty he is!

Scene II

Henriette, Philaminte, Belise, Armande, Trissotin, L'epine

Philaminte

Here! Pray why are you hastening away?

Henriette

I was afraid of disturbing such a delightful interview.

Philaminte

Come here, listen attentively to these marvelous productions.

Henriette

I know very little of beauties of your writings and flashes of wit are not in my line.

Philaminte

That makes no difference. Moreover I have a secret to confide to you of which you must be informed.

Trissotin

There seems to be nothing in the sciences which can arouse you. You interest yourself only in knowing how to charm.

Henriette

One just as little as the other. I have no desire...

Belise

Ah, I beg of you. Let us think of the newly born babe.

Philaminte

Come, come, little "garcon" find us seats; quickly. (The lackey falls down with the chair). See the impudent fellow. Ought one fall after having learned the equilibrium of things?

Belise

You stupid fellow, do you not see the reasons for your fall? That it comes from having removed from the line of direction- what we call the center of gravity?

L'epine

Now that I am down, madame I have discovered it.

Philaminte

The blockhead!

Trissotin

It is lucky that he is not made of glass.

Armande

Oh! He is always so witty!

Belise

He never runs dry.

Philaminte

Quickly, serve your delightful repast.

Trissotin

For this great hunger which is exposed to my eyes, a single plate of (only) eight verses seems to me a very small amount. I think that it would not be a bad thing right here to join to the epigram or rather to the madrigal the relish of a sonnet, which at a princess house, was considered very delicate. It is seasoned throughout with

classical salt. I think you will find it very pleasing to the taste.

Armande

Ah! I do not doubt it.

Philaminte

Let us give ear quickly.

Belise

(Interrupting him every time he begins to read.) I feel my heart flutter with joy, in advance. I am passionately fond of poesy, especially when the verses are cleverly turned.

Philaminte

If we continue to talk, he can never say anything.

Trissotin

Sonnet...

Belise

Silence, niece.

Trissotin

Sonnet to the Princess Urania on her fever.

Your wisdom is(sleeping) dormant,
To treat so magnificently,
And to harbour so superbly,
Your most cruel enemy.

Belise

Oh! What a pretty beginning!

Armande

What a clever turn it has!

Philaminte

He alone has the power of composing musical verses.

Armande

One must surrender certainly to that "dormant wisdom".

Belise

For me "to harbour your enemy" is filled with charm.

Philaminte

I love "superbly" and "magnificently".The combination of those two adverbs is admirable.

Belise

Let us listen to the remainder of it.

Trissotin

Your wisdom is dormant,
To treat so magnificently,
And to harbour so superbly,
Your most cruel enemy.

Armande

Dormant wisdom!

Belise

To harbour the enemy!

Philaminte

"Superbly" and "magnificently!"

Trissotin

Whatever is said, send it forth
From your rich apartment,
Where this ungrateful one is impudently
Attacking your beautiful life.

Belise

Ah! more slowly; let me,I beg,breathe.

Armande

Please give us time to express our admiration.

Philaminte

There is some thing in these verses - and yet I do not know

what it is - which stirs one to the very depth of his soul.

Armande

"Send it forth whatever is said". "Rich apartment" how prettily said! What a clever metaphor.

Philaminte

"Send it forth whatever is said". Ah! How fine the style of that "Whatever is said". In my opinion it is an imperishable thought.

Armande

I too, am enamoured of the "Whatever is said".

Belise

I think as you do that "Whatever is said" is a very happy thought.

Armande

I should like to have created it.

Belise

It is worth a whole piece.

Philaminte

But do you understand the cleverness of it as I do?

Armande and Belise

Oh! Oh!

Philaminte

"Send it away whatever is said". Whatever interest is taken in the fever! Pay no attention to it; disregard the gossip. "Send it forth, whatever is said, whatever is said". Oh this "Whatever is said" contains much more than you might imagine. I do not know if all of you agree with me, but I understand in that a million expressions.

Belise

It is true that it expresses more than its length would verify.

Philaminte

But when you wrote this delightful "Whatever is said" did you fully comprehend its force? Were you thinking of all that it means to us; did you really intend to put so much soul into it?

Trissotin

Ah, madame.

Armande

I think the world of that "ingrate". This "ingrate" of an unjust and rude fever, which harms all those who house it .

Philaminte

Indeed, both of the quatrains are very fine. Pray let us come rapidly to the tiercets.

Armande

Oh! "Whatever is said" once more, I beg of you.

Trissotin

"Send it forth whatever is said".

Philaminte, Armande and Belise

"Whatever is said".

Trissotin

"Of your rich apartment".

Philaminte ,Armande, and Belise

"Rich apartment"!

Trissotin

"Where this ungrateful one is impudently".

Philaminte, Armande and Belise

This "ungrateful" fever".

Trissotin

"Attacks your beautiful life".

Philaminte

"Your beautiful life".

Armande and Belise

Ah!!

Trissotin

What? Regardless of your rank,
It takes hold of your blood.

Philaminte, Armande and Belise

Ah!

Trissotin

Both night and day ravages you!
If you lead it to the bath,
With out any more hesitation,
Drown it with your own hands.

Philaminte

This is too much.

Belise

I am enraptured.

Armande

The pleasure is killing me.

Philaminte

A thousand gentle emotions seize you.

Armande

"If you take it to the bath".

Belise

With out any hesitation.

Philaminte

Drown it with your own hands.

With your own hands, think of it, drown in the bath.

Armande

Each line in your poetry contains a charming feature.

Philaminte

Every where one roams in it with delight.

Belise

One treads there only on beautiful things.

Armande

The little paths are all strewn with roses.

Trissotin

Then the sonnet seems to you...

Philaminte

Admirable, something new. Nothing so fine has ever been composed.

Belise

What? Void of emotion during this reading? Your attitude is very strange, niece.

Henriette

Each one expresses his own feeling, aunt and one can't be a wit by merely wishing to be.

Trissotin

Perhaps my verses weary you.

Henriette

Oh! not at all; I am not listening.

Philaminte

Ah! Let us see the epigram.

Trissotin

On an amaranth -colored carriage, given to a lady by her friends".

Philaminte

The titles are always so rare.

Armande

Their novelty prepares us for a hundred fine flashes of wit.

Trissotin

Love so dearly has sold me its tie.

Philaminte, Armande and Belise

Ah!

Trissotin

That it cost me half of my wealth;
 When you see this beautiful carriage,
 On which so much gold is embossed.
 Which astonishes the whole community,
 And causes my Lais to triumph in splendor.

Philaminte

Ah! my Lais! What learning!

Belise

The theme is fine; it is worth a million others.

Trissotin

When you see this beautiful equipage,
 On which so much gold is embossed,
 Which astonishes the whole community,
 And causes my Lais to triumph in splendor
 Say no more that it is "amarante"- colored;
 Say rather that it is "de ma rente".

Armande

Oh! Oh! We were not prepared for that at all.

Philaminte

He is the only man who can write in that style.

Belise

Say no more that it is "amarante-colored"; say rather that it is "de ma rente". You can decline the phrase, "ma rente, de ma rente, a ma rente."

Philaminte

I do not know whether I was favorably inclined toward you on first acquaintance, but I do admire now your verse and your prose.

Trissotin

If you would show me something of your own composition, we might express our admiration in our turn.

Philaminte

I have done nothing in verse but I indeed hope to be able to show you soon, as a friend, eight chapters concerning the plan of our academy. Plato merely sketched the place where he wrote his treatise on the republic; but I intend to push the idea to completion. For I feel a peculiar grief over the wrong done us women in the matter of wit and I long for vengeance, for the slight put upon us by men: in limiting our talents to mere futilities, and shutting us out from the realms of sublime intelligence.

Armande

It is a great wrong to our sex to limit our mental capacity to the fit of a shirt or a wrap, or to the elegance of some point lace or new style of brocade.

Belise

We must raise ourselves above this shameful lot and resolutely emancipate ourselves.

Trissotin

You know how much I always respect your sex. If I pay homage to the brilliancy of your eyes, I am honoring your intellect too.

Philaminte

Our sex does justice to you for this very reason, but we wish to show certain wits, who, because of their learning treat us with contempt, that women also know something about science; that they, too can have learned assemblies conducted in the best of order; that they intend to reunite that which is separated elsewhere, to mingle fine speech with superior knowledge to reveal nature in a thousand ways, and upon all questions that they may discuss to bring in every sect and yet adopt none.

Trissotin

As a duty I interest myself in peripatetics.

Philaminte

I like platonism for a diversion.

Armande

I delight in Epicurus; his doctrines are so strong.

Belise

I am sufficiently satisfied with the atomic theory. It is painful for me to endure the void and I enjoy much more the subtle matter

Trissotin

Descartes on the loadstone quite agrees with me.

Armande

I love his whirlpools.

Philaminte

I, his falling worlds.

Armande

I long to have our assembly open, so that we may become famous

through some discovery.

Tissotin

Much is expected of your brilliancy. For you, nature is an open book.

Philaminte

I don't mean to boast, but I have already made one discovery. I have plainly seen men in the moon.

Belise

I have not yet seen any men, I think, but I have seen some steeples as plainly as I see you.

Armande

Besides physics we will investigate grammar, history, poetry, morals and politics.

Philaminte

I am greatly interested in some of the facts of morals. This was formerly the passion of great minds. I find nothing so fine as the teaching of the Stoics; I favor them.

Armande

Our rules, pertaining to the language, will soon be made known. We intend to make some radical changes in it. Through some antipathy-either just or natural-each one of us has formed a dislike for a number of words, both verbs and nouns, and we have mutually decided to abandon them. We are preparing some deadly decrees against them. We mean to open our learned assemblies by the abolition of all of these various words of which we are trying to purge both prose and poetry.

Philaminte

However the most important plan of our academy- a lofty undertaking with which I am delighted and a glorious scheme which all the great minds of posterity will boast of - is the suppression of these

unnecessary syllables, which mar our finest words. We desire to do away with those continual playthings of foolish persons of all ages; these insipid common places of our coarse evils- the source of a mass of shameful equivocations with which woman's modesty is insulted.

Trissotin

These are truly ideas worthy of admiration.

Belise

You will see our by-laws when they are completed.

Trissotin

They could not fail to be noble and wise.

Armande

By means of our laws we can judge of literary work; both prose and poetry will be subject to us. Our friends and ourselves alone will be intelligent. We will endeavor to find fault with every thing and we alone will be literary lights.

Scene III

Trissotin, Philaminte, Belise, Armande, Henriette, L'Epine,

Vadius

L'Epine

There is a gentleman out here who wishes to speak to you, sir. He is dressed in black and has a gentle voice.

Trissotin

It is my learned friend who has begged me so often to accord him the pleasure of your acquaintance.

Philaminte

If you desire it, we will gladly meet him. Let us do ourselves

justice. (To Henriette who starts to go out) Here! I have told you plainly that I need you.

Henriette

But what for?

Philaminte

Come, you shall soon know why.

Trissotin

Here is the man who is so anxious to meet you. In presenting him Madame, I have no fear of having admitted an unworthy person to your house. He can hold his own among great minds.

Philaminte

He who presents him speaks his worth.

Trissotin

He is well versed in old authors; and, Madame, he knows Greek as well as any man in France.

Philaminte

Greek, gracious! Greek! Think sister, he knows Greek.

Belise

Oh, niece, Greek!

Armande

Greek! How delightful.

Philaminte

Really? Do you know Greek? Oh, I beg of you, permit us for the love of Greek, to kiss you, sir.

(He kisses them all, until he comes to Henriette, who refuses him).

Henriette

Excuse me, sir, I do not understand Greek.

Philaminte

I admire Greek books greatly.

Vadius

I fear I shall be sorry for having so ardently rendered homage to you to-day, Madame. I have perhaps, interrupted some lofty conversation.

Philaminte

He who knows Greek can mar nothing, sir.

Trissotin

Moreover he creates wonders in verse as well as in prose. If he would he could show you something very fine.

Vadius

An author's greatest fault is to tyrannize over conversation with his own works; boring people at the Palais, at the court, at private parties and at the table with the indefatigable reading of his poetry. In my opinion there is nothing more foolish than an author; who is continually soliciting praise where ever he goes; and who makes a martyr of the first person with whom he comes in contact by pouring into his ears his night-labors. I have never succumbed to this folly. In this matter I follow the opinion of a Greek, who in a distinct dogma, forbids wise persons from too hastily reading their works; but here are some short verses about young lovers. I should like to have your opinion about them.

Trissotin

There is a beauty in your poetry which no other has.

Vadius

But Venus and the Graces fairly reign in yours.

Trissotin

Trissotin

Ease of expression and such a delightful flow of words are yours.

Vadius

Ithos and pathos are every where apparent in your works.

Trissotin

In some of your selections we have seen a style which surpasses Theocrites and Virgil in charm.

Vadius

Your odes have a lofty, delightful style, which leaves Horace far behind you.

Trissotin

Have they anything to compare with the grace of your ditties?

Vadius

Is there anything comparable to your sonnets?

Trissotin

Can anything be more charming than your little rondeaux?

Vadius

Anything so full of wit as your madrigals?

Trissotin

You write especially admirable ballads.

Vadius

You are very clever at bouts-rimes.

Trissotin

If France could only know of your skill.

Vadius

If the age only did justice to fine minds.

Trissotin

You would go about the streets in a golden carriage.

Vadius

The public would erect a statue in your honor. Ahem! This is a ballad and I should like to have you frankly...

Trissotin

Did you see a certain little sonnet on Princess Uranie's fever?

Vadius

Yes, yesterday I heard it read at a social gathering.

Trissotin

You know the author of it?

Vadius

No; but I know very well, -without flattering him at all - that his sonnet is worth nothing.

Trissotin

Never theless, many persons considered it admirable.

Vadius

That does not prevent its being worthless. If you had seen it you would agree with me.

Trissotin

I know that I do not agree with you in this. Very few persons are capable of writing such a sonnet.

Vadius

Heaven preserve me from writing the like of it!

Trissotin

No body could do any better, I am sure. My surest reason, is that I am the author of it myself.

Vadius

You!

Trissotin

Yes, I.

Vadius

I do not understand how that can be.

Trissotin

I was unfortunate not to be able to please you.

Vadius

It must be that I was very inattentive. Perhaps the reader spoiled the sonnet for me. But let us leave this subject of conversation and pay attention to my ballad.

Trissotin

I think a ballad is a stupid thing. It is no longer the style of writing. It savors of antiquity.

Vadius

Nevertheless many people find the ballad delightful.

Trissotin

That does not hinder it from displeasing me.

Vadius

It is no worse for all that.

Trissotin

Pedants are wonderfully charmed by it.

Vadius

Yet we see that it does not displease you.

Trissotin

You foolishly attribute your own qualities to others.

Vadius

You impudently thrust yours upon me.

Trissotin

Go on wretched writer, blotter of paper.

Vadius

Go away miserable rimster, disgrace of the profession.

Trissotin

Go on literary hack, impudent plagairist.

Vadius

Go away you snob.

Philaminte

Gentlemen, what do you intend to do?

Trissotin

Go, go restore all the shameful thefts which the Greek and Latin authors might claim of you.

Vadius

Go make honorable amends to Parnasse for having mutilated Horace in your verses.

Trissotin

Remember your book, and its little renoun.

Vadius

And you, your publisher reduced to poverty.

Trissotin

My fame is established: you are slandering it in vain.

Vadius

Yes, yes, I refer you to the author of the "Satire".

Trissotin

I refer you to him also.

Vadius

I have the satisfaction of knowing that he has treated me more honorably. Among the several authors who are honored at the Palais, he gives me a slight hit in passing; but in his verses, he never

leaves you alone; it is evident that you are everywhere the object of his trusts.

Trissotin

That is the very reason why I hold the more honorable position. He classes you with the multitude, as a wretched writer. He considers one blow sufficient to crush you; hence he never honors you by repeating it. But he attacks me alone, like a noble adversary, for whom his entire effort is necessary. His repeated strokes against me show that he never considers himself victorious.

Vadius

My pen will teach you what kind of a man I can be.

Trissotin

And mine will show you your superior.

Vadius

I defy you in verse, prose, Greek and Latin.

Trissotin

Well, we will see each other, in private, at Barbin's.

Scene IV

Trissotin, Armande, Philaminte, Belise, Henriette.

Trissotin

Do not blame me for becoming angry, Madame. I was defending your judgment as regards the sonnet which he so boldly attacked.

Philaminte

I will gladly devote myself to appeasing you. But let us talk of another affair. Come here Henriette. For some considerable time I have been anxious, because I have seen no evidence of wit in you but now a way presents itself.

Henriette

It is not necessary to take such pains for me. These learned conversations do not concern me. I prefer to live comfortably and too much labor to try to be witty in every thing that is said. I have no desire for it. It suits me to be stupid. I would rather indulge in only ordinary conversation than to torment myself by using fine expressions.

Philaminte

Truly, I am angry at you. I cannot endure such a home. Facial beauty is a frail ornament, a short-lived flower, a temporary glory; it is only skin deep; but the beauty of the mind is innate, fixed. For a long time, I have been searching for a way by which to give you the beauty which old age cannot destroy, to inspire you with a desire for knowledge, hint to you what learning truly means. I have decided to marry you to an erudite. This man is my choice and the one whom I have destined to be your husband.

Henriette

I, mother?

Philaminte

Yes, you. Now, do not be silly.

Belise

I understand you, Henriette. You are awaiting my consent to win over a heart which is mine. Do it, I am willing. I yield to you. This marriage will tend toward intellectual aggrandizement on your part.

Trissotin

I do not know how to express my delight, madame. This marriage by which you are honoring me, places me...

Henriette

Be careful, sir, it is not a settled affair as yet. Do not be in too great haste.

Philaminte

What an answer! Are you aware that if... This suffices, you understand me. She will become tractable, come, let us leave her.

Scene V

Henriette, Armande

Armande

Our mother is so devoted to you. She could not have chosen a more illustrious husband...

Henriette

If the choice is so excellent, why don't you take him?

Armande

He has offered himself to you, not to me.

Henriette

As you are my elder sister, I will give him to you.

Armande

If matrimony seemed as delightful to me as it does to you, I would accept of your offer with joy.

Henriette

If I cared as much for pedants as you , do, I would find him an exceedingly agreeable match.

Armande

Although our tastes in such matters; may be different, we must obey our parents, sister. We are entirely under our mother's control. You think in vain by your resistance...

Scene VI

Chrysale, Ariste, Clitandre, Henriette, Armande

Chrysale

Come, daughter, you must approve of my plan. Take off that glove; give this gentleman your hand; and consider him henceforth as your future husband.

Armande

Your inclination tends very strongly in that direction.

Henriette

Sister, we must obey our parents. A father has every authority over us.

Armande

A mother must be obeyed, too.

Chrysale

What is that?

Armande

I say that I fear you and mother are not of the same opinion. She has another husband in view.

Chrysale

Be quiet, you saucy girl! Go philosophize with her to your heart's content, but do not concern yourself with any of my affairs. Tell her of my intention and warn her not to come around here and scold me. Go quickly.

Ariste

Good for you! You are working wonders.

Clitandre

What a delight! What a joy! Ah! How happy my lot.

Chrysale

Here, take her hand, and go before us. Lead her to her room.

Ah! the tender caresses! See, my heart is moved by this affection.

This enlivens my old age, and reminds me of my youthful days of love.



Act IV

Scene I

Armande, Philaminte

Armande

Yes, she is not rational; she has boasted of her obedience.

While I was with her she scarcely had the time to yield. She appeared not so much to follow the wishes of her father as to pretend to brave your commands.

Philaminte

I will show her to whose laws she must in reason be submissive; I will show her who is to govern her, her mother or her father, mind or body, form or matter.

Armande

Your consent at least should be asked in the matter. This insignificant man is very rude to wish, in spite of you, to become your son-in-law.

Philaminte

It is not his intentions to which I am opposed. They please me; I like his devotion; but his conduct always has displeased me. I am thankful to say that he knows that I am interested in writing, yet he never asks me to read anything to him.

Scene II

Clitandre, Philaminte, Armande

Armande

If I were you I should never suffer Henriette to be his wife.

to accuse me of acting selfishly, or of harboring any ill-will in this affair would be doing me an injustice. The soul is strengthened against such actions by the firm aid of philosophy, which can raise one far above the reach of all. But to subject you to such treatment must provoke you beyond endurance. It is your privilege to oppose his wishes for he is, in fact, a man who cannot please you. Indeed I have never detected any inclination of esteem for you in all my conversations with him.

Philaminte!

The little fool!

Armande

He is never disposed to praise you, whatever satisfaction you may create.

Philaminte

The brute!

Armande

I have read some of your verses, under the guise of new pieces, at least twenty times, and he has not considered them beautiful.

Philaminte

The impudent fellow.

Armande

We often disputed over them; you cannot imagine how many insults

Clitandre

Gently, please; a little charity, madame, or at least a little honesty. What wrong have I done to you? What has my offense been that you speak thus plainly of me? Do you wish to ruin me by making me odious in the eyes of people whom I meet? Speak out, tell me why is this terrible anger? I am willing to take madam as a judge in the matter.

Armande

If I were as angry- as you accuse me of being, I certainly would have cause for it; you would be deserving of it. The first love so sacredly fixes certain rights in one's soul, that happiness must be lost and life sacrificed rather than suffer another love; no horror is comparable to a change in affection; every faithless heart is in morals, a monster.

Clitandre

Do you call that which your proud soul has commanded of me infidelity? I am only obeying the laws which it is imposing on me; it alone is the cause of any insult on my part. First of all, your charms took possession of my whole heart; I have loved you passionately for two years and there are no polite attentions, duties, respect or favors which it has not lovingly sacrificed to you. All my love, all my devotion avails nothing; you are averse to my tenderest feeling; what you refuse, I offer to another. Come, does the fault lie with you or me? Am I eager to change or are you forcing me to it? Am I renouncing you or are you driving me away?

Armande

Am I averse to your affection, sir, when I endeavor to elevate it and limit it to that purity which constitutes the beauty of a perfect love? You would not desire my uninteresting love; my hand without my heart. Surely, an ordinary affection with all its attendant display would not satisfy you? Must a marriage and all that follows, foster the passions of your heart? Ah, what a strange love is yours! and how far removed from such an earthly flame is the love of my pure soul! The senses have no share in it; for my pure flame the heart alone suffices. There are no unclean, impure desires in this pure and perfect love; it is love for love's sake; the spirit without the body

rejoices in it.

Clitandre

As for me- begging your pardon - my body and heart unfortunately are inseparable. Heaven has denied me the philosophy, which teaches us this art of separation. As you have said, there is nothing more beautiful than the union of both heart and mind; this tender, yet unresisting love. But all this is too refined for me; I am somewhat coarse as you accuse me. I love myself and any affection given me must, I confess, love my whole person. There is no occasion to chastise, and although I do not mean to do your fine sentiments any injustice, I notice that my way is the usual one. Matrimony is quite in vogue, and the tie, upright and gentle enough, for me to have desired to wed you, without dreaming of offending you by such a thought.

Armande

Well, sire, since you are so willing to rest satisfied without paying any attention to what I have said, since a marriage is necessary to make you true to me, I will consent to it if my mother does not object.

Clitandre

It is too late, now, for I love another. It would be poor return to mistreat the one whose kindness has saved me from your scorn.

Philaminte

But, sir, when you resolved upon this other marriage, did you consider what might be my opinion? Are you aware that I have chosen another for Henriette?

Clitandre

Oh, Madam, only look at your choice, I beg of you! Please do not disgrace me by considering me a rival of Monsieur Trissotin. With all your love for brilliant minds, you could not have compared me to a

less noble adversary. He is one of the many to whom this century's poor taste has accredited the reputation of being a wit. But he has failed to deceive the people. With the exception of this one house, his writings have been estimated according to their value, and justice has been done them. You have surprised me many times by praising to the skies his nonsense, which, if you yourself had written it, you would have disowned.

Philaminte

Since your decision in regard to him differs so greatly, we must be judging him from a different point of view.

Scene III

Trissotin, Philaminte, Armande Clitandre

Trissotin

I come with great news - last night we had a very narrow escape; a planet near by passed through the earth's orbit, and if it had encountered our earth, it would have shattered it as if it were a glass.

Philaminte

Let us defer this subject until a later time, for Clitandre would find neither rhyme nor reason in it. He professes to cherish ignorance and hate intelligence and science.

Clitandre

This truth needs some softening. Allow me to explain that I dislike science and knowledge only in as much as people are spoiled by them. Taken in themselves, they are beautiful and fine, but I prefer to be an ignoramus rather than be a savant like certain other people.

Trissotin

As for myself, I do not maintain that science can corrupt as much as people think.

Clitandre

I am of the opinion that science is inclined to make people fools, both in actions and in words.

Trissotin

The paradox is very strong.

Clitandre

I need not be very clever to prove my statement. It is an easy thing to do. Even if reasons were lacking, I am sure that I would have notable examples at all events.

Trissotin

Those whom you would cite would hardly prove your point.

Clitandre

I would not be obliged to search very far.

Trissotin

Why, I do not see these notable examples.

Clitandre

I see them so plainly that they are staring me in the face.

Trissotin

I have always thought that ignorance, not science, made fools.

Clitandre

You had the wrong idea. I attest that there is no fool like a learned fool.

Trissotin

Your maxims are contrary to universal opinion, since ignoramus and fool are synonymous terms.

Clitandre

If you will analyze the use of the two words, you will find a greater alliance between pedant and fool.

Trissotin

Stupidity in the one case is genuine.

Clitandre

Study in the other adds to his nature.

Trissotin

Knowledge never boasts.

Clitandre

Knowledge in a fool is impertinence.

Trissotin

Since you defend ignorance so valiantly it must have a great attraction for you.

Clitandre

Well, if it does please me, it is since I have come to know certain learned people.

Trissotin

When you know these savants you will find them quite as good as any whom you can find any place.

Clitandre

Oh, certainly if you refer to your class, but we differ upon that very point.

Philaminte

It seems to me, sir...

Clitandre

I beg your pardon, madame, but this gentleman seems capable of getting along without any body's assistance. It is only in retreating

that I feel obliged to defend myself against him - rude assailant that he is.

Armande

But the abuse and bitterness of each of your retorts...

Clitandre

A minute more and I will give up the affair.

Philaminte

Disputes like this are permissible provided no personal references are made.

Clitandre

Good gracious! There is no personal offense about that. He understands a joke. Though many other incidents have vexed him yet he has never taken them seriously.

Trissotin

I am not surprised to see this gentleman support his side of the argument. He is very much interested in the court, which it is said pays no attention to learning. It is to its advantage to uphold ignorance. Naturally, as he is a courtier, he takes up its defense.

Clitandre

You are very hostile to this poor court. Unfortunately these bright people of yours are constantly declaiming against it : they quarrel with it on account of their own disappointments; accuse it of having poor taste, and blame it, alone, for all of your failures. Allow me, Mr. Trissotin, to inform you - respectfully as your name inspires me to do - that yourself and your colleagues would better speak of the court in a slightly gentler tone. For taking all into consideration it is not quite so stupid as you gentlemen think it.

It has common sense for the good judgement of every thing; it conforms to the best of taste; and - without flattery the wit of

society is worth quite as much as the obscure knowledge of your pedants.

Trissotin

You see the effects of its good taste.

Clitandre

Please show me an incident, sire, where it is so bad?

Trissotin

I have observed that Rasius and Baldus have done honor to France along scientific lines; and through their worth is very evident, yet the court has not recognized them by gifts.

Clitandre

I understand your vexation. Through modesty you have omitted your own name. But leaving yourself out of the question - what do these clever heroes do for the state? Do their writings render it a service by accusing the court of gross injustice; by complaining at all times that favors and gifts have not been lavished on their learned names? Both their knowledge and the books which they have compiled have been greatly needed by the court and by France. These three wretched fellows have the idea that to be important personages in the state their works must be printed and bound in calf - skin, with their pens they hope to win laurels. At the slightest mention of their works, they think that they should receive an annuity; that they should be of universal attraction; that the glory of their names should be spread broadcast. To know what their predecessors knew to have studied for thirty years, to have passed nine or ten thousand nights in cramming Greek and Latin to have ladened their minds with the gruesome confusion of book-lore: these are the requirements of people who always seem intoxicated by their learning, whose only

merit is idle chatter who are incapable of anything, void of common sense and full of nonsense and impertinance because they cry down science and learning.

Philaminte

Your ardor is great. This burst of nature marks your progress. It is the name of the rival which in your soul excites...

Scene IV

Julien, Trissotin, Philaminte, Clitandre, Armande

Julien

The savant, who visited you this afternoon, and whose valet I have the honor to see, exhorts you to read this note, madame.

Philaminte

This may be important, but learn, my friend, that it is insulting to interrupt a conversation in this manner. You must learn how a valet should conduct himself.

Julien

I will make note of that in my book, madame.

Philaminte, reads

Madame, Trissotin has boasted that he would marry your daughter. My opinion is that his philosophy is only aiming after your wealth. You will do well not to conclude the marriage until you have seen the poem, which I am composing against him. While awaiting this portraiture, in which I intend to depict him in his true colors, I send you Horace, Vergil, Terrence and Catullus on the margin of which you will see noted all the places which he has plagerized.

Philaminte, continues

This meritorious marriage, which I have decided upon, is

attacked by numerous enemies. This outburst to-day urges me to act in such a manner as to make her feel that any opposition, on her part, will bring affairs to an immediate crisis. Inform your master of all this, this instant, also in order to let him know how highly I value his opinion and how worthy I believe it of being followed, tell him that this evening my daughter will marry this gentleman here. On my part, I invite you, sir, as a friend of the family, to assist in signing the marriage contract. I charge you, Armande, to send for the notary and to go and to go to warn your sister of the event.

Armande

It is useless to warn her, for the man will take pains to inform her of the news immediately and make her rebellious toward you.

Philaminte

We will see who has authority over her, and if it is I who can make her obedient. (She goes away)

Armande

Indeed, sir, I regret very much that affairs are not turning out favorably to you.

Clitandre

That I may cause you no regret, I am going to work zealously, madame.

Armande

I fear that your effort will be in vain.

Clitandre

Perhaps you may see your fear come to naught.

Armande

I hope so.

Clitandre

I am sure that you will aid us.

Armande

Yes, as much as is in my power.

Clitandre

I shall certainly be very grateful for this service.

Scene V

Chrysale, Ariste, Henriette, Clitandre

Clitandre

I can do nothing without your support, sir, Your wife has rejected me; she desires Trissotin for a son-in-law.

Chrysale

Why, what liking can she have taken for him? Why in the world would she want this Trissotin?

Ariste

He has surpassed his rival in his gift for making Latin rhymes.

Clitandre

She wishes to have the marriage take place this evening.

Chrysale

This evening?

Clitandre

Yes, this evening.

Chrysale

And this evening I want to thwart her by your marriage with Henriette.

Clitandre

She has sent to the Notary to draw up the contract.

Chrysale

I am going to look him up to make out the one which he ought to.

Clitandre

Your wife must be informed by her sister of the marriage for which we wish her consent.

Chrysale

I authoritatively command her to make her mind for this other union. I will make it evident whether or not I am the only master of my own house. We will return; Please wait. Come, follow me, brother, and you, my son-in-law.

Henriette

Alas! Keep him in this humor.

Ariste

I shall do my very best for you.

Clitandre

Whatever influential aid is promised for my love, my greatest hope lies in you alone.

Henriette

You can depend upon my heart.

Clitandre

I can only be happy when I have its support.

Henriette

You see to what a union I am being forced.

Clitandre

As for me, I see nothing to fear.

Henriette

I am going to try for our tendrest desires. If my efforts are in vain, there is a convent to which souls give themselves, which will prevent me from belonging to another.

Clitandre

May Heaven, this day keep me from receiving from you this proof of your love.

ACT V

Scene I

Henriette, Trissotin

Henriette

I wish to converse with you, Monsieur Trissotin, about this marriage for which Mother is preparing. I thought that you would listen to reason concerning our domestic understanding. I realize that with my promise to wed you, you would anticipate a considerable dowry, but money, you know, on which so many people set such a high value, has charms unworthy of a true philosopher. Your words, alone, must not appear to scorn wealth and empty grandeur.

Trissotin

Believe me, it is not that which attracts me toward you. I am in love with your brilliant charms, your piercing, yet mild eyes, your graceful air, these are the wealth, the riches of which I am enamoured.

Henriette

I am much beholden to you for your generous zeal, yet I regret that I cannot reciprocate this obliging love, which rather perplexes me. My regard for you is unsurpassed, but here is the obstacle; My heart can not belong to two persons. I have chosen Clitandre. I know that I have chosen unwisely for you are far his superior; I am wrong, yet my heart forces me to it. To argue with me will avail nothing; you can only wish me ill for such blindness.

Trissotin

If you will only trust to me your hand, I have reason to believe that by tender devotion I shall soon possess the heart which is

now Clitandre's.

Henriette

No, you cannot move me. I shall remain faithful to my first vow I speak to you with frankness, yet do not be shocked. There is no especial merit in love, it is only fancy; we can scarcely tell why a person attracts us. Were I to choose wisely, I should indeed be yours but you see that love is governed otherwise. Leave me, I beg of you, in my blindness, and do not reprimand me for my disobedience. No gentleman will be the means of causing a parent to exert his authority over his child. You should desire a heart for itself alone, and be loath to sacrifice it. Do not urge my mother on to severity, only offer your precious love to another than me.

Trissotin

What can I do to win you? Impose any condition that you will. How can I keep from loving you, unless you cease to be amiable, and to display the celestial charm of your eyes.....

Henriette

Oh, Sir, let us end this nonsense. You are so enamoured of Iris, Phillis and Amarantes, whom you depict so charmingly in your verses and swear so much allegiance to them that.....

Trissotin

My intellect, and not my heart, speaks to them. I love them only as a poet, but I seriously love you, my charming Henriette....

Henriette

Oh, sir, please....

Trissotin

If I am offending you, I am sorry, but my offense must continue Up till this time you have been unaware of my everlasting love, consecrated to you; nothing can check it. Though ,contrary to your

desires, I cannot but accept the assistance of your mother, who wishes to crown this precious love, obtain you as I may.

Henriette

Do you not know that you are risking a great deal in trying to force me against my will? That it is unwise to hasten matters by marrying a girl in spite of her wishes? If she is forced to it, he might have reason to fear her resentment.

Trissotin

You do not alter my intention in the least. A wise man is prepared for anything, for he has risen above the ordinary, human weaknesses and does not grieve over that which is not dependent upon himself.

Henriette

Really, sir, I am delighted with you. I did not think that philosophy was so fine, that it did teach people to bear such occurrences as this with resignation. This firmness of mind, so peculiar to you, deserves an opportunity for displaying itself; it is, indeed, worth the effort of being brought to light. To tell you the truth, I am not fitted for the purpose, hence I leave it for another. Believe me, I must forego the happiness of being your wife.

Trissotin

We will soon see what the outcome of this shall be. The Notary has been sent for.

Scene II

Chrysale, Clitandre, Martine, Henriette

Chrysale

Oh, daughter, how happy I am to see you. Come, do your duty by yielding to your father's wishes . I intend to teach your mother a lesson; in spite of her, I have retained Martine.

Henriette

Your resolutions, to be sure, are worthy of praise, but be careful not to change your mind, be firm in what you want, but do not allow your own kindness to seduce you; do not yield, and be careful not to let Mother have the advantage over you.

Chrysale

How is that? Do you take me for a simpleton?

Henriette

Heaven forbid!

Chrysale

Am I a fop, if you please?

Henriette

I do not say that.

Chrysale

Do you think me incapable of the firm sense of a reasonable man?

Henriette

Indeed, no, Father.

Chrysale

Have I not arrived at the years of discretion enough to be master in my own house?

Henriette

Of course.

Chrysale

Am I weak enough to allow my wife to lead me about by the nose?

Henriette

Why, no, father.

Chrysale

Well, what do you mean, then, by talking thus impertinently to me?

Henriette

I did not mean to shock you.

Chrysale

My wishes are law.

Henriette

Very well, father.

Chrysale

No one but I has the right to command in this house.

Henriette

Yes, you have the right.

Chrysale

I am the head of the family.

Henriette

Certainly you are.

Chrysale

It is I who must dispose of my daughter.

Henriette

Oh, yes.

Chrysale

Heaven gives me full authority over you.

Henriette

Who denies it?

Chrysale

In your choice of a husband, I will show you that you must obey your father and not your mother.

Henriette

Alas! You are flattering my sweetest wish. Please be obeyed - that is all I desire.

Chrysale

We shall see if my wife shall oppose my wishes.

Clitandre

Here she is now, with the notary.

Chrysale

All of you please assist me.

Martine

Let me, I will take care to encourage you, if it is necessary.

Scene III

Philaminte, Belise, Armande, Trissotin, Le notaire, Chrysale

Clitandre, Henriette, Martine

Philaminte

Can you not alter the barbarous style of your writing and make out the contract in finer language?

Le Notaire

Our style is very good, Madame, I would be a fool to try to change a single word in it.

Belise

Oh! What barbarity in the very midst of France! At least, sir, please favor science enough to express the dowry in "mines" and "talents" instead of "ecus, livres and francs", and record the date by

ides and calends.

Le Notaire

I? If I should yield to your request, madame, I should be hissed at by all of my companions.

Philaminte

In vain do we complain of barbarity. Come, sir, write at this table. What, that impudent girl dares to appear again? Why, pray, bring her back to my house again?

Chrysale

We will talk of that later. Just at present we have something else to settle.

Le Notaire

Let us proceed to the contract. Where is the bride?

Philaminte

It is the younger daughter who is to be married.

Le Notaire

Good.

Chrysale

Yes, here she is; her name is Henriette.

Le Notaire

Very well. And the bridegroom.

Philaminte

Here is the husband whom I have chosen for her.

Chrysale

And here is the one whom I- in my own right - intend that she shall marry.

Le Notaire

Two husbands! That is more than customary.

Philaminte

Why do you hesitate? Sir, put Trissotin down for my son-in-law.

Chrysale

I tell you to put Clitandre down as my son-in-law.

Le Notaire

Consult together and do come to some agreement about the future husband.

Philaminte

Write down the name of the one upon whom I have determined.

Chrysale

No, mine.

Le Notaire

Whom shall I obey, please?

Philaminte

What do you mean? You oppose my wish?

Chrysale

I cannot endure to see my daughter married only for her wealth.

Philaminte

Truly, we must take our wealth into consideration, and that is a worthy anxiety for a philosopher.

Chrysale

Well, I have chosen Clitandre.

Philaminte

Here is the one whom I want for her husband. I have resolved upon that.

Chrysale

Bless me! You speak in such an authoratative tone?

Martine

A woman has no right to give off orders. That right belongs to

men.

Chrysale

Well said.

Martine

Although I should be fired a hundred times I should still say that a hen has no right to crow before the cock.

Chrysale

Doubtless.

Martine

A man who is under his wife's thumb is always an object of jest

Chrysale

That is true.

Martine

I tell you if I had a husband he should be the head of the house . I could not love a henpecked simpleton. I should want him to lower my tone with a few slaps if I talked too loudly or argued with him.

Chrysale

Well, that sounds sensible.

Martine

You are right to wish to choose an agreeable husband for your daughter.

Chrysale

Of course.

Martine

Why deny her a fine young fellow like Clitandre? Pray, why give her a savant who does nothing but cavil? She needs a husband and not a pedagogue. So long as she is not interested in Greek or Latin she has no need of Monsieur Trissotin.

Chrysale

Good.

Philaminte

I must suffer her to chatter on at her ease.

Martine

Savants are good only to preach in pulpits. I have said a thousand times that I would never have an intelligent man for my husband. Intelligence does not constitute the whole household and learning and marriage do not agree. If ever I pledge my faith, I want a man who will have no other book than me; and not displeasing you madame - one who does not know A from B, and in short who will be a doctor only for his wife.

Philaminte

Have you finished? Have I listened long enough to your worthy interpreter with out interrupting her?

Chrysale

She has told the truth.

Philaminte

To cut short all of this dispute, I say, that my wish must be complied with. Henriette and this gentleman will be married immediately. I have said it, I want it done. Do not answer me. If you have promised her to Clitandre, now offer him her elder sister for a wife.

Chrysale

Here is a means of conciliation in this affair; here, will you consent to it?

Henriette

Oh! father!

Clitandre

Oh, sir!

Belise

You might propose something which would better please him. The love asserted by us must be pure as the star of day; we banish all of the material substance from it and the spiritual alone is retained.

Last Scene

Ariste, Chrysale, Philaminte, Belise, Henriette, Armande,
Trissotin, Le Notaire, Clitandre, Martine.

Ariste

I regret to interrupt this happy ceremony by informing you that I am the bearer of two letters, containing news, which I have felt cruelly wrongs you. The one for you, Philaminte, is sent to me by your attorney; the other for you, Chrysale, comes to me from Lyons.

Philaminte

What misfortune could they possibly refer to, which would be sufficient to interrupt us?

Ariste

You can read this letter which will explain.

Philaminte

"Madame, I have asked your brother to deliver to you this letter which will make known to you what I dare not tell you. I had not been warned by the clerk of the way in which your business affairs have been neglected, and as a consequence you have entirely lost the law suit which you ought to have gained".

Chrysale

Your lawsuit lost!

Philaminte

Do not be so disturbed! I am not easily unsettled. Do not be

like most people when the reverses of fortune come. Be brave like I am.

"Your suit has cost you forty thousand ecus. You are condemned by the judgment of the court to pay this fine, together with the costs".

Condemned, how shocking! This word is used only in reference to criminals.

Ariste

Truly, he is wrong. You are right to protest. He should have stated that you are requested by the judgment of the court to pay, as soon as possible the forty thousand francs with costs.

Philaminte

Let us see the other one.

Chrysale reads:

"Sir, The friendship, which binds me to your brother, causes me to take an interest in everything which concerns you. I know that you have entrusted your wealth to Argante and Damon, let me inform you that both of them became bankrupt on the same day".

Heavens! Thus to lose all my money at once!

Philaminte

Oh! For shame! What an outcry! All that amounts to nothing. There is no sad reverse for a true philosopher, for, though losing all else, he has himself remaining still. Do cheer up and let us finish up our little transaction. Trissotin's wealth will be sufficient for both himself and us.

Trissotin

No, madame: do not push this affair further. Since everybody seems to oppose this marriage, I do not intend to force them to it.

Philaminte

Your reflexion is very short duration: it follows close upon our misfortune, sir.

Trissotin

At last I am weary of so much resistance. I do not want a heart which is not mine of its own accord; hence I prefer to renounce all of this difficulty.

Philaminte

I see in you - and not to your advantage either that up to this time I have refused to believe of you.

Trissotin

You can see what you wish in me and I do not care how you take it. I am not the person who will endure to be infamously insulted as I have been here. I am the humble servant of whoever does not want me.

Philaminte

How little philosophical is what you have just done. You have only indeed exposed your mercenary soul.

Clitandre

I do not boast of being a philosopher, but I should like, after all, to become connected with you. I take the liberty to offer you, along with myself, any fortune which I may possess.

Philaminte

Your generosity charms me, sir. I wish to reward your amorous desires. Yes, Henriette shall be yours...

Henriette

No, mother: I have changed my mind, now. Suffer me to oppose your will.

Clitandre

What? You are opposed to my happiness? And just when each one

is preparing to accept me...

Henriette

I know your means are limited, Clitandre; when I saw that my marriage with you would aid you in your business, my supremest desire was to be your wife, but now since our destinies are so contrary, I think enough of you in this extremity not to burden you with our misfortune.

Clitandre

Any fate would be acceptable to me, so long as I was with you; any fate, without you, would be unendurable.

Henriette

The outburst of love always speaks thus, Let us avoid the worry of importunate regrets. There is nothing which wears out so much of the love which binds us as the grievous needs of life's realities. Both of us might come to accuse ourselves for the sad sorrows, which come of such a love.

Ariste

Is that the only reason for your refusal to wed Clitandre?

Henriette

Were it not for that, I should willingly consent. It is because I love him so much that I am fleeing from him.

Ariste

Suffer yourself then to be bound by these ties so beautiful. What I have reported is false. It is only a by-play which I have attempted by way of helping you out of your difficulty. I sought to show my sister what her philosopher is worth when put to a true test.

Chrysale

Thank Heaven for it!

Philaminte

I rejoice, too, on account of the vexation which this cowardly deserter must endure and as a punishment for his low avarice, he shall witness this brilliant ceremony.

Chrysale

I knew that you would marry him.

Armande

Am I thus, to be sacrificed to their wishes?

Philaminte

You will not be sacrificed to them. Philosophy will aid you to look upon this marriage with contentment.

Belise

Take heed of this adage: One often marries through sheer desperation and spends the remainder of his life repenting of it.

Chrysale

Come, quickly, sir, do as I have bidden you. Carry into effect the contract just as I have commanded.

MOLIERE'S
LES PRECIEUSES RIDICULES

Personnages

La Grange }
Du Croisy } rejected lovers

Gorgibus, bon bourgeois

Madelon, daughter of Gorgibus }
Cathos, niece of Gorgibus } Precieuses ridicules

Marotte, servant of Precieuses ridicules

Almanzor, lackey of Precieuses ridicules

The Marquis of Mascarille, valet of La Grange

The Viscount of Jordelet, valet of Du Croisy

Two chairmen

Neighbors

Violinists

The scene is at Paris in the house of Gorgibus.

LES PRECIEUSES RIDICULES

Scene I

La Grange, Du Croisy

Du Croisy

Lord la Grange...

La Grange

What?

Du Croisy

Look at me without laughing.

La Grange

Well?

Du Croisy

What have you to say about our call? Are you well satisfied with it.

La Grange

Do you think that we should be?

Du Croisy

Not exactly; to tell the truth.

La Grange

I confess that I am simply scandalized by it. But tell me, did you ever see two more conceited and haughty rustics than they are, or two men treated more contemptuously than we were? They could scarcely make up their minds to offer us seats. I have never seen so much whispering, so much yawning, so much rubbing of eyes. They asked constantly "What time is it?" They answered only "yes" and "no" to every thing we said to them. You confess, don't you, that if we had been

the last persons in the world, they couldn't have treated us worse than they did?

Du Croisy

It seems to me that you take the affair very much to heart.

La Grange

Doubtless, I do, and so much so that I want to revenge their impertinence. I know why they scorned us. That air of a "precieux" has not only infected Paris, but it has also spread into the provinces and these ridiculous wenches have received their share of it. In short, they are a mixture of the "precieuse" and the coquette. I see what must be done to win their favor; if you will assist, we will play a role which will make them see their folly and will teach them to understand who we are.

Du Croisy

How will you do it?

La Grange

My valet, Mascarille, by name, passes for a kind of a wit in the opinion of many, for, you know, there is nothing cheaper than a wit of now-a-days. Some foolish person has given him the idea to pose as a man of rank. Ordinarily he takes pride in his gallantry and his poetry; and he scorns the other valets even to the point of calling them coarse.

Du Croisy

Well. What do you intend to do about it?

La Grange

What do I intend to do? I must...

But let's leave the place first.

Scene II

Gorgibus, Du Croisy, La Grange

Gorgibus

Well, have you seen my niece and my daughter? Everything went smoothly, I suppose. What is the result of the call?

La Grange

They can tell you better than we. All that we can say is that we thank you for your favor and remain your humble servants.

Du Croisy

Your humble servants.

Gorgibus (alone)

Well, they don't seem to go away satisfied. Why can they be discontented? I must find out. Here!

Scene III

Gorgibus, Maroth

Marotte

What do you wish, sir?

Gorgibus

Where are your mistresses?

Marotte

In their room.

Gorgibus

What are they doing?

Marotte

Making an ointment for the lips.

Gorgibus

They are carrying this sort of a thing too far. Tell them to come down stairs. I believe these silly girls, with their pommades want to cause my destruction. All I see around this house is whites of eggs, virgin's milk and a thousand other drugs the names of which are unknown to me. Since we have been here, they have made use of the lard from about a dozen hogs, to say the least; and they use enough mutton every day to satisfy the hunger of four valets.

Scene IV

Madelon, Cathos, Gorgibus

Gorgibus

I presume it is very necessary indeed for you to spend so much money to grease your face. Just tell me what you did to these gentlemen whom I saw depart with such an air of indifference. Didn't I command you to receive them as persons whom I desired to be your husbands?

Madelon

Father, what opinion would you wish us to form of the ungentlemanly conduct of those people?

Cathos

Just tell me, uncle, how a sensible girl could be satisfied with such as they are?

Gorgibus

What fault have you to find with them?

Madelon

How polite they are! Think of it! To begin by talking of marriage the very first thing.

Gorgibus

And what, pray - do you want them to discuss? Marriage is a topic which ought to please both of you as well as me. Could there be anything more kindly than that? The sacred tie to which they are aspiring is a testimony of the seriousness of their intentions.

Madelon

Oh, father, how very vulgar it is in you to talk thus. I am ashamed to hear you. You ought to learn more aristocratic manners.

Gorgibus

I am not interested in such nonsense. I repeat that matrimony is a pure and sacred subject, and one which it is very fitting to discuss.

Madelon

Heavens! If everybody were like you, romance would soon be at an end. What a delightful circumstance it would be if Cyrus married Mandane the first thing; and if Clelie consented immediately to be Aronce's wife!

Gorgibus

What can she mean by telling me all that?

Madelon

Father, your niece, who is here, will tell you as well as I, that marriage should follow the other circumstances. A lover, to be attractive, must know how to say beautiful, sentimental things; must utter sweet, tender and passionate words. His courtship must be in due form. First of all, he must catch sight of the person of whom he becomes enamoured, at church, out walking or at some public gathering or, indeed, be led by fate, to her home by some relative or friend, and come away from there dreamy and sad. For some time he conceals his ardor from the one whom he loves. He visits her and during these

visits never fails to introduce a subject which will give the members of the party an opportunity to display their intelligence. The final day comes. The proposal should take place along some garden path, a short distance away from the rest of the party; the lady in question immediately becomes angry, she blushes and ends by banishing the lover from her presence. And then he finds a means to appease her, and accustoms her gradually to listening to his passion; and draws from her that confession so hard to make. After this comes a series of various circumstances; rivals, bent upon securing her, throw themselves across her path, the persecutions of the father, complaints, jealousy, despair, the elopement and all that follows it. This is the aristocratic manner of wooing, and these rules should not be deviated from. But to come point blank to the marriage without any love-making, that is putting the cart before the horse. And indeed, nothing can be more ordinary than a like proceeding. The very thought of it makes me sick at heart.

Gorgibus

What in the world is all this jargon about? This is certainly high style.

Cathos

Indeed, uncle, your daughter has spoken truthfully. Just tell me how to receive persons who are so utterly boorish. I'll wager that they have never seen "la carte de tendre" and that "Billet-doux, Petits-soins, Billets-galants and Jolis-vers" are unknown quantities to them. Don't you see that they lack all this, and that their manner isn't attractive at first sight? The idea of going courting dressed in such clothes, a hat without plumes, ill-cut hair, and a coat void of ribbon decorations. What kind of lovers are those? What meanness

in their vestments and what dryness of conversation! It is unendurable. I have also noticed that their neckties aren't the latest make and their trousers are fully half a foot too short.

Gorgibus

Both of you certainly are crazy. I don't understand all of this prattle. Cathos, and you, too, Madelon....

Madelon

For mercy sake, father, rid yourself of these odd names, and call us something else.

Gorgibus

What do you mean by these odd names? Aren't they your baptismal names?

Madelon

Oh, how common you are! What surprises me most of all is that you could possibly have as intelligent a daughter as I. Did you ever hear of the names Madelon and Cathos having been used in the highest literature? Won't you admit that one of these alone would be enough to decry the best novel in the world?

Cathos

It is true that these names do grate on a sensitive ear. You must admit that Polixine, which my cousin has chosen and Aminte which I have given myself, have a certain charm.

Gorgibus

Listen to me; there is only one name which I will permit. I won't listen to you being called by names other than those given you by your god-fathers and god-mothers. As for these gentlemen in question, I know their families and their circumstances, and I insist that you make up your minds to receive them for your husbands. I am

tired of supporting you. The care of two girls is too much of a burden for a man of my age.

Cathos

I have only one thing to say in my own defense, uncle, and that is that I find matrimony a very disagreeable thing.

Madelon

Permit us to see something of the life of Paris, where we have so lately come. Let us weave the thread of our romance slowly, and not hasten toward the conclusion of it so quickly.

Gorgibus (to himself)

They are certainly crazy; there is no doubt of it. (aloud) There is one thing more; I don't comprehend all of this nonsense, but I want to be absolute master here; and to put an end to all of this kind of haranging, I say, that either you will be married before long, or, upon my word, both of you will be put in a convent. I swear it.

Scene V

Cathos, Madelon

Cathos

Gracious, how your father has allowed material things to predominate over the spiritual! How stupid his mind is! How clouded his intellect!

Madelon

My dear, how can I help it? He is a puzzle to me. I can scarcely credit that I am his daughter, and I truly believe that some day some circumstance will come to light which will prove a more illustrious lineage for me.

Cathos

It would seem so. There is every appearance in the world; as for myself, when I consider also.....

Scene VI

Cathos, Madelon, Marotte

Marotte

A footman is below; he asks if you are at home. He says that his master desires to come to see you.

Madelon

Will you, simpleton, ever learn to announce callers more aristocratically? You should say: Here is an indispensable accessory who asks if you are in a state of visibility today.

Marotte

Heavens! I don't know Latin I have not learned like you have, Cyrus' philosophy.

Madelon

You impudent girl! How can we stand that? Who is the caller?

Marotte

He called the Marquis Mascarille.

Madelon

Oh, cousin, A marquis! A marquis! Yes. Go tell him that we will receive him. No doubt he is some wit who has heard of us.

Cathos

Certainly, dear.

Madelon

We must receive him in the downstairs reception room rather

than in our room. Let's at least rearrange our hair a little, and let's affirm our fame immediately. Quickly bring me the consellor of beauty.

Marotte

Upon my word! I don't know what kind of an animal that is. You must talk christian if you want me to understand you.

Cathos

Bring us the mirror, you ignorant creature, and take care not to soil the glass by letting it reflect your own image. (They go out)

Scene VII

Mascarille, Two Porters

Mascarille

Hola! Porter, hola! I believe these knaves are intending to kill me, by the way they are dashing me against the walls and stones

First Chairman

Well, it is the fault of this narrow gate. You insist that we bring you clear in.

Mascarille

I should think so. You rascals, would you want me to expose my mass of plumes to the inclemency of this rainy season and soil my shoes in the mud? Hurry, take your chair away from here.

Second Chairman

Pay us, if you please, sir.

Mascarille

What?

Second Chairman

I said, sir, please give us some money.

Mascarille (giving him a slap)

How's that, knave; you dare to ask money of a person of my rank in life?

Second Chairman

Is that the way you pay poor servants? Does your rank supply us with the means of existence?

Mascarille

Oh! I shall teach you to know yourself. These vagabonds dare to defy me?

First Chairman (taking out one of the sticks from his chair)

Here, pay us quickly.

Mascarille

What?

First Chairman

I say that I want some pay immediately.

Mascarille

He is sensible.

First Chairman

Quickly, then.

Mascarille

Well, you talk like a man, but that other fellow is a rogue who doesn't know what he is talking about. Here, are you satisfied?

First Chairman

No, I'm not; you slapped my comrade and (raising his stick)

Mascarille

Gently! Here, take this for the slap. You can obtain everything that I have if you go about it in the right way. Come soon to take me back to the Louvre for the "Petit-Coucher."

Scene VIII

Marotte, Mascarille

Marotte

Sir, my mistresses will be down immediately.

Mascarille

Tell them to be in no haste. I have a very comfortable place in which to await them.

Marotte

Here they are.

Scene IX

Madelon, Cathos, Mascarille, Almanzor

Mascarille (after having saluted them)

Ladies, you will doubtless be surprised by the audacity of this call, but your fame has caused this inopportune intrusion and merit has for me such powerful charms that I go in quest of it everywhere.

Madelon

If you are pursuing merit, you ought not to look for it in our vicinity.

Cathos

To see any merit in our house you must have brought it here yourself.

Mascarille

Ah! I protest against your words. Fame acknowledges rightly when it tells of your worth. You will nonplus the worthiest people in Paris.

Madelon

You are somewhat too free with your praises. My cousin and I will take care not to take your flattery seriously.

Cathos

My dear, we must have some chairs.

Madelon

Almanzor.

Almanzor

Madame?

Madelon

Quickly, roll up here some conveniences of conversation.

Mascarille

I wonder if there is any safety here for me.

(Almanzor goes out.)

Cathos

What are you afraid of?

Mascarille

Some theft of my heart, some assassin of my independence. I see here eyes which have an evil look, capable of injuring liberty and treating a heart cruelly. You ask how? First when you approach them they maintain a sweet reserve. Upon my word, I am distrustful of them. I shall either hasten away or insist upon some generous guarantee that they do me no harm.

Madelon

My dear, he is a playful character.

Cathos

I see plainly that he is an Amilcar.

Madelon

Fear not; our eyes have no malicious designs; you can rest assured of their honesty.

Cathos

I beg you, sir, don't be unrelenting to the arm-chair which has been ready to receive for a quarter of an hour. Satisfy it by the desire that it has to embrace you.

Mascarille

(After having combed his hair and adjusted his glasses and seated himself comfortably.)

Well, ladies, what think you of Paris?

Madelon

Alas! What could we think of it? It would be contrary to all reason, not to confess that Paris is the seat of everything that is wonderful, the centre of good taste, of wit and of gallantry.

Mascarille

My own opinion is that outside of Paris there is no salvation for decent people.

Cathos

That cannot be denied.

Mascarille

It is somewhat muddy here, but we have sedan chairs.

Madelon

The sedan chair is a wonderful protection from the insults of mud, and bad weather.

Mascarille

Do you receive many callers? What wits are among them?

Madelon

Alas! We are as yet unknown. But we are in a fair way to become known soon. A particular friend has promised to bring here all of those gentlemen who figure in the choice extracts from the works of fine minds.

Cathos

And also certain others whom we are told, are sovereign judges of excellent spirits.

Mascarille

I can do it for you better than any one else, for all of them pay me visits. Never get up in the morning without a dozen men of wit around me.

Madelon

Indeed, we will be very grateful to you if you do that kindness for us, for, in fact, one must be acquainted with all of these gentlemen, if one would belong to high life. They set one's reputation going in Paris. One single visit from such as they, you know, would establish a person's reputation. But what I consider especially important, is that by means of these visits from intellectual persons, you can learn a hundred things which you must know, and which are the essence of all wit. Through this means, you can be informed each day of all society news and keep in touch with the literary productions. You know in the nick of time: that this person has composed the prettiest piece in the world on such and such a subject; that another has set the words to music; another has composed a madrigal with some enjoyable event as its theme; another a few verses about some faithless lover; yesterday evening mister so and so, wrote a poem of six verses to miss so and so, and she sent back

the response at eight this morning; such an author has conceived of such a plan; still another is on the third portion of his novel; another is sending his works to the press. That is what gives you some standing in society. If you are ignorant of these things, I would not give a cent for all of the intelligence you may have.

Cathos

Really, I think it extremely ridiculous for a person to pride himself upon being a wit, and not to know even the very smallest quatrain which is composed each day. I should be very much ashamed if I were asked about something new which I had not seen.

Mascarille

It really is disgraceful not to keep up with the latest productions. But don't you worry, for I intend to establish an "academie" of men of wit at your house, and I assure you that there will not be a verse of poetry in Paris, which you will not know by heart before any one else. Such as I am, I dip into it myself when I take the notion. You will see my compositions circulating through all the streets of Paris: two hundred songs, as many sonnets, 400 epigrammes; more than 1000 madrigals, without counting the enigmas and pen-portraits.

Madelon

I am simply wild over pen-portraits, nothing is in such good taste.

Mascarille

Pen-portraits are difficult to compose; they require profound thinking. You will see some in my style of writing that will please you.

Cathos

I am very fond of enigmas.

Mascarille

They drill the mind. Just this morning I made four, which I shall give to you to guess.

Madelon

Madrigals are delightful when they are well made.

Mascarille

I am especially talented in that line. I am working to put all of the Roman history in madrigals.

Madelon

Surely, that will be the height of perfection. I will engage at least one copy of it, if you have it printed.

Mascarille

I promise each of you a copy and in the best of binding. It is below my ordinary rank of writing, but I am composing it only to satisfy the booksellers who are tormenting me so.

Madelon

What a great pleasure it must be to see one's works printed.

Mascarille

Of course it is. But, by the way, I must tell you an extemporaneous composition, which I composed yesterday at the house of a duchess, a friend of mine on whom I was calling, for I am especially clever in impromptus.

Cathos

An impromptu is exactly the touch-stone which I delight in.

Mascarille

Please be attentive.

Madelon

We are all attention.

Mascarille

Oh! I was careless

Thinking no ill, while I gaze at you,

You secretly rob me of my heart.

Stop thief! Stop thief! Stop thief!

Cathos

Gracious! That is the height of gallantry.

Mascarille

Everything that I do has a chivalorous air: that doesn't indicate a pedant.

Madelon

You are far from being one.

Mascarille

Did you notice this beginning; Oh, oh. It is something extraordinary. Oh, oh, like a man who remembers suddenly, Oh, oh, the surprise.

Madelon

Yes, I think it wonderful.

Mascarille

Yet it, doesn't seem like anything much.

Cathos

Gracious, what are you saying? It contains priceless gems.

Madelon

To be sure, I would rather have composed that "Oh! Oh!" than an epic poem.

Mascarille

Zounds! You have excellent taste.

Madelon

I think my taste isn't entirely bad .

Mascarille

But don't you admire, too, the expression "I wasn't aware of that" ? "I wasn't aware of that" the natural way of saying "I didn't know of that." "While thinking no evil means while innocent as a lamb, without any thought of malice." "I look at you", that is to say "I enjoy thinking of you, looking at you, meditating about you". "Your eye stealthily"; What do you think of this word "stealthily". Isn't it a well chosen one?

Cathos

Indeed it is.

Mascarille

"Stealthily, stealthily". The word reminds me of a cat coming to catch a mouse.

Madelon

Nothing could be better.

Mascarille

"Robs me of my heart" means carries it away from me, robs me of it. "Stop, thief, stop thief!" wouldn't you say that it is a man running after a thief to have him arrested? "Stop, thief! Stop, thief!"

Madelon

It must be confessed that it has a witty and elegant turn of style.

Mascarille

Let me show you the tune to which I have set it.

Cathos

Do you know music?

Mascarille

I ? Not at all.

Cathos

Why, how then can this be?

Mascarille

Learned people know everything without having to be taught.

Madelon

Assuradely, cousin.

Mascarille

See if you like this air; Hem, la, la, la, etc. This severe weather has almost ruined my delicate voice. But what is the difference. It is free and easy. (He sings.)

Oh! Oh! I wasn't aware of it. .

Cathos

What an effective air. Don't you feel as if you were passing away with it?

Madelon

It is so chromatic.

Mascarille

Don't you think the music to "Stop, thief!" is expressed well? It is as if one were calling out more loudly "Stop, thief!" etc, and then suddenly as if out of breath, "Stop, thief!"

Madelon

To have composed this you must know everything. It is indeed, wonderful. Both the music and the words enrapture me.

Cathos

I have never heard anything to compare with it.

Mascarille

It comes perfectly natural to me. I do it without any study whatever.

Madelon

Nature has treated you as a truly devoted mother. You are its spoiled child.

Mascarille

What do you do to while away your time?

Cathos

Nothing at all.

Madelon

Until now we have had no diversion.

Mascarille

May I accompany you to the theatre some day? I should enjoy it especially since a new piece is to be played and I should be glad if we might see it together.

Madelon

We can't refuse this invitation.

Mascarille

But I will ask you to applaud in fine style while there for I have promised to praise up the piece. Only this morning the author came again to ask the favor. It is customary here for authors to bring their new pieces to people of our rank to obtain our opinion as to their beauty, and thereby, have their reputation established. And, indeed, when we make a statement, do you think the pit dares to contradict us? I am very exact in this matter when I promise a poet that I will, I keep continually crying; "Here is something praiseworthy." even before the lights are turned on.

Madelon

Tell me no more. What a delightful place Paris is. A hundred things occur here every day of which the inhabitants of the provinces know nothing; how witty one might be.

Cathos

Enough! Now that you have told us, we will do our duty and applaud properly all that will be said.

Mascarille

I do not know whether I am being deceived, but I imagine that you have composed some comedy.

Madelon

Perhaps, that might be.

Mascarille

Well, we certainly must see it. Between us, I have written one which I intend to put on the stage.

Cathos

To what comedians will you give it?

Mascarille

Great need to ask that! To great comedians, of course. Only they can give it its full worth. The rest are ignorant and recite like people talk. They don't know how to declaim the verses; they do not pause in the fine places. How are we to recognize the beautiful verses, if the comedian doesn't pause long enough to let us know that it is the proper time for a burst of applause?

Cathos

Really, it is the way of making the audience feel the strength of the work. Things are worth only what people make them.

Mascarille

What do you think of my ornaments of dress? Do you think they harmonize with the coat?

Cathos

Perfectly.

Mascarille

Does the ribbon match?

Madelon

Wonderfully well. It is a real Perdrigeon.

Mascarille

How about my trousers?

Madelon

Excellent.

Mascarille

I can at least boast that they are much wider than the present style.

Madelon

I must confess that I have never seen any one so elegantly attired.

Mascarille

Just inhale the perfume of these gloves.

Madelon

It has a delightful odor.

Cathos

I never smelled a better one.

Mascarille

And this, too. (He offers them a powdered wig to smell)

Madelon

Of the best quality. The head is delightfully affected by it.

Mascarille

You haven't mentioned my feathers. How do they suit you?

Cathos

Extremely beautiful.

Mascarille

Would you imagine that the bunch cost me a gold louis? I have a mania ordinarily for wanting the most beautiful of all things.

Madelon

I assure you that we can sympathize with each other. I am very fond of wearing delicate and dainty apparel. I even insist that my hose be of the best make.

Mascarille(crying out brusquely)

Oh! Oh! Gently. Heavens, ladies, it isn't fair to act thus. I object. It isn't fair.

Cathos

What is it? What is the matter with you?

Mascarille

What? Both of you attack my heart at the same time, first on the right, then on the left. It is contrary to civil law. The party isn't equal. I will cry "Murder!"

Cathos

I must confess that he says things in a way quite original.

Madelon

He has a wonderful turn to his wit.

Cathos

You are more frightened than hurt. Your heart cries out before it is scorched.

Mascarille

Heavens! I am scorched from head to foot.

Scene X

Cathos, Madelon, Mascarille, Marotte

Marotte

You have a caller, ma'am.

Madelon

Who is it?

Marotte

Viscount Jordelet.

Mascarille

Viscount Jordelet?

Marotte

Yes, sir.

Cathos

Do you know him?

Mascarille

He is my best friend.

Madelon

Bring him in immediately.

Mascarille

It is some time since we have seen each other. This accident delights me.

Cathos

Here he is.

Scene XI

Cathos, Madelon, Jordelet, Mascarille, Marotte, Almanzor

Mascarille

Ah! Viscount!

Jordelet (They embrace each other)

Ah! Marquis!

Mascarille

How happy I am to meet you.

Jordelet

What joy to see you here.

Mascarille

Kiss me again, I beg.

Madelon (to Cathos)

My dearest, our fame is spreading. People of fashion are finding a way to come to see us.

Mascarille

Ladies, may I present this gentleman to you? Believe me, he is worthy of your acquaintance.

Jordelet

It is right that we render homage to you. Your charms are so far superior to others.

Madelon

You are flattering us beyond reason.

Cathos

This must truly be recorded as a happy day for us.

Madelon (To Almanzor)

Come, simpleton, must I keep constantly repeating the same thing? Don't you see that another chair is needed?

Mascarille

Don't be surprised at the viscount's appearance. He has recently recovered from an illness which has left him very pale you notice.

Jordelet

It results from nights spent at the court and the fatigues of war.

Mascarille

Ladies, do you know that you see before you one of the brave men of the century? He is truly courageous.

Jordelet

You are a match for me, Marquis. We are aware of your ability, too.

Mascarille

We occasionally encounter each other in our works.

Jordelet

In some instances the discussion is a very heated one, too.

Mascarille(Looking at Madelon and
Cathos)

But not so much so as the one we just had.

Jordelet

We became acquainted in the army. When we first met, he was in command of a cavalry regiment on the galleys of Malta.

Mascarille

That is true; nevertheless you were in the service in that capacity before I was. I remember that I was only a sub-officer still when you were in command of a thousand horse.

Jordelet

War is, indeed, a fine thing; but, today, the court remunerates very slightly those who have served as we have.

Mascarille

For that reason I want to lay by my sword.

Cathos

I am wonderfully fond of military men.

Madelon

I like them, too, but I want their scholarly ability to overbalance their bravery.

Mascarille

Viscount, do you remember that half-moon that we overcame at the seige of Arras?

Jordelet

What do you mean by saying a half-moon? It was a whole moon.

Mascarille

I believe you are right.

Jordelet

I certainly ought to remember it. I was wounded in the leg with a shell and I bear the proof of it still. Just feel, please. You will understand what a blow it was.

Cathos (After having touched the spot)

It is true; the scar is a large one.

Mascarille

Just give me your hand and feel this one right on the back of my head. Do you feel it?

Madelon

Yes, I feel something.

Mascarille

It is a musket-shot which I received during my last campaign.

Jordelet

(Laying bare his breast)

Here is another ball that pierced me through and through in the attack of Gravelines.

Mascarille(Putting his hand to his belt)

I will show you a frightful scar.

Madelon

It is unnecessary. We believe it without looking at it.

Mascarille

They are marks of honor which reveal our true character.

Cathos

We do not doubt your greatness.

Mascarille

Viscount, is your carriage outside?

Jordelet

Why?

Mascarille

By way of entertainment, we might take the ladies for a drive.

Madelon

We couldn't go today.

Mascarille

Let us have some violin music for dancing, then.

Jordelet

Well, happy thought.

Madelon

We will consent to that; but we must have some more people.

Mascarille

Here! Champagne, Picard, Bourguignon, Cascaret, Basque, le Verdure, Lorrain, Provensal, le Violette! Where on earth are all of the lackeys? I don't believe that there is a more neglected gentleman in all France than I am. Those rascals are always leaving me alone.

Madelon

Almanzor, tell this gentleman's servants to bring some violins; bring in the neighbors to increase the number for our ball.

(He goes out)

Mascarille

Viscount, what do you think of those eyes.

Jordelet

What do you think yourself?

Mascarille

I think that we will not leave here alive. I am receiving great shocks and my heart is held by a single thread.

Madelon

How natural is everything he says. He expresses things so charmingly.

Cathos

He is truly lavish with his wit.

Mascarille

To show you that I am sincere, I wish to give you an impromptu.

(He meditates)

Cathos

I say, I do wish that we might have something that has been written about us.

Jordelet

I should enjoy doing so, but I find my poetic vein a little exhausted on account of the numerous bleedings which I have suffered during the past days.

Mascarille

What in the world is the matter with me? I can compose the

first verse all right, but I find difficulty with the others. Upon my word! I am in too much of a hurry. At leisure I will write an impromptu which will please you immensely.

Jordelet

He has the wit of a genius.

Madelon

And of a galant of superior cast.

Mascarille

Say, Viscount, you haven't seen the Countess for a long time, have you?

Jordelet

I haven't called upon her for more than three weeks.

Mascarille

Did you know that the duke came to see me this morning? He wanted to take me to the country to hunt deer with him.

Madelon

Here come our friends.

Scene XII

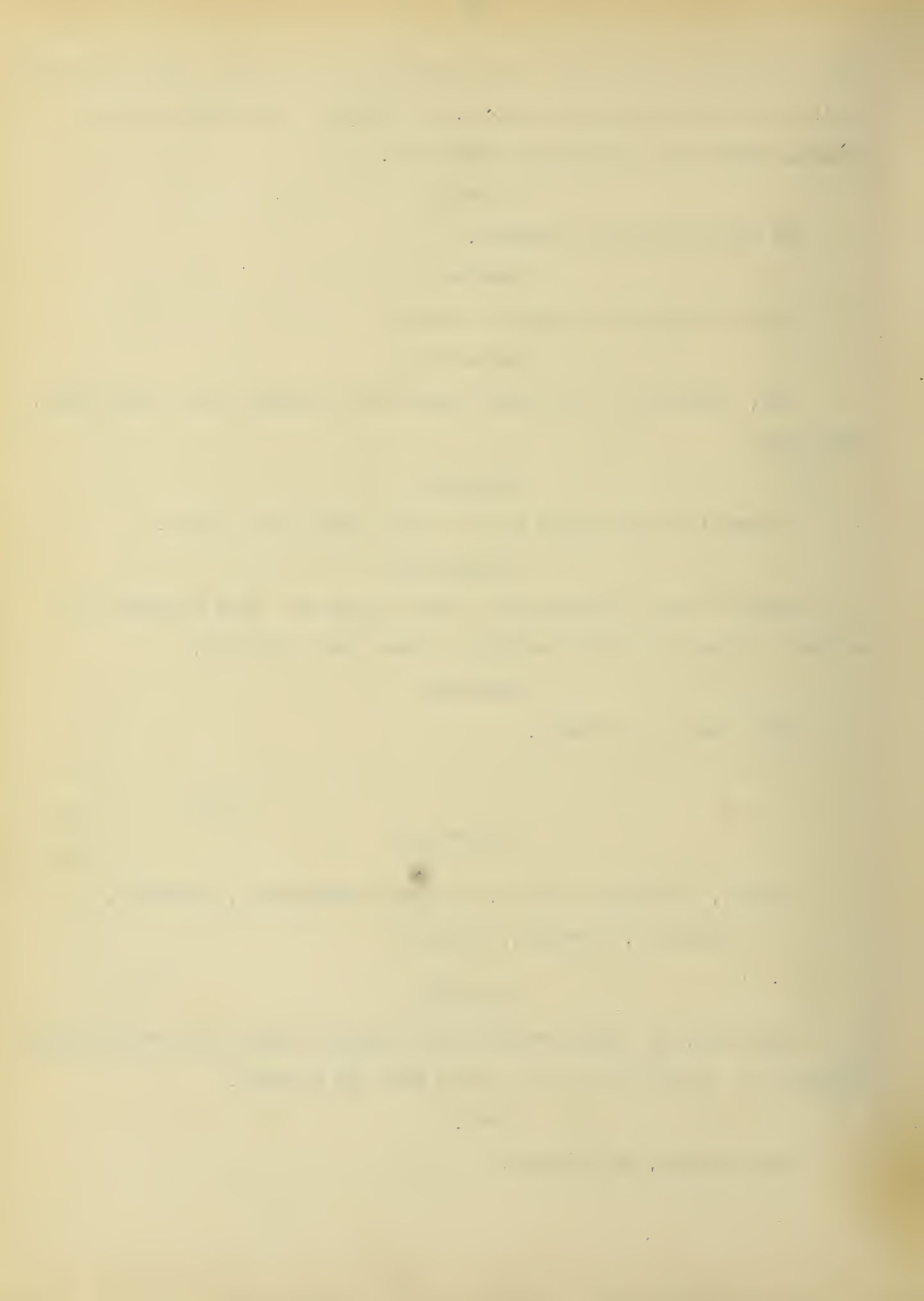
Lucile, Célimène, Cathos, Madelon, Mascarille, Jordelet,
Marotte, Almanzor, Violins

Madelon

Gracious, my dears, we beg your pardon. These gentlemen desired to dance so we sent for you to help make up a party.

Lucile

Many thanks, to be sure.



Mascarille

This is only a hastily arranged ball, but some day we will give you one according to the latest fashion. Have the musicians come?

Almanzor

Yes, sir, they are here.

Cathos

Come, dears, take your places.

Mascarille

(Dancing alone as if to a prelude)

La, la, la, etc

Madelon

What an elegant figure he makes.

Cathos

He appears to dance so gracefully.

Mascarille

(Having taken Madelon to dance)

My freedom can dance the courant as well as my feet. Get the violins in tune. Oh, you ignorant people! We can not dance to that music. The dickens! Can't you play in tune? La, la, la, la. Go on, now You are certainly country fiddlers!

Jordelet (Dancing)

Here! Don't urge on the musicians too much, for remember that I am just recovering from an illness.

Scene XIII

Du Croisy, La Grange, Cathos, Madelon, Lucile, Célimène,
Jordelet, Mascarille, Marotte, Violins

La Grange (A stick in his hands)

Ah! You rascals. What are you doing here? We have been searching for you for three hours.

Mascarille (Feeling some blows)

Heavens! You did not say that I was to get a beating.

Jordelet

Heavens!

La Grange

You are a fine one, you wretch, to try to set yourself up for a man of rank!

Du Croisy

Here is something that will teach you to understand who you are.

Scene XIV

Cathos, Madelon, Lucile, Célimène, Mascarille Jordelet,
Marotte, Violins

Madelon

Pray, what does this mean?

Jordelet

It is a wager.

Cathos

What! To allow yourself to be beaten in this manner.

Mascarille

Gracious! I didn't pay any attention to it; for I am quick-tempered and would fly into a terrible passion.

Madelon

How can you tolerate an insult like that in our presence?

Mascarille

That is nothing. Let us finish the dance. We have known each other for a long time, and friends never become angry over such trifles.

Scene XV

Du Croisy, La Grange, Madelon, Cathos, Célimène, Lucile, Mascarille, Jordelet, Marotte, Violins

La Grange

Upon my word, you will not laugh at us, you rascals. Here, come in. (Three or four fighters enter.)

Madelon

What do you mean by so boldly coming in and disturbing our house?

Du Croisy

Do you think, ladies, that we will suffer our lackeys to be better received than we? Will we permit them to make love to you at our expense, and give you a ball?

Madelon

Your lackeys?

La Grange

Yes, our lackeys. It is neither kind nor ladylike for you to entice them as you have done.

Madelon

Oh heavens! What insolence!

La Grange

Well they will not make use of my clothes any more to fascinate

you. If you intend to love them, upon my word, it will be for their beautiful eyes. Quickly, pull off their clothing immediately.

Jordell,

Farewell, my finery.

Mascarille

Goodby to the marquissate and viscountship.

Du Croisy

Ah! rascals! You have had the audacity to imitate us. You will have to find some other way of pleasing your beautiful ladies. I assure you of that.

La Grange

It is too much to supplant us and to do it with our own clothes.

Mascarille

Oh fortune! How fickle thou art!

Du Croisy

Quickly, disrobe them.

La Grange

Have all of these traps taken off. Hurry. Now, ladies, in the condition in which you see them, you can continue your lovemaking with them as long as you please. We give you entire liberty and we assure you, my friend and I, that we shall not be jealous in the least.

Cathos

Oh! What a confusion.

Madelon

I am bursting with vexation.

One of the violinists to Mascarille

How about this? Which of you will pay us?

Mascarille

Ask the Viscount.

One of the violinists to Jordelet

Which of you will give us our pay?

Jordelet

Ask the Marquis.

Scene XVI

Gorgibus, Madelon, Cathos, Jordelet, Mascarille, Violinists

Gorgibus

Well, you hussies, you have gotten me into a fine quarrel.

I see. I have just heard of the actions of those men who are going out of here.

Madelon

Oh, father, they have played us a cruel trick.

Gorgibus

Yes, it is a cruel trick, but one which is the result of your impertinence, you wretches. They have resented the treatment which you gave them, and nevertheless, unhappy as I am, I must bear the insult.

Madelon

I swear that we shall have vengeance or that I shall perish in the attempt. You vagabonds, do you dare to stay here after your insolence?

Mascarille

Treat a marquis like that? That is the way of the world. The least disfavor makes us scorned by those who cherished us. Come,

comrade, let us go to search for happiness elsewhere; I see that they care only for vain appearances here and that bare virtue itself is not considered. (Both go out.)

Scene XVII

Gorgibus, Madelon, Cathos, Violinists

One of the violinists

Sir, we understand that you, instead of them, will pay us for our music.

Gorgibus. (Beating them)

Oh, yes, I will pay you. And you, you hussies. I don't know what keeps me from doing the same to you. We will be the laughing-stock of everybody. This is the result of your extravagant notions. Go, rascals, go hide yourselves forever. (Alone.) And you who have been the cause of their folly, their nonsense, mischievous amusements of idle minds, books, poetry, songs, sonnet and "sonnettes" go to the deuce!





