The Blunderer

by Molière

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L'ÉTOURDI, OU LES CONTRE-TEMPS.

COMEDIE. THE BLUNDERER: OR, THE COUNTERPLOTS. A COMEDY IN

FIVE ACTS. (THE ORIGINAL IN VERSE.)

1653. (?)

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

The Blunderer is generally believed to have been first acted at Lyons in 1653, whilst Molière and his troupe were in the provinces. In the month of November 1658 it was played for the first time in Paris, where it obtained a great and well-deserved success. It is chiefly based on an Italian comedy, written by Nicolo Barbieri, known as Beltrame, and called L'Inavvertito, from which the character of Mascarille, the servant, is taken, but differs in the ending, which is superior in the Italian play. An imitation of the classical boasting soldier, Captain Bellorofonte, Martelione, and a great number of concetti, have also not been copied by Molière. The fourth scene of the fourth act of l'Ètourdi contains some passages taken from the Angelica, a comedy by Fabritio de Fornaris, a Neapolitan, who calls himself on the title-page of his play "il Capitano Coccodrillo, comico confidente." A few remarks are borrowed from la Emilia, a comedy by Luigi Grotto, whilst here and there we find a reminiscence from Plautus, and one scene, possibly suggested by the sixteenth of the Contes et Discours d'Eutrapel, written by Nöel du Fail, Lord of la Hérissaye. Some of the scenes remind us of passages in several Italian Commedia del' arte between Arlecchino and Pantaleone the personifications of impudence and ingenuity, as opposed to meekness and stupidity; they rouse the hilarity of the spectators, who laugh at the ready invention of the knave as well as at the gullibility of the old man, Before this comedy appeared the French stage was chiefly filled with plays full of intrigue, but with scarcely any attempt to delineate character or manners. In this piece the plot is carried on, partly in imitation of the Spanish taste, by a servant, Mascarille, who is the first original personage Molière has created; he is not a mere imitation of the valets of the Italian or classical comedy; he has not the coarseness

and base feelings of the servants of his contemporaries, but he is a lineal descendant of Villon, a free and easy fellow, not over nice in the choice or execution of his plans, but inventing new ones after each failure, simply to keep in his hand; not too valiant, except perhaps when in his cups, rather jovial and chaffy, making fun of himself and everybody else besides, no respecter of persons or things, and doomed probably not to die in his bed. Molière must have encountered many such a man whilst the wars of the Fronde were raging, during his perigrinations in the provinces. Even at the present time, a Mascarille is no impossibility; for, "like master like man." There are also in The Blunderer too many incidents, which take place successively, without necessarily arising one from another. Some of the characters are not distinctly brought out, the style has often been found fault with, by Voltaire and other competent judges, [Footnote: Victor Hugo appears to be of another opinion. M. Paul Stapfer, in his les Artistes juges et parties (2º Causerie, the Grammarian of Hauteville House, p. 55), states:—"the opinion of Victor Hugo about Molière is very peculiar. According to him, the best written of all the plays of our great comic author is his first work, l'Ètourdi. It possesses a brilliancy and freshness of style which still shine in le Dépit amoureux, but which gradually fade, because Molière, yielding unfortunately to other inspirations than his own, enters more and more upon a new way."] but these defects are partly covered by a variety and vivacity which are only fully displayed when heard on the stage.

In the third volume of the "Select Comedies of M. de Molière, London, 1732." The Blunderer is dedicated to the Right Honorable Philip, Earl of Chesterfield, in the following words:—

"MY LORD,—The translation of L'Ètourdi, which, in company with the original, throws itself at your lordship's feet, is a part of a design form'd by some gentlemen, of exhibiting to the public a Select Collection of Molière's Plays, in French and English. This author, my lord, was truly a genius, caress'd by the greatest men of his own time, and honoured with the patronage of princes. When the translator,

therefore, of this piece was to introduce him in an English dress in justice he owed him an English patron, and was readily determined to your lordship, whom all the world allows to be a genius of the first rank. But he is too sensible of the beauties of his author, and the refined taste your lordship is universally known to have in polite literature, to plead anything but your candour and goodness, for your acceptance of this performance. He persuades himself that your lordship, who best knows how difficult it is to speak like Molière, even when we have his sentiments to inspire us, will be readiest to forgive the imperfections of this attempt. He is the rather encouraged, my lord, to hope for a candid reception from your lordship, on account of the usefulness of this design, which he flatters himself will have your approbation. 'Tis to spirit greater numbers of our countrymen to read this author, who wou'd otherwise not have attempted it, or, being foil'd in their attempts, wou'd throw him by in despair. And however generally the French language may be read, or spoke in England, there will be still very great numbers, even of those who are said to understand French, who, to master this comic writer, will want the help of a translation; and glad wou'd the publishers of this work be to guide the feebler steps of some such persons, not only till they should want no translation, but till some of them should be able to make a much better than the present. The great advantage of understanding Molière your Lordship best knows. What is it, but almost to understand mankind? He has shown such a compass of knowledge in human nature, as scarce to leave it in the power of succeeding writers in comedy to be originals; whence it has, in fact, appear'd, that they who, since his time, have most excelled in the Comic way, have copied Molière, and therein were sure of copying nature. In this author, my lord, our youth will find the strongest sense, the purest moral, and the keenest satyr, accompany'd with the utmost politeness; so that our countrymen may take a French polish, without danger of commencing fops and apes, as they sometimes do by an affectation of the dress and manners of that people; for no man has better pourtray'd, or in a finer manner expos'd fopperies of all kinds, than this

our author hath, in one or other of his pieces. And now,'tis not doubted, my lord, but your lordship is under some apprehensions, and the reader under some expectation, that the translator should attempt your character, in right of a dedicator, as a refin'd wit, and consummate statesman. But, my lord, speaking the truth to a person of your lordship's accomplishments, would have the appearance of flattery, especially to those who have not the honour of knowing you; and those who have, conceive greater ideas of you than the translator will pretend to express. Permit him, then, my lord, to crave your lordship's acceptance of this piece, which appears to you with a fair and correct copy of the original; but with a translation which can be of no manner of consequence to your lordship, only as it may be of consequence to those who would understand Molière if they could. Your lordship's countenance to recommend it to such will infinitely oblige, my lord, your lordship's most devoted, and most obedient, humble servant, THE TRANSLATOR."

To recommend to Lord Chesterfield an author on account of "the purest moral," or because "no man has … in a finer manner exposed fopperies of all kinds," appears to us now a bitter piece of satire; it may however, be doubted if it seemed so to his contemporaries. [Footnote: Lord Chesterfield appeared not so black to those who lived in his own time as he does to us, for Bishop Warburton dedicated to him his Necessity and Equity of an Established Religion and a Test-Law Demonstrated, and says in his preface: "It is an uncommon happiness when an honest man can congratulate a patriot on his becoming minister," and expresses the hope, that "the temper of the times will suffer your Lordship to be instrumental in saving your country by a reformation of the general manners."]

Dryden has imitated The Blunderer in Sir Martin Mar-all; or the Feigned Innocence, first translated by William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, and afterwards adapted for the stage by "glorious John." It must have been very successful, for it ran no less than thirty-three nights, and was four times acted at court. It was performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields by the Duke of York's servants, probably at the desire of the

Duke of Newcastle, as Dryden was engaged to write for the King's Company. It seems to have been acted in 1667, and was published, without the author's name, in 1668. But it cannot be fairly called a translation, for Dryden has made several alterations, generally not for the better, and changed double entendres into single ones. The heroine in the English play, Mrs. Millisent, (Celia), marries the roguish servant, Warner (Mascarille), who takes all his master's blunders upon himself, is bribed by nearly everybody, pockets insults and money with the same equanimity, and when married, is at last proved a gentleman, by the disgusting Lord Dartmouth, who "cannot refuse to own him for my (his) kinsman." With a fine stroke of irony Millisent's father becomes reconciled to his daughter having married a serving-man as soon as he hears that the latter has an estate of eight hundred a year. Sir Martin Mar-all is far more conceited and foolish than Lelio; Trufaldin becomes Mr. Moody, a swashbuckler; a compound of Leander and Andrès, Sir John Swallow, a Kentish knight; whilst of the filthy characters of Lord Dartmouth, Lady Dupe, Mrs. Christian, and Mrs. Preparation, no counterparts are found in Molière's play. But the scene in which Warner plays the lute, whilst his master pretends to do so, and which is at last discovered by Sir Martin continuing to play after the servant has finished, is very clever. [Footnote: According to Geneste, Some Accounts of the English Stage, 10 vols., 1832, vol. i., p. 76, Bishop Warburton, in his Alliance of Church and State (the same work is mentioned in Note 2), and Porson in his Letters to Travis alludes to this scene.] Dryden is also said to have consulted l'Amant indiscret of Quinault, in order to furbish forth the Duke of Newcastle's labours. Sir Walter Scott states in his introduction: "in that part of the play, which occasions its second title of 'the feigned Innocence,' the reader will hardly find wit enough to counterbalance the want of delicacy." Murphy has borrowed from The Blunderer some incidents of the second act of his School for Guardians, played for the first time in 1767.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

[Footnote: Molière, Racine, and Corneille always call the dramatis personae acteurs, and not personnages.]

LELIO, son to PANDOLPHUS.

LEANDER, a young gentleman of good birth.

ANSELMO, an old man.

PANDOLPHUS, an old man.

TRUFALDIN, an old man.

ANDRÈS, a supposed gipsy.

MASCARILLE, servant to Lelio.

[Footnote: Mascarille is a name invented by Molière, and a diminutive of the Spanish mascara, a mask. Some commentators of Molière think that the author, who acted this part, may sometimes have played it in a mask, but this is now generally contradicted. He seems, however, to have performed it habitually, for after his death there was taken an inventory of all his dresses, and amongst these, according to M. Eudore Soulié, Recherches sur Molière, 1863, p. 278, was: "a … dress for l'Étourdi, consisting in doublet, knee-breeches, and cloak of satin." Before his time the usual name of the intriguing man-servant was Philipin.]

ERGASTE, a servant.

A MESSENGER.

Two Troops of Masqueraders.

CELIA, slave to TRUFALDIN.

HIPPOLYTA, daughter to ANSELMO.

Scene.—MESSINA.

THE BLUNDERER: OR, THE COUNTERPLOTS.

(L'ÉTOURDI, ou LES CONTRE-TEMPS.)

ACT I.

SCENE I.—LELIO, alone.

LEL. Very well! Leander, very well! we must quarrel then,—we shall see which of us two will gain the day; and which, in our mutual pursuit after this young miracle of beauty, will thwart the most his rival's addresses. Do whatever you can, defend yourself well, for depend upon it, on my side no pains shall be spared.

SCENE II.—LELIO, MASCARILLE.

LEL. Ah! Mascarille!

MASC. What's the matter?

LEL. A great deal is the matter. Everything crosses my love. Leander is enamoured of Celia. The Fates have willed it, that though I have changed the object of my passion, he still remains my rival.

MASC. Leander enamoured of Celia!

LEL. He adores her, I tell you.

[Footnote: In French, tu, toi, thee, thou, denote either social superiority or familiarity. The same phraseology was also employed in many English comedies of that time, but sounds so stiff at present, that the translator has everywhere used "you."]

MASC. So much the worse.

LEL. Yes, so much the worse, and that's what annoys me. However, I should be wrong to despair, for since you aid me, I ought to take courage. I know that your

mind can plan many intrigues, and never finds anything too difficult; that you should be called the prince of servants, and that throughout the whole world….

MASC. A truce to these compliments; when people have need of us poor servants, we are darlings, and incomparable creatures; but at other times, at the least fit of anger, we are scoundrels, and ought to be soundly thrashed.

LEL. Nay, upon my word, you wrong me by this remark. But let us talk a little about the captive. Tell me, is there a heart so cruel, so unfeeling, as to be proof against such charming features? For my part, in her conversation as well as in her countenance, I see evidence of her noble birth. I believe that Heaven has concealed a lofty origin beneath such a lowly station.

MASC. You are very romantic with all your fancies. But what will Pandolphus do in this case? He is your father, at least he says so. You know very well that his bile is pretty often stirred up; that he can rage against you finely, when your behaviour offends him. He is now in treaty with Anselmo about your marriage with his daughter, Hippolyta; imagining that it is marriage alone that mayhap can steady you: now, should he discover that you reject his choice, and that you entertain a passion for a person nobody knows anything about; that the fatal power of this foolish love causes you to forget your duty and disobey him; Heaven knows what a storm will then burst forth, and what fine lectures you will be treated to.

LEL. A truce, I pray, to your rhetoric.

MASC. Rather a truce to your manner of loving, it is none of the best, and you ought to endeavour.

LEL. Don't you know, that nothing is gained by making me angry, that remonstrances are badly rewarded by me, and that a servant who counsels me acts against his own interest?

MASC. (Aside). He is in a passion now. (Aloud). All that I said was but in jest, and to try you. Do I look so very much like a censor, and is Mascarille an enemy to

pleasure? You know the contrary, and that it is only too certain people can tax me with nothing but being too good-natured. Laugh at the preachings of an old grey-beard of a father; go on, I tell you, and mind them not. Upon my word, I am of opinion that these old, effete and grumpy libertines come to stupify us with their silly stories, and being virtuous, out of necessity, hope through sheer envy to deprive young people of all the pleasures of life! You know my talents; I am at your service.

LEL. Now, this is talking in a manner I like. Moreover, when I first declared my passion, it was not ill received by the lovely object who inspired it; but, just now, Leander has declared to me that he is preparing to deprive me of Celia; therefore let us make haste; ransack your brain for the speediest means to secure me possession of her; plan any tricks, stratagems, rogueries, inventions, to frustrate my rival's pretensions.

MASC. Let me think a little upon this matter. (Aside). What can I invent upon this urgent occasion?

LEL. Well, the stratagem?

MASC. What a hurry you are in! My brain must always move slowly. I have found what you want; you must… No, that's not it; but if you would go…

LEL. Whither?

MASC. No, that's a flimsy trick. I thought that…

LEL. What is it?

MASC. That will not do either. But could you not…?

LEL. Could I not what?

MASC. No, you could not do anything. Speak to Anselmo.

LEL. And what can I say to him?

MASC. That is true; that would be falling out of the frying-pan into the fire. Something must be done however. Go to Trufaldin.

LEL. What to do?

MASC. I don't know.

LEL. Zounds! this is too much. You drive me mad with this idle talk.

MASC. Sir, if you could lay your hand on plenty of pistoles, [Footnote: The pistole is a Spanish gold coin worth about four dollars; formerly the French pistole was worth in France ten livres—about ten francs—they were struck in Franche-Comté.] we should have no need now to think of and try to find out what means we must employ in compassing our wishes; we might, by purchasing this slave quickly, prevent your rival from forestalling and thwarting you. Trufaldin, who takes charge of her, is rather uneasy about these gipsies, who placed her with him. If he could get back his money, which they have made him wait for too long, I am quite sure he would be delighted to sell her; for he always lived like the veriest curmudgeon; he would allow himself to be whipped for the smallest coin of the realm. Money is the God he worships above everything, but the worst of it is that…

LEL. What is the worst of it?…

MASC. That your father is just as covetous an old hunk, who does not allow you to handle his ducats, as you would like; that there is no way by which we could now open ever so small a purse, in order to help you. But let us endeavour to speak to Celia for a moment, to know what she thinks about this affair; this is her window.

LEL. But Trufaldin watches her closely night and day; Take care.

MASC. Let us keep quiet in this corner. What luck! Here she is coming just in the nick of time.

SCENE III.—CELIA, LELIO, MASCARILLE.

LEL. Ah! madam, what obligations do I owe to Heaven for allowing me to behold those celestial charms you are blest with! Whatever sufferings your eyes may have

caused me, I cannot but take delight in gazing on them in this place.

CEL. My heart, which has good reason to be astonished at your speech, does not wish my eyes to injure any one; if they have offended you in anything, I can assure you I did not intend it.

LEL. Oh! no, their glances are too pleasing to do me an injury. I count it my chief glory to cherish the wounds they give me; and…

MASC. You are soaring rather too high; this style is by no means what we want now; let us make better use of our time; let us know of her quickly what…

TRUF. (Within). Celia!

MASC. (To Lelio). Well, what do you think now?

LEL. O cruel mischance! What business has this wretched old man to interrupt us!

MASC. Go, withdraw, I'll find something to say to him.

SCENE IV.—TRUFALDIN, CELIA, MASCARILLE, and LELIO in a corner.

TRUF. (To Celia). What are you doing out of doors? And what induces you to go out,—you, whom I have forbidden to speak to any one?

CEL. I was formerly acquainted with this respectable young man; you have no occasion to be suspicious of him.

MASC. Is this Signor Trufaldin?

CEL. Yes, it is himself.

MASC. Sir, I am wholly yours; it gives me extreme pleasure to have this opportunity of paying my most humble respects to a gentleman who is everywhere so highly spoken of.

TRUF. Your most humble servant.

MASC. Perhaps I am troublesome, but I have been acquainted with this young woman elsewhere; and as I heard about the great skill she has in predicting the future, I wished to consult her about a certain affair.

TRUF. What! Do you dabble in the black art?

CEL. No, sir, my skill lies entirely in the white.

[Footnote: The white art (magie blanche) only dealt with beneficent spirits, and wished to do good to mankind; the black art (magie noire) invoked evil spirits.]

MASC. The case is this. The master whom I serve languishes for a fair lady who has captivated him. He would gladly disclose the passion which burns within him to the beauteous object whom he adores, but a dragon that guards this rare treasure, in spite of all his attempts, has hitherto prevented him. And what torments him still more and makes him miserable, is that he has just discovered a formidable rival; so that I have come to consult you to know whether his love is likely to meet with any success, being well assured that from your mouth I may learn truly the secret which concerns us.

CEL. Under what planet was your master born?

MASC. Under that planet which never alters his love.

CEL. Without asking you to name the object he sighs for, the science which I possess gives me sufficient information. This young woman is high-spirited, and knows how to preserve a noble pride in the midst of adversity; she is not inclined to declare too freely the secret sentiments of her heart. But I know them as well as herself, and am going with a more composed mind to unfold them all to you, in a few words.

MASC. O wonderful power of magic virtue!

CEL. If your master is really constant in his affections, and if virtue alone prompts him, let him be under no apprehension of sighing in vain: he has reason to hope, the

fortress he wishes to take is not averse to capitulation, but rather inclined to surrender.

MASC. That's something, but then the fortress depends upon a governor whom it is hard to gain over.

CEL. There lies the difficulty.

MASC. (Aside, looking at Lelio). The deuce take this troublesome fellow, who is always watching us.

CEL. I am going to teach you what you ought to do.

LEL. (Joining them). Mr. Trufaldin, give yourself no farther uneasiness; it was purely in obedience to my orders that this trusty servant came to visit you; I dispatched him to offer you my services, and to speak to you concerning this young lady, whose liberty I am willing to purchase before long, provided we two can agree about the terms.

MASC. (Aside). Plague take the ass!

TRUF. Ho! ho! Which of the two am I to believe? This story contradicts the former very much.

MASC. Sir, this gentleman is a little bit wrong in the upper story: did you not know it?

TRUF. I know what I know, and begin to smell a rat. Get you in (to Celia), and never take such a liberty again. As for you two, arrant rogues, or I am much mistaken, if you wish to deceive me again, let your stories be a little more in harmony.

SCENE V.—LELIO, MASCARILLE.

MASC. He is quite right. To speak plainly, I wish he had given us both a sound cudgelling. What was the good of showing yourself, and, like a Blunderer, coming

and giving the lie to all that I had been saying?

LEL. I thought I did right.

MASC. To be sure. But this action ought not to surprise me. You possess so many counterplots that your freaks no longer astonish anybody.

LEL. Good Heavens! How I am scolded for nothing! Is the harm so great that it cannot be remedied? However, if you cannot place Celia in my hands, you may at least contrive to frustrate all Leander's schemes, so that he cannot purchase this fair one before me. But lest my presence should be further mischievous, I leave you.

MASC. (Alone). Very well. To say the truth, money would be a sure and staunch agent in our cause; but as this mainspring is lacking, we must employ some other means.

SCENE VI.—ANSELMO, MASCARILLE.

ANS. Upon my word, this is a strange age we live in; I am ashamed of it; there was never such a fondness for money, and never so much difficulty in getting one's own. Notwithstanding all the care a person may take, debts now-a-days are like children, begot with pleasure, but brought forth with pain. It is pleasant for money to come into our purse; but when the time comes that we have to give it back, then the pangs of labour seize us. Enough of this, it is no trifle to receive at last two thousand francs which have been owing upwards of two years. What luck!

MASC. (Aside). Good Heavens! What fine game to shoot flying! Hist, let me see if I cannot wheedle him a little. I know with what speeches to soothe him. (Joining him). Anselmo I have just seen….

ANS. Who, prithee?

MASC. Your Nerina.

ANS. What does the cruel fair one say about me?

MASC. Say? that she is passionately fond of you.

ANS. Is she?

MASC. She loves you so that I very much pity her.

ANS. How happy you make me!

MASC. The poor thing is nearly dying with love. "Oh, my dearest Anselmo," she cries every minute, "when shall marriage unite our two hearts? When will you vouchsafe to extinguish my flames?"

ANS. But why has she hitherto concealed this from me? Girls, in troth, are great dissemblers! Mascarille, what do you say, really? Though in years, yet I look still well enough to please the eye.

MASC. Yes, truly, that face of yours is still very passable; if it is not of the handsomest in the world, it is very agreeable. [Footnote: The original has a play on words which cannot be translated, as, ce visage est encore fort mettable….,s'il n'est pas des plus beaux, il est des agreables; which two last words, according to pronunciation, can also mean disagreeable. This has been often imitated in French. After the Legion of Honour was instituted in France in 1804, some of the wits of the time asked the Imperialists: etes-vous des honores?]

ANS. So that…

MASC. (Endeavouring to take the purse). So that she dotes on you; and regards you no longer…

ANS. What?

MASC. But as a husband: and fully intends…

ANS. And fully intends…?

MASC. And fully intends, whatever may happen, to steal your purse….

ANS. To steal…?

MASC. (Taking the purse, and letting it fall to the ground). To steal a kiss from your

mouth.

[Footnote: There is here again, in the original, a play on the words bourse, purse, and bouche, mouth, which cannot be rendered in English.]

ANS. Ah! I understand you. Come hither! The next time you see her, be sure to say as many fine things of me as possible.

MASC. Let me alone.

ANS. Farewell.

MASC. May Heaven guide you!

ANS. (Returning). Hold! I really should have committed a strange piece of folly; and you might justly have accused me of neglect. I engage you to assist me in serving my passion. You bring good tidings, and I do not give you the smallest present to reward your zeal. Here, be sure to remember….

MASC. O, pray, don't.

[Footnote: Compare in Shakspeare's Winter's Tale Autolyeus' answer to Camillo (Act IV., Scene 3), who gives him money, "I am a poor fellow, sir, … I cannot with conscience take it."]

ANS. Permit me….

MASC. I won't, indeed: I do not act thus for the sake of money.

ANS. I know you do not. But however…

MASC. No, Anselmo, I will not. I am a man of honour; this offends me.

ANS. Farewell then, Mascarille.

MASC. (Aside). How long-winded he is!

ANS. (Coming back). I wish you to carry a present to the fair object of my desires. I will give you some money to buy her a ring, or any other trifle, as you may think will please her most.

MASC. No, there is no need of your money; without troubling yourself, I will make her a present; a fashionable ring has been left in my hands, which you may pay for afterwards, if it fits her.

ANS. Be it so; give it her in my name; but above all, manage matters in such a manner that she may still desire to make me her own.

SCENE VII.—LELIO, ANSELMO, MASCARILLE.

LEL. (Taking up the purse). Whose purse is this?

[Footnote: During the whole of the preceding scene Mascarille has quietly kicked the purse away, so as to be out of sight of Anselmo, intending to pick it up when the latter has gone.]

ANS. Oh Heavens! I dropt it, and might have afterwards believed somebody had picked my pocket. I am very much obliged to you for your kindness, which saves me a great deal of vexation, and restores me my money. I shall go home this minute and get rid of it.

SCENE VIII.—LELIO, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Od's death! You have been very obliging, very much so.

LEL. Upon my word! if it had not been for me he would have lost his money.

MASC. Certainly, you do wonders, and show to-day a most exquisite judgment and supreme good fortune. We shall prosper greatly; go on as you have begun.

LEL. What is the matter now? What have I done?

MASC. To speak plainly as you wish me to do, and as I ought, you have acted like a fool. You know very well that your father leaves you without money; that a formidable rival follows us closely; yet for all this, when to oblige you I venture on a trick of which I take all the shame and danger upon myself…

LEL. What? was this…?

MASC. Yes, ninny; it was to release the captive that I was getting the money, whereof your officiousness took care to deprive us.

LEL. If that is the case, I am in the wrong. But who could have imagined it?

MASC. It really required a great deal of discernment.

LEL. You should have made some signs to warn me of what was going on.

MASC. Yes, indeed; I ought to have eyes in my back. By Jove, be quiet, and let us hear no more of your nonsensical excuses. Another, after all this, would perhaps abandon everything; but I have planned just now a master-stroke, which I will immediately put into execution, on condition that if…

[Footnote: The play is supposed to be in Sicily; hence Pagan oaths are not out of place. Even at the present time Italians say, per Jove! per Bacco!]

LEL. No, I promise you henceforth not to interfere either in word or deed.

MASC. Go away, then, the very sight of you kindles my wrath.

LEL. Above all, don't delay, for fear that in this business…

MASC. Once more, I tell you, begone! I will set about it. (Exit Lelio). Let us manage this well; it will be a most exquisite piece of roguery; if it succeeds, as I think it must. We'll try….But here comes the very man I want.

SCENE IX.—PANDOLPHUS, MASCARILLE.

PAND. Mascarille!

MASC. Sir?

PAND. To tell you the truth, I am very dissatisfied with my son.

MASC. With my master? You are not the only one who complains of him. His bad conduct which has grown unbearable in everything, puts me each moment out of

patience.

PAND. I thought, however, you and he understood one another pretty well.

MASC. I? Believe it not, sir. I am always trying to put him in mind of his duty: we are perpetually at daggers drawn. Just now we had a quarrel again about his engagement with Hippolyta, which, I find he is very averse to. By a most disgraceful refusal he violates all the respect due to a father.

PAND. A quarrel?

MASC. Yes, a quarrel, and a desperate one too.

PAND. I was very much deceived then, for I thought you supported him in all he did.

MASC. I? See what this world is come to! How is innocence always oppressed! If you knew but my integrity, you would give me the additional salary of a tutor, whereas I am only paid as his servant. Yes, you yourself could not say more to him than I do in order to make him behave better. "For goodness' sake, sir," I say to him very often, "cease to be driven hither and thither with every wind that blows,—reform; look what a worthy father Heaven has given you, what a reputation he has. Forbear to stab him thus to the heart, and live, as he does, as a man of honour."

PAND. That was well said; and what answer could he make to this?

MASC. Answer? Why only nonsense, with which he almost drives me mad. Not but that at the bottom of his heart he retains those principles of honour which he derives from you; but reason, at present, does not sway him. If I might be allowed to speak freely, you should soon see him submissive without much trouble.

PAND. Speak out.

MASC. It is a secret which would have serious consequences for me, should it be discovered; but I am quite sure I can confide it to your prudence.

PAND. You are right.

MASC. Know then that your wishes are sacrificed to the love your son has for a certain slave.

PAND. I have been told so before; but to hear it from your mouth pleases me.

MASC. I leave you to judge whether I am his secret confidant…

PAND. I am truly glad of it.

MASC. However, do you wish to bring him back to his duty, without any public scandal? You must… (I am in perpetual fear lest anybody should surprise us. Should he learn what I have told you, I should be a dead man.) You must, as I was saying, to break off this business, secretly purchase this slave, whom he so much idolizes, and send her into another country. Anselmo is very intimate with Trufaldin; let him go and buy her for you this very morning. Then, if you put her into my hands, I know some merchants, and promise you to sell her for the money she costs you, and to send her out of the way in spite of your son. For, if you would have him disposed for matrimony, we must divert this growing passion. Moreover, even if he were resolved to wear the yoke you design for him, yet this other girl might revive his foolish fancy, and prejudice him anew against matrimony.

PAND. Very well argued. I like this advice much. Here comes Anselmo; go, I will do my utmost quickly to obtain possession of this troublesome slave, when I will put her into your hands to finish the rest.

MASC. (Alone). Bravo, I will go and tell my master of this. Long live all knavery, and knaves also!

SCENE X.—HIPPOLYTA, MASCARILLE.

HIPP. Ay, traitor, is it thus that you serve me? I overheard all, and have myself been a witness of your treachery. Had I not, could I have suspected this? You are an

arrant rogue, and you have deceived me. You promised me, you miscreant, and I expected, that you would assist me in my passion for Leander, that your skill and your management should find means to break off my match with Lelio; that you would free me from my father's project; and yet you are doing quite the contrary. But you will find yourself mistaken. I know a sure method of breaking off the purchase you have been urging Pandolphus to make, and I will go immediately….

MASC. How impetuous you are! You fly into a passion in a moment; without inquiring whether you are right or wrong, you fall foul of me. I am in the wrong, and I ought to make your words true, without finishing what I began, since you abuse me so outrageously.

HIPP. By what illusion do you think to dazzle my eyes, traitor? Can you deny what I have just now heard?

MASC. No; but you must know that all this plotting was only contrived to serve you; that this cunning advice, which appeared so sincere, tends to make both old men fall into the snare; that all the pains I have taken for getting Celia into my hands, through their means, was to secure her for Lelio, and to arrange matters so that Anselmo, in the very height of passion, and finding himself disappointed of his son-in-law, might make choice of Leander.

HIPP. What! This admirable scheme, which has angered me so much, was all for my sake, Mascarille?

MASC. Yes, for your sake; but since I find my good offices meet with so bad a return,—since I have thus to bear your caprices, and as a reward for my services, you come here with a haughty air, and call me knave, cur, and cheat, I shall presently go, correct the mistake I have committed, and undo what I had undertaken to perform.

HIPP. (Holding him.) Nay, do not be so severe upon me, and forgive these outbursts of a sudden passion.

MASC. No, no; let me go. I have it yet in my power to set aside the scheme which offends you so much. Henceforth you shall have no occasion to complain of my zeal. Yes, you shall have my master, I promise you.

HIPP. My good Mascarille, be not in such a passion. I judged you ill; I was wrong; I confess I was. (Pulls out her purse). But I intend to atone for my fault with this. Could you find it in your heart to abandon me thus?

MASC. No, I cannot, do what I will. But your impetuosity was very shocking. Let me tell you that nothing offends a noble mind so much as the smallest imputation upon its honour.

HIPP. It is true; I treated you to some very harsh language, but here are two louis to heal your wounds.

MASC. Oh! all this is nothing. I am very sensitive on this point; but my passion begins to cool a little already. We must bear with the failings of our friends.

HIPP. Can you, then, bring about what I so earnestly wish for? Do you believe your daring projects will be as favourable to my passion as you imagine?

MASC. Do not make yourself uneasy on that account. I have several irons in the fire, and though this stratagem should fail us, what this cannot do, another shall.

HIPP. Depend upon it, Hippolyta will at least not be ungrateful.

MASC. It is not the hope of gain that makes me act.

HIPP. Your master beckons and wishes to speak with you. I will leave you, but remember to do what you can for me.

SCENE XI.—LELIO, MASCARILLE.

LEL. What the deuce are you doing there? You promised to perform wonders, but I am sure your dilatory ways are unparalleled. Had not my good genius inspired me, my happiness had been already wholly overthrown. There was an end to my good

fortune, my joy. I should have been a prey to eternal grief; in short, had I not gone to this place in the very nick of time, Anselmo would have got possession of the captive, and I should have been deprived of her. He was carrying her home, but I parried the thrust, warded off the blow, and so worked upon Trufaldin's fears as to make him keep the girl.

MASC. This is the third time! When we come to ten we will score. It was by my contrivance, incorrigible scatterbrains, that Anselmo undertook this desirable purchase; she should have been placed into my own hands, but your cursed officiousness knocks everything on the head again. Do you think I shall still labour to serve your love? I would sooner a hundred times become a fat old woman, a dolt, a cabbage, a lantern, a wehrwolf, and that Satan should twist your neck!

LEL. (Alone.) I must take him to some tavern and let him vent his passion on the bottles and glasses.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—LELIO, MASCARILLE.

MASC. I have at length yielded to your desires. In spite of all my protestations I could hold out no longer; I am going to venture upon new dangers, to promote your interest, which I intended to abandon. So tender-hearted am I! If dame nature had made a girl of Mascarille, I leave you to guess what would have happened. However, after this assurance, do not deal a back stroke to the project I am about to undertake; do not make a blunder and frustrate my expectations. Then, as to Anselmo, we shall anew present your excuses to him, in order to get what we desire. But should your imprudence burst forth again hereafter, then you may bid farewell to all the trouble I take for the object of your passion.

LEL. No, I shall be careful, I tell you; never fear; you shall see….

MASC. Well, mind that you keep your word. I have planned a bold stratagem for your sake. Your father is very backward in satisfying all your wishes by his death. I have just killed him (in words, I mean); I have spread a report that the good man, being suddenly smitten by a fit of apoplexy, has departed this life. But first, so that I might the better pretend he was dead, I so managed that he went to his barn. I had a person ready to come and tell him that the workmen employed on his house accidentally discovered a treasure, in digging the foundations. He set out in an instant, and as all his people, except us two, have gone with him into the country, I shall kill him to-day in everybody's imagination and produce some image which I shall bury under his name. I have already told you what I wish you to do; play your part well; and as to the character I have to keep up, if you perceive that I miss one word of it, tell me plainly I am nothing but a fool.

SCENE II.—LELIO, alone.

It is true, he has found out a strange way to accomplish my wishes fully; but when we are very much in love with a fair lady, what would we not do to be made happy? If love is said to be an excuse for a crime, it may well serve for a slight piece of imposture, which love's ardour to-day compels me to comply with, in expectation of the happy consequences that may result from it. Bless me! How expeditious they are. I see them already talking together about it; let us prepare to act our part.

SCENE III.—MASCARILLE, ANSELMO.

MASC. The news may well surprise you.

ANS. To die in such a manner!

MASC. He was certainly much to blame. I can never forgive him for such a freak.

ANS. Not even to take time to be ill.

MASC. No, never was a man in such a hurry to die.

ANS. And how does Lelio behave?

MASC. He raves, and has lost all command over his temper; he has beaten himself till he is black and blue in several places, and wishes to follow his father into the grave. In short, to make an end of this, the excess of his grief has made me with the utmost speed wrap the corpse in a shroud, for fear the sight, which fed his melancholy, should tempt him to commit some rash act.

ANS. No matter, you ought to have waited until evening. Besides, I should have liked to see Pandolphus once more. He who puts a shroud on a man too hastily very often commits murder; for a man is frequently thought dead when he only seems to be so.

MASC. I warrant him as dead as dead can be. But now, to return to what we were talking about, Lelio has, resolved (and it will do him good) to give his father a fine funeral, and to comfort the deceased a little for his hard fate, by the pleasure of seeing that we pay him such honours after his death. My master inherits a goodly estate, but as he is only a novice in business, and does not see his way clearly in his affairs, since the greater part of his property lies in another part of the country, or what he has here consists in paper, he would beg of you, after having entreated you to excuse the too great violence which he has shewn of late, to lend him for this last duty at least….

ANS. You have told me so already, and I will go and see him.

MASC. (Alone). Hitherto, at least, everything goes on swimmingly; let us endeavour to make the rest answer as well; and lest we should be wrecked in the very harbour, let us steer the ship carefully and keep a sharp look out.

SCENE IV.—ANSELMO, LELIO, MASCARILLE.

ANS. (Coming out of Pandolphus' house). Let us leave the house. I cannot, without great sorrow, see him wrapped up in this strange manner. Alas! in so short a time! He was alive this morning.

MASC. We go sometimes over a good deal of ground in a short time.

LEL. (Weeping). Oh!

ANS. Dear Lelio, he was but a man after all; even Rome can grant no dispensation from death.

LEL. Oh!

ANS. Death smites men without giving warning, and always has bad designs against them.

LEL. Oh!

ANS. That merciless foe would not loosen one grip of his murderous teeth, however we may entreat him. Everybody must feel them.

LEL. Oh!

MASC. Your preaching will all be in vain; this sorrow is too deep-rooted to be plucked up.

ANS. If, notwithstanding all these arguments, you will not cast aside your grief, at least, my dear Lelio, endeavour to moderate it.

LEL. Oh!

MASC. He will not moderate it; I know his temper.

ANS. However, according to your servant's message, I have brought you the money you want, so that you might celebrate your father's funeral obsequies!

LEL. Oh! oh!

MASC. How his grief increases at these words! It will kill him to think of his misfortune.

ANS. I know you will find by the good man's books that I owe him a much larger sum, but even if I should not owe anything, you could freely command my purse. Here it is; I am entirely at your service, and will show it.

LEL. (Going away). Oh!

MASC. How full of grief is my master!

ANS. Mascarille, I think it right he should give me some kind of receipt under his hand.

MASC. Oh!

ANS. Nothing in this world is certain.

MASC. Oh! oh!

ANS. Get him to sign me the receipt I require.

MASC. Alas! How can he comply with your desire in the condition he now is? Give him but time to get rid of his sorrow; and, when his troubles abate a little, I shall take care immediately to get you your security. Your servant, sir, my heart is over full of grief, and I shall go to take my fill of weeping with him. Hi! Hi!

ANS. (Alone). This world is full of crosses; we meet with them every day in different shapes, and never here below…

SCENE V.—PANDOLPHUS, ANSELMO.

ANS. Oh Heavens! how I tremble! It is Pandolphus who has returned to the earth! God grant nothing disturbed his repose! How wan his face is grown since his death! Do not come any nearer. I beseech you; I very much detest to jostle a ghost.

PAND. What can be the reason of this whimsical terror?

ANS. Keep your distance, and tell me what business brings you here. If you have taken all this trouble to bid me farewell, you do me too much honour; I could really have done very well without your compliment. If your soul is restless, and stands in

need of prayers. I promise you you shall have them, but do not frighten me. Upon the word of a terrified man, I will immediately set prayers agoing for you, to your very heart's content.

"Oh, dead worship, please to go! Heaven, if now you disappear, Will grant you joy down there below, And health as well, for many a year."

[Footnote: This seems to be an imitation of a spell, charm, or incantation to lay the supposed ghost, which Anselmo says kneeling and hardly able to speak for terror.]

PAND. (Laughing). In spite of my indignation, I cannot help laughing.

ANS. It is strange, but you are very merry for a dead man.

PAND. Is this a joke, pray tell me, or is it downright madness to treat a living man as if he were dead?

ANS. Alas! you must be dead; I myself just now saw you.

PAND. What? Could I die without knowing it?

ANS. As soon as Mascarille told me the news, I was ready to die of grief.

PAND. But, really, are you asleep or awake? Don't you know me?

ANS. You are clothed in an aerial body which imitates your own, but which may take another shape at any moment. I am mightily afraid to see you swell up to the size of a giant, and your countenance become frightfully distorted. For the love of God, do not assume any hideous form; you have scared me sufficiently for the nonce.

PAND. At any other time, Anselmo, I should have considered the simplicity which accompanies your credulity an excellent joke, and I should have carried on the pleasant conceit a little longer; but this story of my death, and the news of the supposed treasure, which I was told upon the road had not been found at all, raises in my mind a strong suspicion that Mascarille is a rogue, and an arrant rogue, who is proof against fear or remorse, and who invents extraordinary stratagems to compass

his ends.

ANS. What! Am I tricked and made a fool of? Really, this would be a compliment to my good sense! Let me touch him and be satisfied. This is, indeed, the very man. What an ass I am! Pray, do not spread this story about, for they will write a farce about it, and shame me for ever. But, Pandolphus, help me to get the money back which I lent them to bury you.

PAND. Money, do you say? Oh! that is where the shoe pinches; that is the secret of the whole affair! So much the worse for you. For my part, I shall not trouble myself about it, but will go and lay an information against this Mascarille, and if he can be caught he shall be hanged, whatever the cost may be.

ANS. (Alone). And I, like a ninny, believe a scoundrel, and must in one day lose both my senses and my money. Upon my word, it well becomes me to have these gray hairs and to commit an act of folly so readily, without examining into the truth of the first story I hear…! But I see….

SCENE VI.—LELIO, ANSELMO.

LEL. Now, with this master-key, I can easily pay Trufaldin a visit.

ANS. As far as I can see, your grief has subsided.

LEL. What do you say? No; it can never leave a heart which shall ever cherish it dearly.

ANS. I came back to tell you frankly of a mistake I made in the money I gave you just now; amongst these louis-d'or, though they look very good, I carelessly put some which I think are bad. I have brought some money with me to change them. The intolerable audacity of our coiners is grown to such a height in this state, that no one can receive any money now without danger of his being imposed upon. It would be doing good service to hang them all!

LEL. I am very much obliged to you for being willing to take them back, but I saw none among them that were bad, as I thought.

ANS. Let me see the money; let me see it; I shall know them again. Is this all?

LEL. Yes.

ANS. So much the better. Are you back again? my dear money! get into my pocket. As for you, my gallant sharper, you have no longer got a penny of it. You kill people who are in good health, do ye? And what would you have done, then, with me, a poor infirm father-in-law? Upon my word, I was going to get a nice addition to my family, a most discreet son-in-law. Go, go, and hang yourself for shame and vexation.

LEL. (Alone). I really must admit I have been bit this time. What a surprise this is! How can he have discovered our stratagem so soon?

SCENE VII.—LELIO, MASCARILLE.

MASC. What, you were out? I have been hunting for you everywhere. Well, have we succeeded at last? I will give the greatest rogue six trials to do the like. Come, give me the money that I may go and buy the slave; your rival will be very much astonished at this.

LEL. Ah! my dear boy, our luck has changed. Can you imagine how ill fortune has served me?

MASC. What? What can it be?

LEL. Anselmo having found out the trick, just now got back every sou he lent us, pretending some of the gold-pieces were bad, and that he was going to change them.

MASC. You do but joke, I suppose?

LEL. It is but too true.

MASC. In good earnest?

LEL. In good earnest; I am very much grieved about it. It will put you into a furious passion.

MASC. Me, sir! A fool might, but not I! Anger hurts, and I am going to take care of myself, come what will. After all, whether Celia be captive or free, whether Leander purchases her or whether she remains where she is, I do not care one stiver about it.

LEL. Ah! do not show such indifference, but be a little more indulgent to my slight imprudence. Had this last misfortune not happened, you would have confessed that I did wonders, and that in this pretended decease I deceived everybody, and counterfeited grief so admirably that the most sharp-sighted would have been taken in.

MASC. Truly you have great reason to boast.

LEL. Oh! I am to blame, and I am willing to acknowledge it; but if ever you cared for my happiness, repair this mishap, and help me.

MASC. I kiss your hands, I cannot spare the time.

LEL. Mascarille, my dear boy!

MASC. No.

LEL. Do me this favour.

MASC. No, I will not.

LEL. If you are inflexible, I shall kill myself.

MASC. Do so—you may.

LEL. Can I not soften your hard heart?

MASC. No.

LEL. Do you see my sword ready drawn?

MASC. Yes.

LEL. I am going to stab myself.

MASC. Do just what you please.

LEL. Would you not regret to be the cause of my death?

MASC. No.

LEL. Farewell, Mascarille.

MASC. Good bye, Master Lelio.

LEL. What…?

MASC. Kill yourself quick. You are a long while about it.

LEL. Upon my word, you would like me to play the fool and kill myself, so that you might get hold of my clothes.

MASC. I knew all this was nothing but a sham; whatever people may swear they will do, they are not so hasty now-a-days in killing themselves.

SCENE VIII.—TRUFALDIN, LEANDER, LELIO, MASCARILLE.

(Trufaldin taking Leander aside and whispering to him).

LEL. What do I see? my rival and Trufaldin together! He is going to buy Celia. Oh! I tremble for fear.

MASC. There is no doubt that he will do all he can; and if he has money, he can do all he will. For my part I am delighted. This is a just reward for your blunders, your impatience.

LEL. What must I do? Advise me.

MASC. I don't know.

LEL. Stay, I will go and pick a quarrel with him.

MASC. What good will that do?

LEL. What would you have me do to ward off this blow?

MASC. Well, I pardon you; I will yet cast an eye of pity on you. Leave me to watch them; I believe I shall discover what he intends to do by fairer means. (Exit Lelio).

TRUF. (To Leander). When you send by and by, it shall be done.

MASC. (Aside and going out). I must trap him and become his confidant, in order to baffle his designs the more easily.

LEAND. (Alone). Thanks to Heaven, my happiness is complete. I have found the way to secure it, and fear nothing more. Whatever my rival may henceforth attempt, it is no longer in his power to do me any harm.

SCENE IX.—LEANDER, MASCARILLE.

MASC. (Speaking these words within, and then coming on the stage). Oh! oh! Help! Murder! Help! They are killing me! Oh! oh! oh! oh! Traitor! Barbarian!

LEAND. Whence comes that noise? What is the matter? What are they doing to you?

MASC. He has just given me two hundred blows with a cudgel.

LEAND. Who?

MASC. Lelio.

LEAND. And for what reason?

MASC. For a mere trifle he has turned me away and beats me most unmercifully.

LEAND. He is really much to blame.

MASC. But, I swear, if ever it lies in my power I will be revenged on him. I will let you know, Mr. Thrasher, with a vengeance, that people's bones are not to be broken for nothing! Though I am but a servant, yet I am a man of honour. After having been in your service for four years you shall not pay me with a switch, nor affront me in so sensible a part as my shoulders! I tell you once more, I shall find a way to be revenged! You are in love with a certain slave, you would fain induce me to get her

for you, but I will manage matters so that somebody else shall carry her off; the deuce take me if I don't!

LEAND. Hear me, Mascarille, and moderate your passion. I always liked you, and often wished that a young fellow, faithful and clever like you, might one day or other take a fancy to enter my service. In a word, if you think my offer worthy of acceptance, and if you have a mind to serve me, from this moment I engage you.

MASC. With all my heart, sir, and so much the rather because good fortune in serving you offers me an opportunity of being revenged, and because in my endeavours to please you I shall at the same time punish that wretch. In a word, by my dexterity, I hope to get Celia for…

LEAND. My love has provided already for that. Smitten by a faultless fair one, I have just now bought her for less than her value.

MASC. What! Celia belongs to you, then?

LEAND. You should see her this minute, if I were the master of my own actions. But alas! it is my father who is so; since he is resolved, as I understand by a letter brought me, to make me marry Hippolyta. I would not have this affair come to his knowledge lest it should exasperate him. Therefore in my arrangement with Trufaldin (from whom I just now parted), I acted purposely in the name of another. When the affair was settled, my ring was chosen as the token, on the sight of which Trufaldin is to deliver Celia. But I must first arrange the ways and means to conceal from the eyes of others the girl who so much charms my own, and then find some retired place where this lovely captive may be secreted.

MASC. A little way out of town lives an old relative of mine, whose house I can take the freedom to offer you; there you may safely lodge her, and not a creature know anything of the matter.

LEAND. Indeed! so I can: you have delighted me with the very thing I wanted. Here, take this, and go and get possession of the fair one. As soon as ever Trufaldin

sees my ring, my girl will be immediately delivered into your hands. You can then take her to that house, when… But hist! here comes Hippolyta.

SCENE X.—HIPPOLYTA, LEANDER, MASCARILLE.

HIPP. I have some news for you, Leander, but will you be pleased or displeased with it?

LEAND. To judge of that, and make answer off-hand, I should know it.

HIPP. Give me your hand, then, as far as the church, and I will tell it you as we go.

[Footnote: Generally it was thought preferable, during Molière's lifetime, to use the word temple for "church," instead of église.]

LEAND. (To Mascarille). Go, make haste, and serve me in that business without delay.

SCENE XI.—MASCARILLE, alone.

Yes, I will serve you up a dish of my own dressing. Was there ever in the world so lucky a fellow. How delighted Lelio will be soon! His mistress to fall into our hands by these means! To derive his whole happiness from the man he would have expected to ruin him! To become happy by the hands of a rival! After this great exploit, I desire that due preparations be made to paint me as a hero crowned with laurel, and that underneath the portrait be inscribed in letters of gold: Vivat Mascarillus, rogum imperator.

SCENE XII.—TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Soho, there!

TRUF. What do you want?

MASC. This ring, which you know, will inform you what business brings me hither.

TRUF. Yes, I recognise that ring perfectly; stay a little, I will fetch you the slave.

SCENE XIII.—TRUFALDIN, A MESSENGER, MASCARILLE.

MESS. (To Trufaldin). Do me the favor, sir, to tell me where lives a gentleman….

TRUF. What gentleman?

MESS. I think his name is Trufaldin.

TRUF. And what is your business with him, pray? I am he.

MESS. Only to deliver this letter to him.

TRUF. (Reads). "Providence, whose goodness watches over my life, has just brought to my ears a most welcome report, that my daughter, who was stolen from me by some robbers when she was four years old, is now a slave at your house, under the name of Celia. If ever you knew what it was to be a father, and if natural affection makes an impression on your heart, then keep in your house this child so dear to me, and treat her as if she were your own flesh and blood. I am preparing to set out myself in order to fetch her. You shall be so well rewarded for your trouble, that in everything that relates to your happiness (which I am determined to advance) you shall have reason to bless the day in which you caused mine."

DON PEDRO DE GUSMAN, From Madrid. Marquess of MONTALCANA

Though the gipsies can be seldom believed, yet they who sold her to me told me she would soon be fetched by somebody, and that I should have no reason to complain. Yet here I was going, all through my impatience, to lose the fruits of a great expectation. (To the Messenger). Had you come but one moment later, your journey would have been in vain; I was going, this very instant, to give the girl up into this gentleman's hands; but it is well, I shall take great care of her. (Exit Messenger). (To

Mascarille). You yourself have heard what this letter says, so you may tell the person who sent you that I cannot keep my word, and that he had better come and receive his money back.

MASC. But the way you insult him…

TRUF. Go about your business, and no more words.

MASC. (Alone). Oh, what a curse that this letter came now! Fate is indeed against me. What bad luck for this messenger to come from Spain when he was not wanted! May thunder and hail go with him! Never, certainly, had so happy a beginning such a sad ending in so short a time.

SCENE XIV.—LELIO laughing, MASCARILLE.

MASC. What may be the cause of all this mirth?

LEL. Let me have my laugh out before I tell you.

MASC. Let us laugh then heartily, we have abundant cause so to do.

LEL. Oh! I shall no longer be the object of your expostulations: you who always reproach me shall no longer say that I am marrying all your schemes, like a busy-body as I am. I myself have played one of the cleverest tricks in the world. It is true I am quick-tempered, and now and then rather too hasty; but yet, when I have a mind to it, I can plan as many tricks as any man alive; even you shall own that what I have done shows an amount of sharpness rarely to be met with.

MASC. Let us hear what tricks you have invented.

LEL. Just now, being terribly frightened on seeing Trufaldin along with my rival, I was casting about to find a remedy for that mischief, when, calling all my invention to my aid, I conceived, digested, and perfected a stratagem, before which all yours, however vain you may be of them, ought undoubtedly to lower their colours.

MASC. But what may this be?

LEL. May it please you to have a little patience. Without much delay I invented a letter, written by an imaginary nobleman to Trufaldin, setting forth that, having fortunately heard that a certain slave, who lives in the latter's house, and is named Celia, was this grandee's daughter formerly kidnapped by thieves, it was his intention to come and fetch her; and he entreats him at least to keep her and take great care of her; for, that on her account he was setting out from Spain, and would acknowledge his civility by such handsome presents, that he should never regret being the means of making him happy.

MASC. Mighty well.

LEL. Hear me out; here is something much cleverer still. The letter I speak of was delivered to him, but can you imagine how? Only just in time, for the messenger told me, had it not been for this droll device, a fellow, who looked very foolish, was waiting to carry her off that identical moment.

MASC. And you did all this without the help of the devil?

LEL. Yes. Would you have believed me capable of such a subtle piece of wit? At least praise my skill, and the dexterity with which I have utterly disconcerted the scheme of my rival.

MASC. To praise you as you deserve, I lack eloquence; and feel unequal to the task. Yes, sufficiently to commend this lofty effort, this fine stratagem of war achieved before our eyes, this grand and rare effect of a mind which plans as many tricks as any man, which for smartness yields to none alive, my tongue wants words. I wish I had the abilities of the most refined scholars, so that I might tell you in the noblest verse, or else in learned prose, that you will always be, in spite of everything that may be done, the very same you have been all your life; that is to say, a scatter-brain, a man of distempered reason, always perplexed, wanting common sense, a man of left-handed judgment, a meddler, an ass, a blundering, hare-brained, giddy fellow,—what can I think of? A… a hundred times worse than anything I can

say. This is only an abridgement of your panegyric.

LEL. Tell me, what puts you in such a passion with me? Have I done anything? Clear up this matter.

MASC. No, you have done nothing at all; but do not come after me.

LEL. I will follow you all over the world to find out this mystery.

MASC. Do so. Come on, then; get your legs in order, I shall give you an opportunity to exercise them.

LEL. (Alone). He has got away from me! O misfortune which cannot be allayed! What am I to understand by his discourse? And what harm can I possibly have done to myself?

ACT III.

SCENE I.—MASCARILLE, alone

[Footnote: Compare Launcelot Gobbo's speech about his conscience in Shakspeare's Merchant of Venice (ii. 2).]

Silence, my good nature, and plead no more; you are a fool, and I am determined not to do it. Yes, my anger, you are right, I confess it! To be for ever doing what a meddler undoes, is showing too much patience, and I ought to give it up after the glorious attempts he has marred. But let us argue the matter a little without passion; if I should now give way to my just impatience the world will say I sank under difficulties, that my cunning was completely exhausted. What then becomes of that public esteem, which extols you everywhere as a first-rate rogue, and which you have acquired upon so many occasions, because you never yet were found wanting in inventions? Honour, Mascarille, is a fine thing; do not pause in your noble labours; and whatever a master may have done to incense you, complete your work,

for your own glory, and not to oblige him. But what success can you expect, if you are thus continually crossed by your evil genius? You see he compels you every moment to change your tone; you may as well hold water in a sieve as try to stop that resistless torrent, which in a moment overturns the most beautiful structures raised by your art. Well, once more, out of kindness, and whatever may happen, let us take some pains, even if they are in vain; yet, if he still persists in baffling my designs, then I shall withdraw all assistance. After all, our affairs are not going on badly, if we could but supplant our rival, and if Leander, at last weary of his pursuit, would leave us one whole day for my intended operations. Yes, I have a most ingenious plot in my head, from which I expect a glorious success, if I had no longer that obstacle in my way. Well, let us see if he still persists in his love.

SCENE II.—LEANDER, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Sir, I have lost my labour; Trufaldin will not keep his word.

LEAND. He himself has told me the whole affair; but, what is more, I have discovered that all this pretty rigmarole about Celia being carried off by gypsies, and having a great nobleman for her father, who is setting out from Spain to come hither, is nothing but a mere stratagem, a merry trick, a made-up story, a tale raised by Lelio to prevent my buying Celia.

MASC. Here is roguery for you!

LEAND. And yet this ridiculous story has produced such an impression on Trufaldin, and he has swallowed the bait of this shallow device so greedily, that he will not allow himself to be undeceived.

MASC. So that henceforth he will watch her carefully. I do not see we can do anything more.

LEAND. If at first I thought this girl amiable, I now find her absolutely adorable, and I am in doubt whether I ought not to employ extreme measures to make her my

own, thwart her ill fortune by plighting her my troth, and turn her present chains into matrimonial ones.

MASC. Would you marry her?

LEAND. I am not yet determined, but if her origin is somewhat obscure, her charms and her virtue are gentle attractions, which have incredible force to allure every heart.

MASC. Did you not mention her virtue?

LEAND. Ha! what is that you mutter? Out with it; explain what you mean by repeating that word "virtue."

MASC. Sir, your countenance changes all of a sudden; perhaps I had much better hold my tongue.

LEAND. No, no, speak out.

MASC. Well, then, out of charity I will cure you of your blindness. That girl….

LEAND. Proceed.

MASC. So far from being merciless, makes no difficulty in obliging some people in private; you may believe me, after all she is not stony-hearted, to any one who knows how to take her in the right mood. She looks demure, and would fain pass for a prude; but I can speak of her on sure grounds. You know I understand something of the craft, and ought to know that kind of cattle.

LEAND. What! Celia?…

MASC. Yes, her modesty is nothing but a mere sham, the semblance of a virtue which will never hold out, but vanishes, as any one may discover, before the shining rays emitted from a purse.

[Footnote: This is an allusion to the rays of the sun, placed above the crown, and stamped on all golden crown-pieces, struck in France from Louis XI. (November 2, 1475) until the end of the reign of Louis XIII. These crowns were called écus au

soleil. Louis XIV. took much later for his device the sun shining in full, with the motto, Nec pluribus impar.]

LEAND. Heavens! What do you tell me? Can I believe such words?

MASC. Sir, there is no compulsion; what does it matter to me? No, pray do not believe me, follow your own inclination, take the sly girl and marry her; the whole city, in a body, will acknowledge this favour; you marry the public good in her.

LEAND. What a strange surprise!

MASC. (Aside). He has taken the bait. Courage, my lad; if he does but swallow it in good earnest, we shall have got rid of a very awkward obstruction on our path.

LEAND. This astonishing account nearly kills me.

MASC. What! Can you…

LEAND. Go to the post-office, and see if there is a letter for me. (Alone, and for a while lost in thought). Who would not have been imposed upon? If what he says be true then there never was any countenance more deceiving.

SCENE III.—LELIO, LEANDER.

LEL. What may be the cause of your looking so sad?

LEAND. Who, I?

LEL. Yes, yourself.

LEAND. I have, however, no occasion to be so.

LEL. I see well enough what it is; Celia is the cause of it.

LEAND. My mind does not run upon such trifles.

LEL. And yet you had formed some grand scheme to get her into your hands; but you must speak thus, as your stratagem has miscarried.

LEAND. Were I fool enough to be enamoured of her, I should laugh at all your

finesse.

LEL. What finesse, pray?

LEAND. Good Heavens! sir, we know all.

LEL. All what?

LEAND. All your actions, from beginning to end.

LEL. This is all Greek to me; I do not understand one word of it.

LEAND. Pretend, if you please, not to understand me; but believe me, do not apprehend that I shall take a property which I should be sorry to dispute with you. I adore a beauty who has not been sullied, and do not wish to love a depraved woman.

LEL. Gently, gently, Leander.

LEAND. Oh! how credulous you are! I tell you once more, you may attend on her now without suspecting anybody. You may call yourself a lady-killer. It is true, her beauty is very uncommon, but, to make amends for that, the rest is common enough.

LEL. Leander, no more of this provoking language. Strive against me as much as you like in order to obtain her; but, above all things, do not traduce her so vilely. I should consider myself a great coward if I could tamely submit to hear my earthly deity slandered. I can much better bear your rivalry than listen to any speech that touches her character.

LEAND. What I state here I have from very good authority.

LEL. Whoever told you so is a scoundrel and a rascal. Nobody can discover the least blemish in this young lady; I know her heart well.

LEAND. But yet Mascarille is a very competent judge in such a cause; he thinks her guilty.

LEL. He?

LEAND. He himself.

LEL. Does he pretend impudently to slander a most respectable young lady, thinking, perhaps, I should only laugh at it? I will lay you a wager he eats his words.

LEAND. I will lay you a wager he does not.

LEL. 'Sdeath! I would break every bone in his body should he dare to assert such lies to me,

LEAND. And I will crop his ears, if he does not prove every syllable he has told me.

SCENE IV.—LELIO, LEANDER, MASCARILLE.

LEL. Oh! that's lucky; there he is. Come hither, cursed hangdog!

MASC. What is the matter?

LEL. You serpent's tongue! so full of lies! dare you fasten your stings on Celia, and slander the most consummate virtue that ever added lustre to misfortune?

MASC. (In a whisper to Lelio). Gently; I told him so on purpose.

LEL. No, no; none of your winking, and none of your jokes. I am blind and deaf to all you do or say. If it were my own brother he should pay dear for it; for to dare defame her whom I adore is to wound me in the most tender part. You make all these signs in vain. What was it you said to him?

MASC. Good Heavens! do not quarrel, or I shall leave you.

LEL. You shall not stir a step.

MASC. Oh!

LEL. Speak then; confess.

MASC. (Whispering to Lelio). Let me alone. I tell you it is a stratagem.

LEL. Make haste; what was it you said? Clear up this dispute between us.

MASC. (In a whisper to Lelio). I said what I said. Pray do not put yourself in a passion.

LEL. (Drawing his sword). I shall make you talk in another strain.

LEAND. (Stopping him). Stay your hand a little; moderate your ardour.

MASC. (Aside). Was there ever in the world a creature so dull of understanding?

LEL. Allow me to wreak my just vengeance on him.

LEAND. It is rather too much to wish to chastise him in my presence.

LEL. What! have I no right, then, to chastise my own servant?

LEAND. What do you mean by saying "your servant?"

MASC. (Aside). He is at it again! He will discover all.

LEL. Suppose I had a mind to thrash him within an inch of his life, what then? He is my own servant.

LEAND. At present he is mine.

LEL. That is an admirable joke. How comes he to be yours? Surely…

MASC. (In a whisper). Gently.

LEL. What are you whispering?

MASC. (Aside). Oh! the confounded blockhead. He is going to spoil everything, He understands not one of my signs.

LEL. You are dreaming, Leander. You are telling me a pretty story! Is he not my servant?

LEAND. Did you not discharge him from your service for some fault?

LEL. I do not know what this means.

LEAND. And did you not, in the violence of your passion, make his back smart most unmercifully?

LEL. No such thing. I discharge him! cudgel him! Either you make a jest of me, Leander, or he has been making a jest of you.

MASC. (Aside). Go on, go on, numskull; you will do your own business effectually.

LEAND. (To Mascarille). Then all this cudgelling is purely imaginary?

MASC. He does not know what he says; his memory…

LEAND. No, no; all these signs do not look well for you. I suspect some prettily contrived trick here; but for the ingenuity of the invention, go your ways, I forgive you. It is quite enough that I am undeceived, and see now why you imposed upon me. I come off cheap, because I trusted myself to your hypocritical zeal. A word to the wise is enough. Farewell, Lelio, farewell; your most obedient servant.

SCENE V.—LELIO, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Take courage, my boy, may fortune ever attend us I Let us draw and bravely take the field; let us act Olibrius, the slayer of the innocents.

[Footnote: Olibrius was, according to ancient legends, a Roman governor of Gaul, in the time of the Emperor Decius, very cruel, and a great boaster.]

LEL. He accused you of slandering…

MASC. And you could not let the artifice pass, nor let him remain in his error, which did you good service, and which pretty nearly extinguished his passion. No, honest soul, he cannot bear dissimulation. I cunningly get a footing at his rival's, who, like a dolt, was going to place his mistress in my hands, but he, Lelio, prevents me getting hold of her by a fictitious letter; I try to abate the passion of his rival, my hero presently comes and undeceives him. In vain I make signs to him, and show him it was all a contrivance of mine; it signifies nothing; he continues to the end, and never rests satisfied till he has discovered all. Grand and sublime effect of a mind which is not inferior to any man living! It is an exquisite piece, and worthy, in troth, to be made a present of to the king's private museum.

LEL. I am not surprised that I do not come up to your expectations; if I am not acquainted with the designs you are setting on foot, I shall be for ever making

mistakes.

MASC. So much the worse.

LEL. At least, if you would be justly angry with me, give me a little insight into your plan; but if I am kept ignorant of every contrivance, I must always be caught napping.

[Footnote: The original is, je suis pris sans vert, "I am taken without green," because in the month of May, in some parts of France, there is a game which binds him or her who is taken without a green leaf about them to pay a forfeit.]

MASC. I believe you would make a very good fencing-master, because you are so skilful at making feints, and at parrying of a thrust.

[Footnote: In the original we find prendre les contretemps, and rompre les mesures. In a little and very curious book, "The Scots Fencing Master, or Compleat Smal-Sword Man," printed in Edinburgh 1687, and written by Sir William Hope of Kirkliston, the contre-temps is said to be: "When a man thrusts without having a good opportunity, or when he thrusts at the same time his adversarie thrusts, and that each of them at that time receive a thrust." Breaking of measure is, according to the same booklet, done thus: "When you perceive your adversary thrusting at you, and you are not very certain of the parade, then break his measure, or make his thrust short of you, by either stepping a foot or half a foot back, with the single stepp, for if you judge your adversary's distance or measure well, half a foot will break his measure as well as ten ells."]

LEL. Since the thing is done, let us think no more about it. My rival, however, will not have it in his power to cross me, and provided you will but exert your skill, in which I trust…

MASC. Let us drop this discourse, and talk of something else; I am not so easily pacified, not I; I am in too great a passion for that. In the first place, you must do me a service, and then we shall see whether I ought to undertake the management of

your amours.

LEL. If it only depends on that, I will do it! Tell me, have you need of my blood, of my sword?

MASC. How crack-brained he is! You are just like those swashbucklers who are always more ready to draw their sword than to produce a tester, if it were necessary to give it.

LEL. What can I do, then, for you?

MASC. You must, without delay, endeavour to appease your father's anger.

LEL. We have become reconciled already.

MASC. Yes, but I am not; I killed him this morning for your sake; the very idea of it shocks him. Those sorts of jokes are severely felt by such old fellows as he, which, much against their will, make them reflect sadly on the near approach of death. The good sire, notwithstanding his age, is very fond of life, and cannot bear jesting upon that subject; he is alarmed at the prognostication, and so very angry that I hear he has lodged a complaint against me. I am afraid that if I am once housed at the expense of the king, I may like it so well after the first quarter of an hour, that I shall find it very difficult afterwards to get away. There have been several warrants out against me this good while; for virtue is always envied and persecuted in this abominable age. Therefore go and make my peace with your father.

LEL. Yes, I shall soften his anger, but you must promise me then…

MASC. We shall see what there is to be done. (Exit Lelio). Now, let us take a little breath after so many fatigues; let us stop for a while the current of our intrigues, and not move about hither and thither as if we were hobgoblins. Leander cannot hurt us now, and Celia cannot be removed, through the contrivance of…

SCENE VI.—ERGASTE, MASCARILLE.

ERG. I was looking for you everywhere to render you a service. I have a secret of importance to disclose.

MASC. What may that be?

ERG. Can no one overhear us?

MASC. Not a soul.

ERG. We are as intimate as two people can be; I am acquainted with all your projects, and the love of your master. Mind what you are about by and by; Leander has formed a plot to carry off Celia; I have been told he has arranged everything, and designs to get into Trufaldin's house in disguise, having heard that at this time of the year some ladies of the neighbourhood often visit him in the evening in masks.

MASC. Ay, well! He has not yet reached the height of his happiness; I may perhaps be beforehand with him; and as to this thrust, I know how to give him a counter-thrust, by which he may run himself through. He is not aware with what gifts I am endowed. Farewell, we shall take a cup together next time we meet.

SCENE VII.—MASCARILLE, alone.

We must, we must reap all possible benefit from this amorous scheme, and by a dexterous and uncommon counterplot endeavour to make the success our own, without any danger. If I put on a mask and be beforehand with Leander, he will certainly not laugh at us; if we take the prize ere he comes up, he will have paid for us the expenses of the expedition; for, as his project has already become known, suspicion will fall upon him; and we, being safe from all pursuit, need not fear the consequences of that dangerous enterprise. Thus we shall not show ourselves, but use a cat's paw to take the chesnuts out of the fire. Now, then, let us go and disguise ourselves with some good fellows; we must not delay if we wish to be beforehand with our gentry. I love to strike while the iron is hot, and can, without much difficulty, provide in one moment men and dresses. Depend upon it, I do not let my

skill lie dormant. If Heaven has endowed me with the gift of knavery, I am not one of those degenerate minds who hide the talents they have received.

SCENE VIII.—LELIO, ERGASTE.

LEL. He intends to carry her off during a masquerade!

ERG. There is nothing more certain; one of his band informed me of his design, upon which I instantly ran to Mascarille and told him the whole affair; he said he would spoil their sport by some counter-scheme which he planned in an instant; so meeting with you by chance, I thought I ought to let you know the whole.

LEL. I am very much obliged to you for this piece of news; go, I shall not forget this faithful service.

[Exit Ergaste.]

SCENE IX.—LELIO, alone.

My rascal will certainly play them some trick or other; but I, too, have a mind to assist him in his project. It shall never be said that, in a business which so nearly concerns me, I stirred no more than a post; this is the time; they will be surprised at the sight of me. Why did I not take my blunderbuss with me? But let anybody attack me who likes, I have two good pistols and a trusty sword. So ho! within there; a word with you.

SCENE X.—TRUFALDIN at his window, LELIO.

TRUF. What is the matter? Who comes to pay me a visit?

LEL. Keep your door carefully shut to-night.

TRUF. Why?

LEL. There are certain people coming masked to give you a sorry kind of serenade; they intend to carry off Celia.

TRUF. Good Heavens!

LEL. No doubt they will soon be here. Keep where you are, you may see everything from your window. Hey! Did I not tell you so? Do you not see them already? Hist! I will affront them before your face. We shall see some fine fun, if they do not give way.

[Footnote: This is one of the passages of Molière about which commentators do not agree; the original is, nous allons voir beau jeu, si la corde ne rompt. Some maintain that corde refers to the tight rope of a rope dancer; others that corde means the string of a bow, as in the phrase avoir deux cordes a son arc, to have two strings (resources) to one's bow. Mons. Eugène Despois, in his carefully edited edition of Molière, (i., 187), defends the latter reading, and I agree with him.]

SCENE XI.—LELIO, TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE, and his company masked.

TRUF. Oh, the funny blades, who think to surprise me.

LEL. Maskers, whither so fast? Will you let me into the secret? Trufaldin, pray open the door to these gentry, that they may challenge us for a throw with the dice.

[Footnote: The original has jouer un momon. Guy Miege, in his Dictionary of barbarous French. London, 1679 has "Mommon, a mummer, also a company of mummers; also a visard, or mask; also a let by a mummer at dice."]

(To Mascarille, disguised as a woman). Good Heavens! What a pretty creature! What a darling she looks! How now! What are you mumbling? Without offence, may I remove your mask and see your face.

TRUF. Hence! ye wicked rogues; begone, ye ragamuffins! And you, sir, good night,

and many thanks.

SCENE XII.—LELIO, MASCARILLE.

LEL. (After having taken the mask from Mascarille's face). Mascarille, is it you?

MASC. No, not at all; it is somebody else.

LEL. Alas! How astonished I am! How adverse is our fate! Could I possibly have guessed this, as you did not secretly inform me that you were going to disguise yourself? Wretch that I am, thoughtlessly to play you such a trick, while you wore this mask. I am in an awful passion with myself, and have a good mind to give myself a sound beating.

MASC. Farewell, most refined wit, unparalleled inventive genius.

LEL. Alas! If your anger deprives me of your assistance, what saint shall I invoke?

MASC. Beelzebub.

LEL. Ah! If your heart is not made of stone or iron, do once more at least forgive my imprudence; if it is necessary to be pardoned that I should kneel before you, behold…

MASC. Fiddlesticks! Come, my boys, let us away; I hear some other people coming closely behind us.

SCENE XIII.—LEANDER and his company masked; TRUFALDIN at the window.

LEAND. Softly, let us do nothing but in the gentlest manner.

TRUF. (At the window). How is this? What! mummers besieging my door all night. Gentlemen, do not catch a cold gratuitously; every one who is catching it here must have plenty of time to lose. It is rather a little too late to take Celia along with you;

she begs you will excuse her to-night; the girl is in bed and cannot speak to you; I am very sorry; but to repay you for all the trouble you have taken for her sake, she begs you will be pleased to accept this pot of perfume.

LEAND. Faugh! That does not smell nicely. My clothes are all spoiled; we are discovered; let us be gone this way.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—LELIO, disguised as an Armenian; MASCARILLE.

MASC. You are dressed in a most comical fashion.

LEL. I had abandoned all hope, but you have revived it again by this contrivance.

MASC. My anger is always too soon over; it is vain to swear and curse, I can never keep to my oaths.

LEL. Be assured that if ever it lies in my power you shall be satisfied with the proofs of my gratitude, and though I had but one piece of bread…

MASC. Enough: Study well this new project; for if you commit now any blunder, you cannot lay the blame upon ignorance of the plot; you ought to know your part in the play perfectly by heart.

LEL. But how did Trufaldin receive you?

MASC. I cozened the good fellow with a pretended zeal for his interests. I went with alacrity to tell him that, unless he took very great care, some people would come and surprise him; that from different quarters they had designs upon her of whose origin a letter had given a false account; that they would have liked to draw me in for a share in the business, but that I kept well out of it; and that, being full of zeal for what so nearly concerned him, I came to give him timely notice that he might take

his precautions. Then, moralizing, I discoursed solemnly about the many rogueries one sees every day here below; that, as for me, being tired with the world and its infamies, I wished to work out my soul's salvation, retire from all its noise, and live with some worthy honest man, with whom I could spend the rest of my days in peace; that, if he had no objection, I should desire nothing more than to pass the remainder of my life with him; that I had taken such a liking to him, that, without asking for any wages to serve him, I was ready to place in his hands, knowing it to be safe there, some property my father had left me, as well as my savings, which I was fully determined to leave to him alone, if it pleased Heaven to take me hence. That was the right way to gain his affection. You and your beloved should decide what means to use to attain your wishes. I was anxious to arrange a secret interview between you two; he himself has contrived to show me a most excellent method, by which you may fairly and openly stay in her house. Happening to talk to me about a son he had lost, and whom he dreamt last night had come to life again, he told me the following story, upon which, just now, I founded my stratagem.

LEL. Enough; I know it all; you have told it me twice already.

[Footnote: Though Lelio says to Mascarille, "Enough, I know it all," he has not been listening to the speech of his servant, but, in the meanwhile, is arranging his dress, and smoothing his ruffles, and making it clear to the spectator that he knows nothing, and that he will be a bad performer of the part assigned to him. This explains the blunders he makes afterwards in the second and fifth scenes of the same act.]

MASC. Yes, yes; but even if I should tell it thrice, it may happen still, that with all your conceit, you might break down in some minor detail.

LEL. I long to be at it already.

MASC. Pray, not quite so fast, for fear we might stumble. Your skull is rather thick, therefore you should be perfectly well instructed in your part. Some time ago

Trufaldin left Naples; his name was then Zanobio Ruberti. Being suspected in his native town of having participated in a certain rebellion, raised by some political faction (though really he is not a man to disturb any state), he was obliged to quit it stealthily by night, leaving behind him his daughter, who was very young, and his wife. Some time afterwards he received the news that they were both dead, and in this perplexity, wishing to take with him to some other town, not only his property, but also the only one who was left of all his family, his young son, a schoolboy, called Horatio, he wrote to Bologna, where a certain tutor, named Alberto, had taken the boy when very young, to finish there his education; but though for two whole years he appointed several times to meet them, they never made their appearance. Believing them to be dead, after so long a time, he came to this city, where he took the name he now bears, without for twelve years ever having discovered any traces of this Alberto, or of his son Horatio. This is the substance of the story, which I have repeated so that you may better remember the groundwork of the plot. Now, you are to personate an Armenian merchant, who has seen them both safe and sound in Turkey. If I have invented this scheme, in preference to any other, of bringing them to life again according to his dream, it is because it is very common in adventures for people to be taken at sea by some Turkish pirate, and afterwards restored to their families in the very nick of time, when thought lost for fifteen or twenty years. For my part, I have heard a hundred of that kind of stories. Without giving ourselves the trouble of inventing something fresh, let us make use of this one; what does it matter? You must say you heard the story of their being made slaves from their own mouths, and also that you lent them money to pay their ransom; but that as urgent business obliged you to set out before them, Horatio asked you to go and visit his father here, whose adventures he was acquainted with, and with whom you were to stay a few days till their arrival. I have given you a long lesson now.

LEL. These repetitions are superfluous. From the very beginning I understood it all.

MASC. I shall go in and prepare the way.

LEL. Listen, Mascarille, there is only one thing that troubles me; suppose he should ask me to describe his son's countenance?

MASC. There is no difficulty in answering that! You know he was very little when he saw him last. Besides it is very likely that increase of years and slavery have completely changed him.

LEL. That is true. But pray, if he should remember my face, what must I do then?

MASC. Have you no memory at all? I told you just now, that he has merely seen you for a minute, that therefore you could only have produced a very transient impression on his mind; besides, your beard and dress disguise you completely.

LEL. Very well. But, now I think of it, what part of Turkey…?

MASC. It is all the same, I tell you, Turkey or Barbary.

LEL. But what is the name of the town I saw them in?

MASC. Tunis. I think he will keep me till night. He tells me it is useless to repeat that name so often, and I have already mentioned it a dozen times.

LEL. Go, go in and prepare matters; I want nothing more.

MASC. Be cautious at least, and act wisely. Let us have none of your inventions here.

LEL. Let me alone! Trust to me, I say, once more.

MASC. Observe, Horatio, a schoolboy in Bologna; Trufaldin, his true name Zanobio Ruberti, a citizen of Naples; the tutor was called Alberto…

LEL. You make me blush by preaching so much to me; do you think I am a fool?

MASC. No, not completely, but something very like it.

SCENE II.—LELIO, alone.

When I do not stand in need of him he cringes, but now, because he very well knows

of how much use he is to me, his familiarity indulges in such remarks as he just now made. I shall bask in the sunshine of those beautiful eyes, which hold me in so sweet a captivity, and, without hindrance, depict in the most glaring colours the tortures I feel. I shall then know my fate…. But here they are.

SCENE III.—TRUFALDIN, LELIO, MASCARILLE.

TRUF. Thanks, righteous heaven, for this favourable turn of my fortune!

MASC. You are the man to see visions and dream dreams, since you prove how untrue is the saying that dreams are falsehoods.

[Footnote: In French there is a play on words between songes, dreams, and mensonges, falsehoods, which cannot be rendered into English.]

TRUF. How can I thank you? what returns can I make you, sir? You, whom I ought to style the messenger sent from Heaven to announce my happiness!

LEL. These compliments are superfluous; I can dispense with them.

TRUF. (To Mascarille). I have seen somebody like this Armenian, but I do not know where.

MASC. That is what I was saying, but one sees surprising likenesses sometimes.

TRUF. You have seen that son of mine, in whom all my hopes are centred?

LEL. Yes, Signor Trufaldin, and he was as well as well can be.

TRUF. He related to you his life and spoke much about me, did he not?

LEL. More than ten thousand times.

MASC. (Aside to Lelio). Not quite so much, I should say.

LEL. He described you just as I see you, your face, your gait.

TRUF. Is that possible? He has not seen me since he was seven years old. And even his tutor, after so long a time, would scarcely know my face again.

MASC. One's own flesh and blood never forget the image of one's relations; this likeness is imprinted so deeply, that my father…

TRUF. Hold your tongue. Where was it you left him?

LEL. In Turkey, at Turin.

TRUF. Turin! but I thought that town was in Piedmont.

MASC. (Aside). Oh the dunce! (To Trufaldin). You do not understand him; he means Tunis; it was in reality there he left your son; but the Armenians always have a certain vicious pronunciation, which seems very harsh to us; the reason of it is because in all their words they change nis into rin; and so, instead of saying Tunis, they pronounce Turin.

TRUF. I ought to know this in order to understand him. Did he tell you in what way you could meet with his father?

MASC. (Aside). What answer will he give?

[Footnote: Trufaldin having found out that Mascarille makes signs to his master, the servant pretends to fence.]

(To Trufaldin, after pretending to fence). I was just practising some passes; I have handled the foils in many a fencing school.

TRUF. (To Mascarille). That is not the thing I wish to know now. (To Lelio). What other name did he say I went by?

MASC. Ah, Signor Zanobio Ruberti. How glad you ought to be for what Heaven sends you!

LEL. That is your real name; the other is assumed.

TRUF. But where did he tell you he first saw the light?

MASC. Naples seems a very nice place, but you must feel a decided aversion to it.

TRUF. Can you not let us go on with our conversation, without interrupting us?

LEL. Naples is the place where he first drew his breath.

TRUF. Whither did I send him in his infancy, and under whose care?

MASC. That poor Albert behaved very well, for having accompanied your son from Bologna, whom you committed to his care.

TRUF. Pshaw!

MASC. (Aside). We are undone if this conversation lasts long.

TRUF. I should very much like to know their adventures; aboard what ship did my adverse fate…?

MASC. I do not know what is the matter with me, I do nothing but yawn. But, Signor Trufaldin, perhaps this stranger may want some refreshment; besides, it grows late.

LEL. No refreshment for me.

MASC. Oh sir, you are more hungry than you imagine.

TRUF. Please to walk in then.

LEL. After you, sir.

[Footnote: It shows that Lelio knows not what he is about when he does the honours of the house to the master of the house himself, and forgets that as a stranger he ought to go in first.]

MASC. (To Trufaldin). Sir, in Armenia, the masters of the house use no ceremony. (To Lelio, after Trufaldin has gone in). Poor fellow, have you not a word to say for yourself?

LEL. He surprised me at first; but never fear, I have rallied my spirits, and am going to rattle away boldly..

MASC. Here comes our rival, who knows nothing of our plot. (They go into Trufaldin's house).

SCENE IV.—ANSELMO, LEANDER.

ANS. Stay, Leander, and allow me to tell you something which concerns your peace and reputation. I do not speak to you as the father of Hippolyta, as a man interested for my own family, but as your father, anxious for your welfare, without wishing to flatter you or to disguise anything; in short, openly and honestly, as I would wish a child of mine to be treated upon the like occasion. Do you know how everybody regards this amour of yours, which in one night has burst forth? How your yesterday's undertaking is everywhere talked of and ridiculed? What people think of the whim which, they say, has made you select for a wife a gipsy outcast, a strolling wench, whose noble occupation was only begging? I really blushed for you, even more than I did for myself, who am also compromised by this public scandal. Yes, I am compromised, I say, I whose daughter, being engaged to you, cannot bear to see her slighted, without taking offence at it. For shame, Leander; arise from your humiliation; consider well your infatuation; if none of us are wise at all times, yet the shortest errors are always the best. When a man receives no dowry with his wife, but beauty only, repentance follows soon after wedlock; and the handsomest woman in the world can hardly defend herself against a lukewarmness caused by possession. I repeat it, those fervent raptures, those youthful ardours and ecstacies, may make us pass a few agreeable nights, but this bliss is not at all lasting, and as our passions grow cool, very unpleasant days follow those pleasant nights; hence proceed cares, anxieties, miseries, sons disinherited through their fathers' wrath.

LEAND. All that I now hear from you is no more than what my own reason has already suggested to me. I know how much I am obliged to you for the great honour you are inclined to pay me, and of which I am unworthy. In spite of the passion which sways me, I have ever retained a just sense of your daughter's merit and virtue: therefore I will endeavour…

ANS. Somebody is opening this door; let us retire to a distance, lest some contagion

spreads from it, which may attack you suddenly.

SCENE V.—LELIO, MASCARILLE.

MASC. We shall soon see our roguery miscarry if you persist in such palpable blunders.

LEL. Must I always hear your reprimands? What can you complain of? Have I not done admirably since…?

MASC. Only middling; for example, you called the Turks heretics, and you affirmed, on your corporal oath, that they worshipped the sun and moon as their gods. Let that pass. What vexes me most is that, when you are with Celia, you strangely forget yourself; your love is like porridge, which by too fierce a fire swells, mounts up to the brim, and runs over everywhere.

LEL. Could any one be more reserved? As yet I have hardly spoken to her.

MASC. You are right! but it is not enough to be silent; you had not been a moment at table till your gestures roused more suspicion than other people would have excited in a whole twelvemonth.

LEL. How so?

MASC. How so? Everybody might have seen it. At table, where Trufaldin made her sit down, you never kept your eyes off her, blushed, looked quite silly, cast sheep's eyes at her, without ever minding what you were helped to; you were never thirsty but when she drank, and took the glass eagerly from her hands; and without rinsing it, or throwing a drop of it away, you drank what she left in it, and seemed to choose in preference that side of the glass which her lips had touched; upon every piece which her slender hand had touched, or which she had bit, you laid your paw as quickly as a cat does upon a mouse, and you swallowed it as glibly as if you were a regular glutton. Then, besides all this, you made an intolerable noise, shuffling with

your feet under the table, for which Trufaldin, who received two lusty kicks, twice punished a couple of innocent dogs, who would have growled at you if they dared; and yet, in spite of all this, you say you behaved finely! For my part I sat upon thorns all the time; notwithstanding the cold, I feel even now in a perspiration. I hung over you just as a bowler does over his bowl after he has thrown it, and thought to restrain your actions by contorting my body ever so many times.

LEL. Lack-a day! how easy it is for you to condemn things of which you do not feel the enchanting cause. In order to humour you for once I have, nevertheless, a good mind to put a restraint upon that love which sways me. Henceforth…

SCENE VI.—TRUFALDIN, LELIO, MASCARILLE.

MASC. We were speaking about your son's adventures.

TRUF. (To Lelio). You did quite right. Will you do me the favour of letting me have one word in private with him?

LEL. I should be very rude if I did not. (Lelio goes into Trufaldin's House).

SCENE VII.—TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE.

TRUF. Hark ye! do you know what I have just been doing?

MASC. No, but if you think it proper, I shall certainly not remain long in ignorance.

TRUF. I have just now cut off from a large and sturdy oak, of about two hundred years old, an admirable branch, selected on purpose, of tolerable thickness, of which immediately, upon the spot, I made a cudgel, about … yes, of this size (showing his arm); not so thick at one end as at the other, but fitter, I imagine, than thirty switches to belabour the shoulders withal; for it is well poised, green, knotty, and heavy.

MASC. But, pray, for whom is all this preparation?

TRUF. For yourself, first of all; then, secondly, for that fellow, who wishes to palm

one person upon me, and trick me out of another; for this Armenian, this merchant in disguise, introduced by a lying and pretended story.

MASC. What! you do not believe…?

TRUF. Do not try to find an excuse; he himself, fortunately, discovered his own stratagem, by telling Celia, whilst he squeezed her hand at the same time, that it was for her sake alone he came disguised in this manner. He did not perceive Jeannette, my little god-daughter, who overheard every word he said. Though your name was not mentioned, I do not doubt but you are a cursed accomplice in all this.

MASC. Indeed, you wrong me. If you are really deceived, believe me I was the first imposed upon with his story.

TRUF. Would you convince me you speak the truth? Assist me in giving him a sound drubbing, and in driving him away; let us give it the rascal well, and then I will acquit you of all participation in this piece of rascality.

MASC. Ay, ay, with all my soul. I will dust his jacket for him so soundly, that you shall see I had no hand in this matter. (Aside). Ah! you shall have a good licking, Mister Armenian, who always spoil everything.

SCENE VIII.—LELIO, TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE.

TRUF. (Knocks at his door, and then addresses Lelio). A word with you, if you please. So, Mr. Cheat, you have the assurance to fool a respectable man, and make game of him?

MASC. To pretend to have seen his son abroad, in order to get the more easily into his house!

TRUF. (Beating Lelio). Go away, go away immediately.

LEL. (To Mascarille, who beats him likewise). Oh! you scoundrel!

MASC. It is thus that rogues…

LEL. Villain!

MASC. Are served here. Keep that for my sake!

LEL. What? Is a gentleman…?

MASC. (_Beating him and driving him off). March off, begone, I tell you, or I shall break all the bones in your body.

TRUF. I am delighted with this; come in, I am satisfied. (Mascarille follows Trufaldin into his house).

LEL. (Returning). This to me! To be thus affronted by a servant! Could I have thought the wretch would have dared thus to ill-treat his master?

MASC. (From Trufaldin's window). May I take the liberty to ask how your shoulders are?

LEL. What! Have you the impudence still to address me?

MASC. Now see what it is not to have perceived Jeannette, and to have always a blabbing tongue in your head! However, this time I am not angry with you, I have done cursing and swearing at you; though you behaved very imprudently, yet my hand has made your shoulders pay for your fault.

LEL. Ha! I shall be revenged on you for your treacherous behaviour.

MASC. You yourself were the cause of all this mischief.

LEL. I?

MASC. If you had had a grain of sense when you were talking to your idol you would have perceived Jeannette at your heels, whose sharp ears overheard the whole affair.

LEL. Could anybody possibly catch one word I spoke to Celia?

MASC. And what else was the cause why you were suddenly turned out of doors? Yes, you are shut out by your own tittle-tattle. I do not know whether you play often at piquet, but you at least throw your cards away in an admirable manner.

LEL. Oh! I am the most unhappy of all men. But why did you drive me away also?

MASC. I never did better than in acting thus. By these means, at least, I prevent all suspicion of my being the inventor or an accomplice of this stratagem.

LEL. But you should have laid it on more gently.

MASC. I was no such fool! Trufaldin watched me most narrowly; besides, I must tell you, under the pretence of being of use to you, I was not at all displeased to vent my spleen. However, the thing is done, and if you will give me your word of honour, never, directly or indirectly, to be revenged on me for the blows on the back I so heartily gave you, I promise you, by the help of my present station, to satisfy your wishes within these two nights.

LEL. Though you have treated me very harshly, yet what would not such a promise prevail upon me to do?

MASC. You promise, then?

LEL. Yes, I do.

MASC. But that is not all; promise never to meddle in anything I take in hand.

LEL. I do.

MASC. If you break your word may you get the cold shivers!

LEL. Then keep it with me, and do not forget my uneasiness.

MASC. Go and change your dress, and rub something on your back.

LEL. (Alone). Will ill-luck always follow me, and heap upon me one misfortune after another?

MASC. (Coming out of Trufaldin's house). What! Not gone yet? Hence immediately; but, above all, be sure you don't trouble your head about any thing. Be satisfied, that I am on your side; do not make the least attempt to assist me; remain quiet.

LEL. (Going). Yes, to be sure, I will remain quiet.

MASC. (Alone). Now let me see what course I am to steer.

SCENE IX.—ERGASTE, MASCARILLE.

ERG. Mascarille, I come to tell you a piece of news, which will give a cruel blow to your projects. At the very moment I am talking to you, a young gipsy, who nevertheless is no black, and looks like a gentleman, has arrived with a very wan-looking old woman, and is to call upon Trufaldin to purchase the slave you wished to redeem. He seems to be very anxious to get possession of her.

MASC. Doubtless it is the lover Celia spoke about. Were ever fortunes so tangled as ours? No sooner have we got rid of one trouble than we fall into another. In vain do we hear that Leander intends to abandon his pursuit, and to give us no further trouble; that the unexpected arrival of his father has turned the scales in favour of Hippolyta; that the old gentleman has employed his parental authority to make a thorough change, and that the marriage contract is going to be signed this very day; as soon as one rival withdraws, another and a more dangerous one starts up to destroy what little hope there was left. However, by a wonderful stratagem, I believe I shall be able to delay their departure and gain what time I want to put the finishing stroke to this famous affair. A great robbery has lately been committed, by whom, nobody knows. These gipsies have not generally the reputation of being very honest; upon this slight suspicion, I will cleverly get the fellow imprisoned for a few days. I know some officers of justice, open to a bribe, who will not hesitate on such an occasion; greedy and expecting some present, there is nothing they will not attempt with their eyes shut; be the accused ever so innocent, the purse is always criminal, and must pay for the offence.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—MASCARILLE, ERGASTE.

MASC. Ah blockhead! numskull! idiot! Will you never leave off persecuting me?

ERG. The constable took great care everything was going on smoothly; the fellow would have been in jail, had not your master come up that very moment, and, like a madman spoiled your plot. "I cannot suffer," says he in a loud voice, "that a respectable man should be dragged to prison in this disgraceful manner; I will be responsible for him, from his very looks, and will be his bail." And as they refused to let him go, he immediately and so vigorously attacked the officers, who are a kind of people much afraid of their carcasses, that, even at this very moment, they are running, and every man thinks he has got a Lelio at his heels.

MASC. The fool does not know that this gipsy is in the house already to carry off his treasure.

ERG. Good-bye, business obliges me to leave you.

SCENE II.—MASCARILLE, alone.

Yes, this last marvellous accident quite stuns me. One would think, and I have no doubt of it, that this bungling devil which possesses Lelio takes delight in defying me, and leads him into every place where his presence can do mischief. Yet I shall go on, and notwithstanding all these buffets of fortune, try who will carry the day. Celia has no aversion to him, and looks upon her departure with great regret. I must endeavour to improve this opportunity. But here they come; let me consider how I shall execute my plan. Yonder furnished house is at my disposal, and I can do what I like with it; if fortune but favours us, all will go well; nobody lives there but myself, and I keep the key. Good Heavens! what a great many adventures have befallen us in so short a time, and what numerous disguises a rogue is obliged to put on.

SCENE III.—CELIA, ANDRÈS.

AND. You know it, Celia, I have left nothing undone to prove the depth of my passion. When I was but very young, my courage in the wars gained me some consideration among the Venetians, and one time or other, and without having too great an opinion of myself, I might, had I continued in their service, have risen to some employment of distinction; but, for your sake, I abandoned everything; the sudden change you produced in my heart, was quickly followed by your lover joining the gipsies. Neither a great many adventures nor your indifference have been able to make me abandon my pursuit. Since that time, being by an accident separated from you much longer than I could have foreseen, I spared neither time nor pains to meet with you again. At last I discovered the old gipsy-woman, and heard from her that for a certain sum of money, which was then of great consequence to the gipsies, and prevented the dissolution of the whole band, you were left in pledge in this neighbourhood. Full of impatience, I flew hither immediately to break these mercenary chains, and to receive from you whatever commands you might be pleased to give. But, when I thought to see joy sparkle in your eyes, I find you pensive and melancholy; if quietness has charms for you, I have sufficient means at Venice, of the spoils taken in war, for us both to live there; but if I must still follow you as before, I will do so, and my heart shall have no other ambition than to serve you in whatever manner you please.

CEL. You openly display your affection for me. I should be ungrateful not to be sensible of it. Besides, just now, my countenance does not bear the impress of the feelings of my heart; my looks show that I have a violent headache. If I have the least influence over you, you will delay our voyage for at least three or four days, until my indisposition has passed away.

AND. I shall stay as long as you like; I only wish to please you; let us look for a house where you may be comfortable. Ho! here is a bill up just at the right time.

SCENE IV.—CELIA, ANDRÈS, MASCARILLE, disguised as a Swiss.

AND. Monsieur Swiss, are you the master of the house?

MASC. I am at your service.

[Footnote: In the original, Mascarille speaks a kind of gibberish, which is only amusing when the play is acted; but it can serve no purpose to translate "moi, pour serfir a fous," "Oui, moi pour d'estrancher chappon champre garni, mais che non point locher te gent te mechant vi," etc., by "me be at your serfice," "yes. me have de very goot shambers, ready furnish for stranger, but me no loge de people scandaluse," etc. A provincial pronunciation, an Irish brogue, or a Scotch tongue, are no equivalent for this mock Swiss German-French.]

AND. Can we lodge here?

MASC. Yes, I let furnished lodgings to strangers, but only to respectable people.

AND. I suppose your house has a very good reputation?

MASC. I see by your face you are a stranger in this town.

AND. I am.

MASC. Are you the husband of this lady?

AND. Sir?

MASC. Is she your wife or your sister?

AND. Neither.

MASC. Upon my word, she is very pretty! Do you come on business, or have you a lawsuit going on before the court? A lawsuit is a very bad thing, it costs so much money; a solicitor is a thief, and a barrister a rogue.

AND. I do not come for either of these.

MASC. You have brought this young lady then to walk about and to see the town?

AND. What is that to you? (To Celia). I shall be with you again in one moment; I am going to fetch the old woman presently, and tell them not to send the travelling-carriage which was ready.

MASC. Is the lady not quite well?

AND. She has a headache.

MASC. I have some good wine and cheese within; walk in, go into my small house. (Celia, Andrès and Mascarille go into the house).

SCENE V.—LELIO, alone.

However impatient and excited I may feel, yet I have pledged my word to do nothing but wait quietly, to let another work for me, and to see, without daring to stir, in what manner Heaven will change my destiny.

SCENE VI.—ANDRÈS, LELIO.

LEL. (Addressing Andrès, who is coming out of the house). Do you want to see anybody in this house?

AND. I have just taken some furnished apartments there.

LEL. The house belongs to my father, and my servant sleeps there every night to take care of it.

AND. I know nothing of that; the bill, at least, shows it is to be let; read it.

LEL. Truly this surprises me, I confess. Who the deuce can have put that bill up, and why…? Ho, faith, I can guess, pretty near, what it means; this cannot possibly proceed but from the quarter I surmise.

AND. May I ask what affair this may be?

LEL. I would keep it carefully from anybody else, but it can be of no consequence to

you, and you will not mention it to any one. Without doubt, that bill can be nothing else but an invention of the servant I spoke of; nothing but some cunning plot he has hatched to place into my hands a certain gipsy girl, with whom I am smitten, and of whom I wish to obtain possession. I have already attempted this several times, but until now in vain.

AND. What is her name?

LEL. Celia.

AND. What do you say? Had you but mentioned this, no doubt I should have saved you all the trouble this project costs you.

LEL. How so? Do you know her?

AND. It is I who just now bought her from her master.

LEL. You surprise me!

AND. As the state of her health did not allow her to leave this town, I just took these apartments for her; and I am very glad that on this occasion you have acquainted me with your intentions.

LEL. What! shall I obtain the happiness I hope for by your means? Could you…?

AND. (Knocks at the door). You shall be satisfied immediately.

LEL. What can I say to you? And what thanks…?

AND. No, give me none; I will have none.

SCENE VII.—LELIO, ANDRÈS, MASCARILLE.

MASC. (Aside). Hallo! Is this not my mad-cap master? He will make another blunder.

LEL. Who would have known him in this grotesque dress? Come hither, Mascarille, you are welcome.

MASC. I am a man of honour; I am not Mascarille, I never debauched any married or unmarried woman.

[Footnote: Mascarille answers in his gibberish, "Moi non point Masquerille," an allusion to maquerelle a female pander; hence his further remarks.]

LEL. What funny gibberish! It is really very good!

MASC. Go about your business, and do not laugh at me.

LEL. You can take off your dress; recognise your master.

MASC. Upon my word! by all the saints, I never knew you!

LEL. Everything is settled, disguise yourself no longer.

MASC. If you do not go away I will give you a slap in the face.

LEL. Your Swiss jargon is needless, I tell you, for we are agreed, and his generosity lays me under an obligation. I have all I can wish for; you have no reason to be under any farther apprehension.

MASC. If you are agreed, by great good luck, I will no longer play the Swiss, and become myself again.

AND. This valet of yours serves you with much zeal; stay a little; I will return presently.

SCENE VIII.—LELIO, MASCARILLE.

LEL. Well, what do you say now?

MASC. That I am delighted to see our labours crowned with success.

LEL. You were hesitating to doff your disguise, and could hardly believe me.

MASC. As I know you I was rather afraid, and still find the adventure very astonishing.

LEL. But confess, however, that I have done great things—at least I have now made

amends for all my blunders—mine will be the honour of having finished the work.

MASC. Be it so; you have been much more lucky than wise.

SCENE IX.—CELIA, ANDRÈS, LELIO, MASCARILLE.

AND. Is not this the lady you were speaking of to me?

LEL. Heavens! what happiness can be equal to mine!

AND. It is true; I am indebted to you for the kindness you have shown me; I should be much to blame if I did not acknowledge it; but this kindness would be too dearly bought were I to repay it at the expense of my heart. Judge, by the rapture her beauty causes me, whether I ought to discharge my debt to you at such a price. You are generous, and would not have me act thus. Farewell. Let us return whence we came, and stay there for a few days. (He leads Celia away).

SCENE X.—LELIO, MASCARILLE.

MASC. I am laughing, and yet I have little inclination to it. You two are quite of the same mind; he gives Celia to you. Hem! … You understand me, sir?

LEL. This is too much. I am determined no longer to ask you to assist me; it is useless; I am a puppy, a wretch, a detestable blockhead, not worthy of any one taking any trouble for me, incapable of doing anything. Abandon all endeavours to aid an unfortunate wretch, who will not allow himself to be made happy; after so many misfortunes, after all my imprudent actions, death alone should aid me.

SCENE XI.—MASCARILLE, alone.

That is the true way of putting the finishing stroke to his fate; he wants nothing now but to die, to crown all his follies. But in vain his indignation, for all the faults he has committed urges him to renounce my aid and my support. I intend, happen what

will, to serve him in spite of himself, and vanquish the very devil that possesses him. The greater the obstacle, the greater the glory; and the difficulties which beset us are but a kind of tire-women who deck and adorn virtue.

SCENE XII.—CELIA, MASCARILLE.

CELIA. (To Mascarille, who has been whispering to her). Whatever you may say, and whatever they intend doing, I have no great expectation from this delay. What we have seen hitherto may indeed convince us that they are not as yet likely to agree. I have already told you that a heart like mine will not for the sake of one do an injustice to another, and that I find myself strongly attached to both, though by different ties. If Lelio has love and its power on his side, Andrès has gratitude pleading for him, which will not permit even my most secret thoughts ever to harbour anything against his interests. Yes; if he has no longer a place in my heart, if the gift of my hand must not crown his love, I ought at least to reward that which he has done for me, by not choosing another, in contempt of his flame, and suppress my own inclinations in the same manner as I do his. You have heard the difficulties which duty throws in my way, and you can judge now whether your expectations will be realized.

MASC. To speak the truth, they are very formidable obstacles in our way, and I have not the knack of working miracles; but I will do my utmost, move Heaven and earth, leave no stone unturned to try and discover some happy expedient. I shall soon let you know what can be done.

SCENE XIII.—HIPPOLYTA, CELIA.

HIPP. Ever since you came among us, the ladies of this neighbourhood may well complain of the havoc caused by your eyes, since you deprive them of the greatest part of their conquests, and make all their lovers faithless. There is not a heart which

can escape the darts with which you pierce them as soon as they see you; many thousands load themselves with your chains, and seem to enrich you daily at our expense. However, as regards myself, I should make no complaints of the irresistible sway of your exquisite charms, had they left me one of all my lovers to console me for the loss of the others; but it is inhuman in you that without mercy you deprive me of all; I cannot forbear complaining to you.

CEL. You rally in a charming manner, but I beseech you to spare me a little. Those eyes, those very eyes of yours, know their own power too well ever to dread anything that I am able to do; they are too conscious of their own charms, and will never entertain similar feelings of fear.

HIPP. Yet I advance nothing in what I have said which has not already entered the mind of every one, and without mentioning anything else, it is well known that Celia has made a deep impression on Leander and on Lelio.

CEL. I believe you will easily console yourself about their loss, since they have become so infatuated; nor can you regret a lover who could make so ill a choice.

HIPP. On the contrary, I am of quite a different opinion, and discover such great merits in your beauty, and see in it so many reasons sufficient to excuse the inconstancy of those who allow themselves to be attracted by it, that I cannot blame Leander for having changed his love and broken his plighted troth. In a short time, and without either hatred or anger, I shall see him again brought under my sway, when his father shall have exercised his authority.

SCENE XIV.—CELIA, HIPPOLYTA, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Great news! great news! a wonderful event which I am now going to tell you!

CEL. What means this?

MASC. Listen. This is, without any compliments…

CEL. What?

MASC. The last scene of a true and genuine comedy. The old gipsy-woman was, but this very moment…

CEL. Well?

MASC. Crossing the market-place, thinking about nothing at all, when another old woman, very haggard-looking, after having closely stared at her for some time, hoarsely broke out in a torrent of abusive language, and thus gave the signal for a furious combat, in which, instead of swords, muskets, daggers, or arrows, nothing was seen but four withered paws, brandished in the air, with which these two combatants endeavoured to tear off the little flesh old age had left on their bones. Not a word was heard but drab, wretch, trull. Their caps, to begin with, were flying about, and left a couple of bald pates exposed to view, which rendered the battle ridiculously horrible. At the noise and hubbub, Andrès and Trufaldin, as well as many others, ran to see what was the matter, and had much ado to part them, so excited were they by passion. Meanwhile each of them, when the storm was abated, endeavoured to hide her head with shame. Everybody wished to know the cause of this ridiculous fray. She who first began it having, notwithstanding the warmth of her passion, looked for some time at Trufaldin, said in a loud voice,—"It is you, unless my sight misgives me, who, I was informed, lived privately in this town; most happy meeting! Yes, Signor Zanobio Ruberti, fortune made me find you out at the very moment I was giving myself so much trouble for your sake. When you left your family at Naples, your daughter, as you know, remained under my care. I brought her up from her youth. When she was only four years old she showed already in a thousand different ways what charms and beauty she would have. That woman you see there—that infamous hag—who had become rather intimate with us, robbed me of that treasure. Your good lady, alas! felt so much grief at this

misfortune, that, as I have reason to believe it shortened her days; so that, fearing your severe reproaches because your daughter had been stolen from me, I sent you word that both were dead; but now, as I have found out the thief, she must tell us what has become of your child." At the name of Zanobio Ruberti, which she repeated several times throughout the story, Andrès, after changing colour often, addressed to the surprised Trufaldin these words: "What! has Heaven most happily brought me to him whom I have hitherto sought in vain! Can I possibly have beheld my father, the author of my being, without knowing him? Yes, father, I am Horatio, your son; my tutor, Albert, having died, I felt anew certain uneasiness in my mind, left Bologna, and abandoning my studies, wandered about for six years in different places, according as my curiosity led me. However, after the expiration of that time, a secret impulse drove me to revisit my kindred and my native country; but in Naples, alas! I could no longer find you, and could only hear vague reports concerning you; so that having in vain tried to meet with you, I ceased to roam about idly, and stopped for a while in Venice. From that time to this I have lived without receiving any other information about my family, except knowing its name." You may judge whether Trufaldin was not more than ordinarily moved all this while; in one word (to tell you shortly that which you will have an opportunity of learning afterwards more at your leisure, from the confession of the old gipsy-woman), Trufaldin owns you (to Celia) now for his daughter; Andrès is your brother; and as he can no longer think of marrying his sister, and as he acknowledges he is under some obligation to my master, Lelio, he has obtained for him your hand. Pandolphus being present at this discovery, gives his full consent to the marriage; and to complete the happiness of the family, proposes that the newly-found Horatio should marry his daughter. See how many incidents are produced at one and the same time!

CEL. Such tidings perfectly amaze me.

MASC. The whole company follow me, except the two female champions, who are adjusting their toilet after the fray. Leander and your father are also coming. I shall

go and inform my master of this, and let him know that when we thought obstacles were increasing, Heaven almost wrought a miracle in his favour. (Exit Mascarille).

HIPP. This fortunate event fills me with as much as joy as if it were my own case. But here they come.

SCENE XV.—TRUFALDIN, ANSELMO, ANDRÈS, CELIA, HIPPOLYTA, LEANDER.

TRUF. My child!

CEL. Father!

TRUF. Do you already know how Heaven has blest us?

CEL. I have just now heard this wonderful event.

HIPP. (To Leander). You need not find excuses for your past infidelity. The cause of it, which I have before my eyes, is a sufficient excuse.

LEAND. I crave nothing but a generous pardon. I call Heaven to witness that, though I return to my duty suddenly, my father's authority has influenced me less than my own inclination.

AND. (To Celia). Who could ever have supposed that so chaste a love would one day be condemned by nature? However, honour swayed it always so much, that with a little alteration it may still continue.

CEL. As for me, I blamed myself, and thought I was wrong, because I felt nothing but a very sincere esteem for you. I could not tell what powerful obstacle stopped me in a path so agreeable and so dangerous, and diverted my heart from acknowledging a love which my senses endeavoured to communicate to my soul.

TRUF. (To Celia). But what would you say of me if, as soon as I have found you, I should be thinking of parting with you? I promised your hand to this gentleman's son.

CEL. I know no will but yours.

SCENE XVI.—TRUFALDIN, ANSELMO, PANDOLPHUS, CELIA, HIPPOLYTA, LELIO, LEANDER, ANDRÈS, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Now, let us see whether this devil of yours will have the power to destroy so solid a foundation as this; and whether your inventive powers will again strive against this great good luck that befalls you. Through a most unexpected favourable turn of fortune your desires are crowned with success, and Celia is yours.

LEL. Am I to believe that the omnipotence of Heaven…?

TRUF. Yes, son-in-law, it is really so.

PAND. The matter is settled.

AND. (To Lelio). By this I repay the obligation you lay me under.

LEL. (To Mascarille). I must embrace you ever so many times in this great joy…

MASC. Oh! oh! gently, I beseech you; he has almost choked me. I am very much afraid for Celia if you embrace her so forcibly. One can do very well without such proofs of affection.

TRUF. (To Lelio). You know the happiness with which Heaven has blessed me; but since the same day has caused us all to rejoice, let us not part until it is ended, and let Leander's father also be sent for quickly.

MASC. You are all provided for. Is there not some girl who might suit poor Mascarille? As I see, every Jack has his Gill, I also want to be married.

ANS. I have a wife for you.

MASC. Let us go, then; and may propitious Heaven give us children, whose fathers we really are.

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