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#14 in our series by Moliere

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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SGANARELLE \*\*\*

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SGANARELLE; OU, LE COCU IMAGINAIRE

COMÉDIE EN UN ACTE.

\* \* \* \* \*

SGANARELLE: OR THE SELF-DECEIVED HUSBAND.

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

(\_THE ORIGINAL IN VERSE\_)

28TH MAY, 1660.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

Six months after the brilliant success of the *Précieuses Ridicules*, Molière brought out at the Théâtre du Petit-Bourbon a new comedy, called *Sganarelle, ou le Cocu Imaginaire*, which I have translated by *Sganarelle, or the self-deceived Husband*. It has been said that Molière owed the first idea of this piece to an Italian farce, *Il Ritratto ovvero Arlichino cornuto per opinione*, but, as it has never been printed, it is difficult to decide at the present time whether or not this be true. The primary idea of the play is common to many *commedia dell' arte*, whilst Molière has also been inspired by such old authors as Noël Du Fail, Rabelais, those of the *Quinze joyes de Mariage*, of the *Cent nouvelles Nouvelles*, and perhaps others.

The plot of *Sganarelle* is ingenious and plausible; every trifle becomes circumstantial evidence, and is received as conclusive proof both by the husband and wife. The dialogue is sprightly throughout, and the anxious desire of Sganarelle to kill his supposed injurer, whilst his cowardice prevents him from executing his valorous design, is extremely ludicrous. The chief aim of our author appears to have been to show how dangerous it is to judge with too much haste, especially in those circumstances where passion may either augment or diminish the view we take of certain objects. This truth, animated by a great deal of humour and wit, drew crowds of spectators for forty nights, though the play was brought out in summer and the marriage of the young king kept the court from Paris.

The style is totally different from that employed in the *Précieuses Ridicules*, and is a real and very good specimen of the *style gaulois* adapted to the age in which Molière lived. He has often been blamed for not having followed up his success of the *Précieuses Ridicules* by a comedy in the same style, but Molière did not want to make fresh enemies. It appears to have been a regular and set purpose with him always to produce something farcical after a creation which provoked either secret or open hostility, or even violent opposition.

Sganarelle appears in this piece for the first time, if we except the farce, or rather sketch, of the *MØdecin volant*, where in reality nothing is developed, but everything is in mere outline. But in Sganarelle Molière has created a character that is his own just as much as Falstaff belongs to Shakespeare, Sancho Panza to Cervantes, or Panurge to Rabelais. Whether Sganarelle is a servant, a husband, the father of Lucinde, the brother of Ariste, a guardian, a faggot-maker, a doctor, he always represents the ugly side of human nature, an antiquated, grumpy, sullen, egotistical, jealous, grovelling, frightened character, ever and anon raising a laugh on account of his boasting, mean, morose, odd qualities. Molière was, at the time he wrote *Sganarelle*, more than thirty years old, and could therefore no longer successfully represent Mascarille as the rollicking servant of the *Blunderer*.

This farce was published by a certain Mr. Neufvillainne, who was so smitten by it that, after having seen it represented several times, he knew it by heart, wrote it out, and published it, accompanied by a running commentary, which is not worth much, and preceded by a letter to a friend in which he extols its beauties. Molière got, in 1663, his name inserted, instead of that of Neufvillainne, in the *privilège du roi*.

Mr. Henry Baker, the translator of this play, in the "Select Comedies of M. de Molière, London, 1732," oddly dedicates it to Miss Wolstenholme [Footnote: I suppose the lady was a descendant of Sir John Wolstenholme, mentioned in one of the notes of Pepy's Diary, Sept. 5, 1662, as created a baronet, 1664, an intimate friend of Lord Clarendon's, and collector outward for the Port of London--ob. 1679.] in the following words:--

MADAM,

Be so good to accept this little Present as an Instance of my high Esteem. Whoever has any Knowledge of the French Language, or any Taste for COMEDY, must needs distinguish the Excellency of *Molière's* Plays: one of which is here translated. What the *English* may be, I leave others to determine; but the ORIGINAL, which you receive along with it, is, I am certain, worthy your Perusal.

Tho' what You read, at present, is called a DEDICATION, it is, perhaps, the most unlike one of any thing You ever saw: for, You'll find not one Word, in Praise, either of Your blooming Youth, Your agreeable Person, Your genteel Behaviour, Your easy Temper, or Your good Sense... and, the Reason is, that I cannot for my Life bring myself to such a Degree of Impertinence, as to sit down with a solemn Countenance, and Take upon me to inform the World, that the Sun is bright, and that the Spring is lovely.

My Knowledge of You from Your Infancy, and the many Civilities I am obliged for to Your Family, will, I hope, be an Excuse for this Presumption in,

MADAM, \_Your most obedient humble servant\_

H. B.

Enfield,

Jan. 1st 1731-2.

This play seems to have induced several English playwrights to imitate it. First, we have Sir William D'Avenant's \_The Playhouse to be Let\_, of which the date of the first performance is uncertain. According to the Biographia Britannica, it was "a very singular entertainment, composed of five acts, each being a distinct performance. The first act is introductory, shows the distress of the players in the time of vacation, that obliges them to let their house, which several offer to take for different purposes; amongst the rest a Frenchman, who had brought over a troop of his countrymen to act a farce. This is performed in the second act, which is a translation of Molière's \_Sganarelle, or the Cuckold Conceit\_; all in broken French to make the people laugh. The third act is a sort of comic opera, under the title of The History of Sir Francis Drake. The fourth act is a serious opera, representing the cruelties of the Spaniards in Peru. The fifth act is a burlesque in Heroicks on the Amours of ~~Cæsar~~ and Cleopatra, has a great deal of wit and humour, and was often acted afterwards by itself."

With the exception of the first act, all the others, which are separate and distinct, but short dramatic pieces, were written in the time of Oliver Cromwell, and two of them at least were performed at the Cockpit, when Sir William D'Avenant had obtained permission to present his entertainments of music and perspective in scenes.

The second imitation of \_Sganarelle\_ is "\_Tom Essence, or the Modish Wife\_", a Comedy as it is acted at the Duke's Theatre, 1677. London, printed by T. M. for W. Cademan, at the \_Pope's Head\_, in the Lower Walk of the \_New Exchange\_ in the \_Strand\_, 1677." This play is written by a Mr. Thomas Rawlins, printer and engraver to the Mint, under Charles the First and Second, and is founded on two French comedies---viz., Molière's \_Sganarelle\_, and Thomas Corneille's \_Don Cōsar d' Avalos\_. The prologue is too bad to be quoted, and I doubt if it can ever have been spoken on any stage. This play is written partly in blank verse, partly in prose; though very coarse, it is, on the whole, clever and witty. Old Moneylove, a credulous fool, who has a young wife (Act ii., Scene I), reminds one at times of the senator Antonio in Otway's \_Venice Preserved\_, and is, of course, deceived by the gallant Stanley; the sayings and doings of Mrs. Moneylove, who is "what she ought not to be," and the way she tricks her husband, are very racy, perhaps too much so for the taste of the present times. I do not think any dramatist would now bring upon the stage a young lady like Theodocia, daughter of old Moneylove, reading the list about Squire Careless. Tom Essence is a seller of perfumes, a "jealous coxcomb of his wife;" and Courtly is "a sober gentleman,

servant to Theodocia;" these are imitations of Sganarelle and Lelio. Loveall, "a wilde debauched blade," and Mrs. Luce, "a widdow disguis'd, and passes for Theodocia's maid," are taken from Corneille.

In the epilogue, the whole of which cannot be given, Mrs. Essence speaks the following lines:

"But now methinks a Cloak-Cabal I see,  
Whose Prick-ears glow, whilst they their Jealousie  
In \_Essence\_ find; but City-Sirs, I fear,  
Most of you have more cause to be severe.  
We yield you are the truest Character."

Nearly all the scenes imitated in this play from Molière's \_Sganarelle\_ contain nothing which merits to be reproduced.

\_The Perplexed Couple, or Mistake upon Mistake\_, as it is acted at the New Theatre in Lincolns-Inn-Fields, by the Company of Comedians, acting under Letters Patent granted by King Charles the Second. London, Printed for \_W. Meares\_ at the \_Lamb\_, and \_F. Brown\_, at the \_Black Swan\_ without \_Temple Bar\_, 1715, is the third imitation of Molière's \_Sganarelle\_. This comedy, printed for two gentlemen, with zoological signs, was written by a Mr. Charles Molloy, who for a long time was the editor of a well-known paper, \_Common Sense\_, in defence of Tory principles. This play had little success, and deserved to have had none, for it has no merit whatever. Our author states in the prologue:--

"The injur'd Muses, who with savage Rage,  
Of late have often been expell'd a Tyrant Stage,  
Here fly for Refuge; where, secure from Harms,  
By you protected, shall display their Charms...  
No Jest profane the guilty scene deforms,  
That impious way of being dull he scorns;  
No Party Cant shall here inflame the Mind,  
And poison what for Pleasure was designed."

Mr. Molloy admits in the preface that "the Incident of the Picture in the Third act, something in the Fourth, and one Hint in the last Act, are taken from the \_Cocu Imaginaire\_; the rest I'm forced to subscribe to myself, for I can lay it to no Body else." I shall only remark on this, that nearly the whole play is a mere paraphrasing of Molière's \_Cocu Imaginaire\_, and several other of his plays. The scene between Leonora, the heroine, and Sterling, the old usurer and lover (Act I.), is imitated from Madelon's description in the art of making love in the \_Pretentious Young Ladies\_, and so are many others. The servant Crispin is a medley of Mascarille from \_The Blunderer\_, of Gros-Renø from \_The Love-Tiff\_, and of the servant of the same name in the \_Cocu Imaginaire\_; the interfering uncle of Lady Thinwit, is taken from \_George Dandin\_, whilst Sir Anthony Tainwit becomes Sganarelle. The only thing new I have been able

to discover in *The Perplexed Couple* is the lover Octavio disguising himself as a pedlar to gain admittance to the object of his love; and old Sterling, the usurer, marrying the maid instead of the mistress. Molière's farce has been lengthened by those means into a five-act comedy, and though "no jest profane" may be found in it it is more full than usual of coarse and lewd sayings, which can hardly be called inuendoes. The play is a mistake altogether; perhaps that is the reason, its second name is called *Mistake upon Mistake*.

*The Picture, or the Cuckold in Conceit*, a Comedy in one act, by J. Miller, is founded on Molière, and is the fourth imitation of *Sganarelle*. London, MDCCXLV. This play is, on the whole, a free translation of Molière's, interspersed with some songs set to music by Dr. Arne. Sganarelle is called Mr. Timothy Dotterel, grocer and common councilman; Gorgibus, Mr. Per-cent; Lelio, Mr. Heartly; Gros-Renø, John Broad, whilst Celia's maid is called Phillis. The Prologue, spoken by Mr. Havard, ends thus:

"...To-night we serve  
A Cuckold, that the Laugh does well deserve;  
A Cuckold in Conceit, by Fancy made  
As mad, as by the common Course of Trade:  
And more to please ye, and his Worth enhance,  
He's carbonado'd a la mode de France;  
Cook'd by Molière, great Master of his Trade,  
From whose Receipt this Harrico was made.  
But if that poignant Taste we fail to take,  
That something, that a mere Receipt can't make;  
Forgive the Failure--we're but Copies all,  
And want the Spirit of th' Original."

The fifth and best imitation is Arthur Murphy's *All in the Wrong*, a comedy in five acts, first performed during the summer season of 1761, at the Theatre Royal, in Drury Lane. Though the chief idea and several of the scenes are taken from *Sganarelle*, yet the characters are well drawn, and the play, as a whole, very entertaining. The Prologue, written and spoken by Samuel Foote, is as follows:

"To-night, be it known to Box, Gall'ry, and Pit,  
Will be open'd the best Summer-Warehouse for Wit;

[Footnote: Mr. Garrick, at this time, had let his playhouse for the summer months.]

The New Manufacture, Foote and Co., Undertakers;  
Play, Pantomime, Opera, Farce,--by the Makers!  
We scorn, like our brethren, our fortunes to owe  
To Shakespeare and Southern, to Otway and Rowe.  
Though our judgment may err, yet our justice is shewn,  
For we promise to mangle no works but our own.  
And moreover on this you may firmly rely,  
If we can't make you laugh, that we won't make you cry.

For Roscius, who knew we were mirth-loving souls,  
Has lock'd up his lightning, his daggers, and bows.  
Resolv'd that in buskins no hero shall stalk,  
He has shut us quite out of the Tragedy walk.  
No blood, no blank verse!--and in short we're undone,  
Unless you're contented with Frolic and Fun.

If tired of her round in the Ranelagh-mill,  
There should be but one female inclined to sit still;  
If blind to the beauties, or sick of the squall,  
A party should shun to catch cold at Vauxhall;  
If at Sadler's sweet Wells the made wine should be thick,  
The cheese-cakes turn sour, or Miss Wilkinson sick;  
If the fume of the pipes should oppress you in June,  
Or the tumblers be lame, or the bells out of tune;  
I hope you will call at our warehouse in Drury;  
We've a curious assortment of goods, I assure you;  
Domestic and foreign, and all kinds of wares;  
English cloths, Irish linnen, and French petenlairs!  
If for want of good custom, or losses in trade,  
The poetical partners should bankrupts be made;  
If from dealings too large, we plunge deeply in debt,  
And Whereas issue out in the Muses Gazette;  
We'll on you our assigns for Certificates call;  
Though insolvent, we're honest, and give up our all."

Otway in his very indecent play, *The Soldier's Fortune*, performed at Dorset Garden, 1681, has borrowed freely from Molière; namely: one scene from *Sganarelle*, four scenes from *The School for Husbands*, and a hint from *The School for Wives*.

The joke from *The Pretentious Young Ladies*, Scene xii., page 162, about "the half moon and the full moon" is repeated in the conversation between Fourbin and Bloody-Bones in *The Soldier's Fortune*.

Sir John Vanbrugh also translated Molière's *Sganarelle*, which was performed at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket, 1706, but has not been printed.

There was also a ballad opera played at Drury Lane April 11, 1733, called the *Imaginary Cuckold*, which is an imitation of *Sganarelle*.

#### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

GORGIBUS, a citizen of Paris.

LELIO, \_in love with Celia\_.

SGANARELLE, \_a citizen of Paris and the self-deceived husband\_.

[Footnote: Molière acted this part himself. In the inventory of his dresses taken after his death, and given by M. Eudore Soulié in his \_Recherches sur Molière\_, 1863. we find: "a ... dress for the \_Cocu imaginaire\_, consisting of knee-breeches, doublet, cloak, collar, and shoes, all in crimson red satin."]

VILLEBREQUIN, \_father to Valère\_.

GROS-RENÉ \_servant to Lelio\_.

A RELATIVE OF SGANARELLE'S WIFE.

CELIA, \_daughter of Gorgibus\_.

SGANARELLE'S WIFE.

CELIA'S MAID.

\_Scene\_--A PUBLIC PLACE IN PARIS.

SGANARELLE: OR THE SELF-DECEIVED HUSBAND,

(\_SGANARELLE: OU LE COCU IMAGINAIRE\_.)

SCENE I.--GORGIBUS, CELIA, CELIA'S MAID.

CEL. (\_Coming out in tears, her father following her\_). Ah! never expect my heart to consent to that.

GORG. What do you mutter, you little impertinent girl? Do you suppose you can thwart my resolution? Have I not absolute power over you? And shall your youthful brain control my fatherly discretion by foolish arguments? Which of us two has most right to command the other? Which of us two, you or I, is, in your opinion, best able to judge what is advantageous for you? Zounds, do not provoke me too much, or you may feel, and in a very short time too, what strength this arm of mine still possesses! Your shortest way, you obstinate minx, would be to accept without any more ado the husband intended for you; but you say, "I do not know what kind of temper he has, and I ought to think about



it beforehand, if you will allow me." I know that he is heir to a large fortune; ought I therefore to trouble my head about anything else? Can this man, who has twenty thousand golden charms in his pocket to be beloved by you, want any accomplishments? Come, come, let him be what he will, I promise you that with such a sum he is a very worthy gentleman!

CEL. Alas!

GORG. Alas, indeed! What is the meaning of that?

A fine alas you have uttered just now! Look ye! If once you put me in a passion you will have plenty of opportunities for shouting alas! This comes of that eagerness of yours to read novels day and night; your head is so full of all kinds of nonsense about love, that you talk of God much less than of Clølie. Throw into the fire all these mischievous books, which are every day corrupting the minds of so many young people; instead of such trumpery, read, as you ought to do, the Quatrains of Pibrac and the learned memorandum-books of Councillor Matthieu,

[Footnote: Gui du Faur de Pibrac (1528-1584) was a distinguished diplomatist, magistrate, and orator, who wrote several works, of which the *Cinquante quatrains contenant prøceptes et enseignements utiles pour la vie de l'homme, composes à l'imitation de Phocylides, Epicharmus, et autres poøtes grecs*, and which number he afterwards increased to 126, are the best known. These quatrains, or couplets of four verses, have been translated into nearly all European and several Eastern languages. A most elegant reprint has been published of them, in 1874, by M. A. Lemetre, of Paris.]

[Footnote: Pierre Matthieu (1563--1621), a French historian and poet wrote, among other works, his *Tablettes de la vie et de la mort, quatrains de la Vanitø du Monde*, a collection of 274 moral quatrains, divided in three parts, each part of which was published separately in an oblong shape, like a memorandum book; hence the name *Tablettes*.]

a valuable work and full of fine sayings for you to learn by heart; the Guide for Sinners

[Footnote: *La guide des pøcheurs*, the Guide for Sinners, is a translation in French of an ascetic Spanish work, *la guia de pecadores*, written by a Dominican friar, Lewis, of Granada.]

is also a good book. Such writings teach people in a short time how to spend their lives well, and if you had never read anything but such moral books you would have known better how to submit to my commands.

CEL. Do you suppose, dear father, I can ever forget that unchangeable affection I owe to Lelio? I should be wrong to dispose of my hand against your will, but you yourself engaged me to him.

GORG. Even if you were engaged ever so much, another man has made his appearance whose fortune annuls your engagement. Lelio is a pretty fellow, but learn that there is nothing that does not give way to money,

that gold will make even the most ugly charming, and that without it everything else is but wretchedness. I believe you are not very fond of Valère, but though you do not like him as a lover, you will like him as a husband. The very name of husband endears a man more than is generally supposed, and love is often a consequence of marriage. But what a fool I am to stand arguing when I possess the absolute right to command. A truce then, I tell you, to your impertinence; let me have no more of your foolish complaints. This evening Valère intends to visit you, and if you do not receive him well, and look kindly upon him, I shall... but I will say no more on this subject.

## SCENE II.--CELIA, CELIA'S MAID.

MAID. What, madam! you refuse positively what so many other people would accept with all their heart! You answer with tears a proposal for marriage, and delay for a long time to say a "yes" so agreeable to hear! Alas! why does some one not wish to marry me? I should not need much entreaty: and so far from thinking it any trouble to say "yes" once, believe me I would very quickly say it a dozen times. Your brother's tutor was quite right when, as we were talking about worldly affairs, he said, "A woman is like the ivy, which grows luxuriantly whilst it clings closely to the tree, but never thrives if it be separated from it." Nothing can be truer, my dear mistress, and I, miserable sinner, have found it out. Heaven rest the soul of my poor Martin! when he was alive my complexion was like a cherub's; I was plump and comely, my eyes sparkled brightly, and I felt happy: now I am doleful. In those pleasant times, which flew away like lightning, I went to bed, in the very depth of winter, without kindling a fire in the room; even airing the sheets appeared then to me ridiculous; but now I shiver even in the dogdays. In short, madam, believe me there is nothing like having a husband at night by one's side, were it only for the pleasure of hearing him say, "God bless you," whenever one may happen to sneeze.

CEL. Can you advise me to act so wickedly as to forsake Lelio and take up with this ill-shaped fellow?

MAID. Upon my word, your Lelio is a mere fool to stay away the very time he is wanted; his long absence makes me very much suspect some change in his affection.

GEL. (\_showing her the portrait of Lelio\_). Oh! do not distress me by such dire forebodings! Observe carefully the features of his face; they swear to me an eternal affection; after all, I would not willingly believe them to tell a falsehood, but that he is such as he is here limned by art, and that his affection for me remains unchanged.

MAID. To be sure, these features denote a deserving lover, whom you are right to regard tenderly.

CEL. And yet I must--Ah! support me.

(\_She lets fall the portrait of Lelio\_)

MAID. Madam, what is the cause of... Heavens! she swoons. Oh! make haste! help! help!

SCENE III.--CELIA, SGANARELLE, CELIA'S MAID.

SGAN. What is the matter? I am here.

MAID. My lady is dying.

SGAN. What! is that all? You made such a noise, I thought the world was at an end. Let us see, however. Madam, are you dead? Um! she does not say one word.

MAID. I shall fetch somebody to carry her in; be kind enough to hold her so long.

SCENE IV.--CELIA, SGANARELLE, SGANARELLE'S WIFE.

SGAN. (\_passing his hand over Celia's bosom\_). She is cold all over, and I do not know what to say to it. Let me draw a little nearer and try whether she breathes or not. Upon my word, I cannot tell, but I perceive still some signs of life.

SGAN.'S WIFE, (\_looking from the window\_). Ah! what do I see? My husband, holding in his arms... But I shall go down; he is false to me most certainly; I should be glad to catch him.

SGAN. She must be assisted very quickly; she would certainly be in the wrong to die. A journey to another world is very foolish, so long as a body is able to stay in this. (\_He carries her in\_).

SCENE V.--SGANARELLE'S WIFE, \_alone\_.

He has suddenly left this spot; his flight has disappointed my curiosity; but I doubt no longer that he is unfaithful to me; the little I have seen sufficiently proves it. I am no longer astonished that he returns my modest love with strange coldness; the ungrateful wretch reserves his caresses for others, and starves me in order to feed their

pleasures. This is the common way of husbands; they become indifferent to what is lawful; at the beginning they do wonders, and seem to be very much in love with us, but the wretches soon grow weary of our fondness, and carry elsewhere what is due to us alone. Oh! how it vexes me that the law will not permit us to change our husband as we do our linen! That would be very convenient; and, troth, I know some women whom it would please as much as myself. (\_Taking up the picture which Celia had let fall\_). But what a pretty thing has fortune sent me here; the enamel of it is most beautiful, the workmanship delightful; let me open it?

SCENE VI.--SGANARELLE, SGANARELLE'S WIFE.

SGAN. (\_Thinking himself alone\_). They thought her dead, but it was nothing at all! She is already recovering and nearly well again. But I see my wife.

SGAN.'S WIFE. (\_Thinking herself alone\_). O Heaven! It is a miniature, a fine picture of a handsome man.

SGAN. (\_Aside, and looking over his wife's shoulder\_). What is this she looks at so closely? This picture bodes my honour little good. A very ugly feeling of jealousy begins to creep over me.

SGAN.'S WIFE. (\_Not seeing her husband\_). I never saw anything more beautiful in my life! The workmanship is even of greater value than the gold! Oh, how sweet it smells!

SGAN. (\_Aside\_). The deuce! She kisses it! I am victimized!

SGAN.'S WIFE. (\_Continues her Monologue\_) I think it must be a charming thing to have such a fine-looking man for a sweetheart; if he should urge his suit very much the temptation would be great. Alas! why have I not a handsome man like this for my husband instead of my booby, my clod-hopper...?

SGAN. (\_Snatching the portrait from her\_). What, hussey! have I caught you in the very act, slandering your honourable and darling husband? According to you, most worthy spouse, and everything well considered, the husband is not as good as the wife? In Beelzebub's name (and may he fly away with you), what better match could you wish for? Is there any fault to be found with me? It seems that this shape, this air, which everybody admires; this face, so fit to inspire love, for which a thousand fair ones sigh both night and day; in a word, my own delightful self, by no manner of means pleases you. Moreover, to satisfy your ravenous appetite you add to the husband the relish of a gallant.

SGAN.'S WIFE. I see plainly the drift of your jocular remarks, though you do not clearly express yourself. You expect by these means...

SGAN. Try to impose upon others, not upon me, I pray you. The fact is evident; I have in my hands a convincing proof of the injury I complain of.

SGAN.'S WIFE. I am already too angry, and do not wish you to make me more so by any fresh insult. Hark ye, do not imagine that you shall keep this pretty thing; consider...

SGAN. I am seriously considering whether I shall break your neck. I wish I had but the original of this portrait in my power as much as I have the copy.

SGAN.'S WIFE. Why?

SGAN. For nothing at all, dear, sweet object of my love! I am very wrong to speak out; my forehead ought to thank you for many favours received. (\_Looking at the portrait of Lelio\_). There he is, your darling, the pretty bed-fellow, the wicked incentive of your secret flame, the merry blade with whom...

SGAN.'S WIFE. With whom? Go on.

SGAN. With whom, I say... I am almost bursting with vexation.

[Footnote: The original has: "\_j'en creve d'ennui\_." The French word *ennui*, which now only means weariness of mind, signified formerly injury, and the vexation or hatred caused thereby; something like the English word "annoy," as in Shakespeare's *Richard III.*, v. 3:

"Sleep, Richmond, sleep in peace, and wake in joy;  
Good angels guard thee from the boar's annoy."]

SGAN.'S WIFE. What does the drunken sot mean by all this?

SGAN. You know but too well, Mrs. Impudence. No one will call me any longer Sganarelle, but every one will give me the title of Signor Cornutus; my honor is gone, but to reward you, who took it from me, I shall at the very least break you an arm or a couple of ribs.

SGAN.'S WIFE. How dare you talk to me thus?

SGAN. How dare you play me these devilish pranks?

SGAN.'S WIFE. What devilish pranks? Say what you mean.

SGAN. Oh! It is not worth complaining of. A stag's top-knot on my head is indeed a very pretty ornament for everybody to come and look at.

SGAN.'S WIFE. After you have insulted your wife so grossly as to excite her thirst for vengeance, you stupidly imagine you can prevent the effects of it by pretending to be angry? Such insolence was never before known on the like occasion. The offender is the person who begins the quarrel.

SGAN. Oh! what a shameless creature! To see the confident behaviour of this woman, would not any one suppose her to be very virtuous?

SGAN.'S WIFE. Away, go about your business, wheedle your mistresses, tell them you love them, caress them even, but give me back my picture, and do not make a jest of me. (\_She snatches the picture from him and runs away\_).

SGAN. So you think to escape me; but I shall get hold of it again in spite of you.

#### SCENE VII.--LELIO, GROS-RENÉ

GR.-RE. Here we are at last; but, sir, if I might be so bold, I should like you to tell me one thing.

LEL. Well, speak.

GR.-RE. Are you possessed by some devil or other, that you do not sink under such fatigues as these? For eight whole days we have been riding long stages, and have not been sparing of whip and spur to urge on confounded screws, whose cursed trot shook us so very much that, for my part, I feel as if every limb was out of joint; without mentioning a worse mishap which troubles me very much in a place I will not mention. And yet, no sooner are you at your journey's end, than you go out well and hearty, without taking rest, or eating the least morsel.

LEL. My haste may well be excused, for I am greatly alarmed about the report of Celia's marriage. You know I adore her, and, before everything, I wish to hear if there is any truth in this ominous rumour.

GR.-RE. Ay, sir, but a good meal would be of great use to you to discover the truth or falsehood of this report; doubtless you would become thereby much stronger to withstand the strokes of fate. I judge by my own self, for, when I am fasting, the smallest disappointment gets hold of me and pulls me down; but when I have eaten sufficiently my soul can resist anything, and the greatest misfortunes cannot depress it. Believe me, stuff yourself well, and do not be too cautious. To fortify you under whatever misfortune may do, and in order to prevent sorrow from entering your heart, let it float in plenty of wine.

[Footnote: This is an imitation of Plautus' \_Curculio, or the Forgery\_. The Parasite of Phædromus, who gave his name to the piece, says (ii. 3):--"I am quite undone. I can hardly see; my mouth is bitter; my teeth are blunted; my jaws are clammy through fasting; with my entrails thus lank with abstinence from food, am I come... Let's cram down something first; the gammon, the udder, and the kernels; these are the foundations for the stomach, with head and roast-beef, a good-sized

cup and a capacious pot, that council enough may be forthcoming."]

LEL. I cannot eat.

GR.-RE. (*\_Aside\_*). I can eat very well indeed; If it is not true may I be struck dead! (*\_Aloud\_*). For all that, your dinner shall be ready presently.

LEL. Hold your tongue, I command you.

GR.-RE. How barbarous is that order!

LEL. I am not hungry, but uneasy.

GR.-RE. And I am hungry and uneasy as well, to see that a foolish love-affair engrosses all your thoughts.

[Footnote: Shakespeare, in *\_The Two Gentlemen of Verona\_* (Act ii., Sc. I), has the following:

*\_Speed\_*. ...Why muse you, sir? 'tis dinner-time.

*\_Val\_*. I have dined.

*\_Speed\_*. Ay, but hearken, sir; though the chameleon, love, can feed on the air, I am one that am nourished by my victuals, and would fain have meat. O, be not like your mistress; be moved, be moved.]

LEL. Let me but get some information about my heart's delight, and without troubling me more, go and take your meal if you like.

GR.-RE. I never say nay when a master commands.

SCENE VIII.--LELIO, *\_alone\_*.

No, no, my mind is tormented by too many terrors; the father has promised me Celia's hand, and she has given me such proofs of her love that I need not despair.

SCENE IX.--SGANARELLE, LELIO.

SGAN. (*\_Not seeing Lelio, and holding the portrait in his hand\_*). I have got it. I can now at my leisure look at the countenance of the rascal who causes my dishonour. I do not know him at all.

LEL. (*\_Aside\_*). Heavens! what do I see? If that be my picture, what then must I believe?

SGAN. (\_Not seeing Lelio\_). Ah! poor Sganarelle! your reputation is doomed, and to what a sad fate! Must... (\_Perceiving that Lelio observes him he goes to the other side of the stage\_).

LEL. (\_Aside\_). This pledge of my love cannot have left the fair hands to which I gave it, without startling my faith in her.

SGAN. (\_Aside\_). People will make fun of me henceforth by holding up their two fingers; songs will be made about me, and every time they will fling in my teeth that scandalous affront, which a wicked wife has printed upon my forehead.

LEL. (\_Aside\_). Do I deceive myself?

SGAN. (\_Aside\_). Oh! Jade!

[Footnote: The original is *\_truande\_*, which, as well as the masculine *\_truand\_*, meant, in old French, a vagabond, a rascal; it is still retained in the English phrase "to play the truant."]

were you impudent enough to cuckold me in the flower of my age? The wife too of a husband who may be reckoned handsome! and must be a monkey, a cursed addle-pated fellow...

LEL. (\_Aside, looking still at the portrait in Sganarelle's hand\_). I am not mistaken; it is my very picture.

SGAN. (\_Turning his back towards him\_). This man seems very inquisitive.

LEL. (\_Aside\_). I am very much surprised.

SGAN. What would he be at?

LEL. (\_Aside\_). I will speak to him. (\_Aloud\_). May I... (\_Sganarelle goes farther off\_). I say, let me have one word with you.

SGAN. (\_Aside, and moving still farther\_). What does he wish to tell me now?

LEL. Will you inform me by what accident that picture came into your hands?

SGAN. (\_Aside\_). Why does he wish to know? But I am thinking... (\_Looking at Lelio and at the portrait in his hand\_). Oh! upon my word, I know the cause of his anxiety; I no longer wonder at his surprise. This is my man, or rather, my wife's man.

LEL. Pray, relieve my distracted mind, and tell me how you come by...

SGAN. Thank Heaven, I know what disturbs you; this portrait, which causes you some uneasiness, is your very likeness, and was found in the



hands of a certain acquaintance of yours; the soft endearments which have passed between that lady and you are no secret to me. I cannot tell whether I have the honour to be known by your gallant lordship in this piece of gallantry; but henceforth, be kind enough to break off an intrigue, which a husband may not approve of; and consider that the holy bonds of wedlock...

LEL. What do you say? She from whom you received this pledge...

SGAN. Is my wife, and I am her husband.

LEL. Her husband?

SGAN. Yes, her husband, I tell you. Though married I am far from merry; you, sir, know the reason of it; this very moment I am going to inform her relatives about this affair.

[Footnote: The original has *\_mari-tres-marri\_*; literally, "husband very sad;" *\_marri\_* being the old French for sad: the ancient plays and tales are full of allusions to the connection between these two words, *\_mari\_* and *\_marri\_*.]

SCENE X.--LELIO, *\_alone\_*.

Alas! what have I heard! The report then was true that her husband was the ugliest of all his sex. Even if your faithless lips had never sworn me more than a thousand times eternal love, the disgust you should have felt at such a base and shameful choice might have sufficiently secured me against the loss of your affection... But this great insult, and the fatigues of a pretty long journey, produce all at once such a violent effect upon me, that I feel faint, and can hardly bear up under it.

SCENE XI.--LELIO, SGANARELLE'S WIFE.

SGAN.'S WIFE. In spite of me, my wretch... (*\_Seeing Lelio\_*). Good lack! what ails you? I perceive, sir, you are ready to faint away.

LEL. It is an illness that has attacked me quite suddenly.

SGAN'S WIFE. I am afraid you shall faint; step in here, and stay until you are better.

LEL. For a moment or two I will accept of your kindness.

SCENE XII.--SGANARELLE, A RELATIVE OF SGANARELLE'S WIFE.

REL. I commend a husband's anxiety in such a case, but you take fright a little too hastily. All that you have told me against her, kinsman, does not prove her guilty. It is a delicate subject, and no one should ever be accused of such a crime unless it can be fully proved.

SGAN. That is to say, unless you see it.

REL. Too much haste leads us to commit mistakes. Who can tell how this picture came into her hands, and, after all, whether she knows the man? Seek a little more information, and if it proves to be as you suspect, I shall be one of the first to punish her offence.

SCENE XIII.--SGANARELLE, \_alone\_.

Nothing could be said fairer; it is really the best way to proceed cautiously. Perhaps I have dreamt of horns without any cause, and the perspiration has covered my brow rather prematurely. My dishonour is not at all proved by that portrait which frightened me so much. Let me endeavour then by care...

SCENE XIV.--SGANARELLE, SGANARELLE'S WIFE, \_standing at the door of her house, with\_ LELIO.

SGAN. (\_Aside seeing them\_). Ha! what do I see? Zounds! there can be no more question about the portrait, for upon my word here stands the very man, in \_propria persona\_.

SGAN.'S WIFE. You hurry away too fast, sir; if you leave us so quickly, you may perhaps have a return of your illness.

LEL. No, no, I thank you heartily for the kind assistance you have rendered me.

SGAN. (\_Aside\_). The deceitful woman is to the last polite to him. (\_Sganarelle's Wife goes into the house again\_).

SCENE XV.--SGANARELLE, LELIO.

SGAN. He has seen me, let us hear what he can say to me.

LEL. (*Aside*). Oh! my soul is moved! this sight inspires me with... but I ought to blame this unjust resentment, and only ascribe my sufferings to my merciless fate; yet I cannot help envying the success that has crowned his passion. (*Approaching Sganarelle*). O too happy mortal in having so beautiful a wife.

SCENE XVI.--SGANARELLE, CELIA, *at her window, seeing Lelio go away*.

SGAN. (*Alone*). This confession is pretty plain. His extraordinary speech surprises me as much as if horns had grown upon my head. (*Looking at the side where Lelio went off*). Go your way, you have not acted at all like an honourable man.

CEL. (*Aside, entering*). Who can that be? Just now I saw Lelio. Why does he conceal his return from me?

SGAN. (*Without seeing Celia*). "O too happy mortal in having so beautiful a wife!" Say rather, unhappy mortal in having such a disgraceful spouse through whose guilty passion, it is now but too clear, I have been cuckolded without any feeling of compassion. Yet I allow him to go away after such a discovery, and stand with my arms folded like a regular silly-billy! I ought at least to have knocked his hat off, thrown stones at him, or mud on his cloak; to satisfy my wrath I should rouse the whole neighbourhood, and cry, "Stop, thief of my honour!"

CEL. (*To Sganarelle*). Pray, sir, how came you to know this gentleman who went away just now and spoke to you?

SGAN. Alas! madam, it is not I who am acquainted with him; it is my wife.

CEL. What emotion thus disturbs your mind?

SGAN. Do not blame me; I have sufficient cause for my sorrow; permit me to breathe plenty of sighs.

CEL. What can be the reason of this uncommon grief?

SGAN. If I am sad it is not for a trifle: I challenge other people not to grieve, if they found themselves in my condition. You see in me the model of unhappy husbands. Poor Sganarelle's honour is taken from him; but the loss of my honour would be small--they deprive me of my reputation also.

CEL. How do they do that?

SGAN. That fop has taken the liberty to cuckold me--saving your presence, madam--and this very day my own eyes have been witness to a private interview between him and my wife.

CEL. What? He who just now...

SGAN. Ay, ay, it is he who brings disgrace upon me; he is in love with my wife, and my wife is in love with him.

CEL. Ah! I find I was right when I thought his returning secretly only concealed some base design; I trembled the minute I saw him, from a sad foreboding of what would happen.

SGAN. You espouse my cause with too much kindness, but everybody is not so charitably disposed; for many, who have already heard of my sufferings, so far from taking my part, only laugh at me.

CEL. Can anything be more base than this vile deed? or can a punishment be discovered such as he deserves? Does he think he is worthy to live, after polluting himself with such treachery? O Heaven! is it possible?

SGAN. It is but too true.

CEL. O traitor, villain, deceitful, faithless wretch!

SGAN. What a kind-hearted creature!

CEL. No, no, hell has not tortures enough to punish you sufficiently for your guilt!

SGAN. How well she talks!

CEL. Thus to abuse both innocence and goodness!

SGAN. (\_Sighing aloud\_) Ah!

CEL. A heart which never did the slightest action deserving of being treated with such insult and contempt.

SGAN. That's true.

CEL. Who far from... but it is too much; nor can this heart endure the thought of it without feeling on the rack.

SGAN. My dear lady, do not distress yourself so much; it pierces my very soul to see you grieve so at my misfortune.

CEL. But do not deceive yourself so far as to fancy that I shall sit down and do nothing but lament; no, my heart knows how to act in order to be avenged; nothing can divert me from it; I go to prepare everything.

SCENE XVII.--SGANARELLE, *\_alone\_*.

May Heaven keep her for ever out of harm's way! How kind of her to wish to avenge me! Her anger at my dishonour plainly teaches me how to act. Nobody should bear such affronts as these tamely, unless indeed he be a fool. Let us therefore hasten to hunt out this rascal who has insulted me, and let me prove my courage by avenging my dishonour.

[Footnote: A similar adventure is told of the renowned fabulist La Fontaine. One day some one informed him that Poignan, a retired captain of dragoons and one of his friends, was by far too intimate with Madame La Fontaine, and that to avenge his dishonour he ought to fight a duel with him. La Fontaine calls upon Poignan at four o'clock in the morning, tells him to dress, takes him out of town, and then coolly says "that he has been advised to fight a duel with him in order to avenge his wounded honour." Soon La Fontaine's sword flies out of his hand, the friends go to breakfast, and the whole affair is at an end.]

I will teach you, you rogue, to laugh at my expense, and to cuckold people without showing them any respect. (*\_After going three or four steps he comes back again\_*.) But gently, if you please, this man looks as if he were very hot-headed and passionate; he may, perhaps, heaping one insult upon another, ornament my back as well as he has done my brow.

[Footnote: In the original there is a play on words which cannot be rendered in English. *\_Il pourrait bien ... charger de bois mon dos comme, il a fait mort front\_*. *\_Bois\_* means "stick" and "stags' antlers."]

I detest, from the bottom of my heart, these fiery tempers, and vastly prefer peaceable people. I do not care to beat for fear of being beaten; a gentle disposition was always my predominant virtue: But my honour tells me that it is absolutely necessary I should avenge such an outrage as this. Let honour say whatever it likes, the deuce take him who listens. Suppose now I should play the hero, and receive for my pains an ugly thrust with a piece of cold steel quite through my stomach; when the news of my death spreads through the whole town, tell me then, my honour, shall you be the better of it.

[Footnote: Compare in Shakespeare's *\_Part First of King Henry IV\_*. v. I, Falstaff's speech about honour.]

The grave is too melancholy an abode, and too unwholesome for people who are afraid of the colic; as for me, I find, all things considered, that it is, after all, better to be a cuckold than to be dead. What harm is there in it? Does it make a man's legs crooked? does it spoil his shape? The plague take him who first invented being grieved about such a delusion, linking the honour of the wisest man to anything a fickle woman may do. Since every person is rightly held responsible for his own crimes, how can our honour, in this case, be considered criminal? We are

blamed for the actions of other people. If our wives have an intrigue with any man, without our knowledge, all the mischief must fall upon our backs; they commit the crime and we are reckoned guilty. It is a villainous abuse, and indeed Government should remedy such injustice. Have we not enough of other accidents that happen to us whether we like them or not? Do not quarrels, lawsuits, hunger, thirst, and sickness sufficiently disturb the even tenour of our lives? and yet we must stupidly get it into our heads to grieve about something which has no foundation. Let us laugh at it, despise such idle fears, and be above sighs and tears. If my wife has done amiss, let her cry as much as she likes, but why should I weep when I have done no wrong? After all, I am not the only one of my fraternity, and that should console me a little. Many people of rank see their wives cajoled, and do not say a word about it. Why should I then try to pick a quarrel for an affront, which is but a mere trifle? They will call me a fool for not avenging myself, but I should be a much greater fool to rush on my own destruction. (\_Putting his hand upon his stomach\_) I feel, however, my bile is stirred up here; it almost persuades me to do some manly action. Ay, anger gets the better of me; it is rather too much of a good thing to be a coward too! I am resolved to be revenged upon the thief of my honour. Full of the passion which excites my ardour, and in order to make a beginning, I shall go and tell everywhere that he lies with my wife.

SCENE XVIII.--GORGIBUS, CELIA, CELIA'S MAID.

CEL. Yes, I will yield willingly to so just a law, father; you can freely dispose of my heart and my hand; I will sign the marriage contract whenever you please, for I am now determined to perform my duty. I can command my own inclinations, and shall do whatever you order me.

GORG. How she pleases me by talking in this manner! Upon my word! I am so delighted that I would immediately cut a caper or two, were people not looking on, who would laugh at it. Come hither, I say, and let me embrace you; there is no harm in that; a father may kiss his daughter whenever he likes, without giving any occasion for scandal. Well, the satisfaction of seeing you so obedient has made me twenty years younger.

SCENE XIX.--CELIA, CELIA'S MAID.

MAID. This change surprises me.

CEL. When you come to know why I act thus, you will esteem me for it.

MAID. Perhaps so.

CEL. Know then that Lelio has wounded my heart by his treacherous behaviour, and has been in this neighbourhood without...

MAID. Here he comes.

SCENE XX.--LELIO, CELIA, CELIA'S MAID.

LEL. Before I take my leave of you for ever, I will at least here tell you that...

CEL. What! are you insolent enough to speak to me again?

LEL. I own my insolence is great, and yet your choice is such I should not be greatly to blame if I upbraided you. Live, live contented, and laugh when you think of me, as well as your worthy husband, of whom you have reason to be proud.

CEL. Yes, traitor, I will live so, and I trust most earnestly that the thought of my happiness may disturb you.

LEL. Why this outbreak of passion?

CEL. You pretend to be surprised, and ask what crimes you have committed?

SCENE XXI.--CELIA, LELIO, SGANARELLE *\_armed cap-a-piØ\_*, CELIA'S MAID.

SGAN. I wage war, a war of extermination against this robber of my honour, who without mercy has sullied my fair name.

CEL. (*\_To Lelio, pointing to Sganarelle\_*). Look on this man, and then you will require no further answer.

LEL. Ah! I see.

CEL. A mere glance at him is sufficient to abash you.

LEL. It ought rather to make you blush.

SGAN. My wrath is now disposed to vent itself upon some one; my courage is at its height; if I meet him, there will be blood shed. Yes, I have sworn to kill him, nothing can keep me from doing so. Wherever I see him I will dispatch him. (*\_Drawing his sword halfway and approaching Lelio\_*). Right through the middle of his heart I shall thrust...

LEL. (\_Turning round\_). Against whom do you bear such a grudge?

SGAN. Against no one.

LEL. Why are you thus in armour?

SGAN. It is a dress I put on to keep the rain off. (\_Aside\_). Ah! what a satisfaction it would be for me to kill him! Let us pluck up courage to do it.

LEL. (\_Turning round again\_). Hey?

SGAN. I did not speak. (\_Aside, boxing his own ears, and thumping himself to raise his courage\_). Ah! I am enraged at my own cowardice! Chicken-hearted poltroon!

CEL. What you have seen ought to satisfy you, but it appears to offend you.

LEL. Yes through him I know you are guilty of the greatest faithlessness that ever wronged a faithful lover's heart, and for which no excuse can be found.

SGAN. (\_Aside\_). Why have I not a little more courage?

CEL. Ah, traitor, speak not to me in so unmanly and insolent a manner.

SGAN. (\_Aside\_). You see, Sganarelle, she takes up your quarrel: courage, my lad, be a trifle vigorous. Now, be bold, try to make one noble effort and kill him whilst his back is turned.

LEL. (\_Who has moved accidentally a few steps back, meets Sganarelle, who was drawing near to kill him. The latter is frightened, and retreats\_). Since my words kindle your wrath, madam, I ought to show my satisfaction with what your heart approves, and here commend the lovely choice you have made.

CEL. Yes, yes, my choice is such as cannot be blamed.

LEL. You do well to defend it.

SGAN. No doubt, she does well to defend my rights, but what you have done, sir, is not according to the laws; I have reason to complain; were I less discreet, much blood would be shed.

LEL. Of what do you complain? And why this...

SGAN. Do not say a word more. You know too well where the shoe pinches me. But conscience and a care for your own soul should remind you that my wife is my wife, and that to make her yours under my very nose is not acting like a good Christian.

LEL. Such a suspicion is mean and ridiculous! Harbour no scruples



on that point: I know she belongs to you; I am very far from being in love with...

CEL. Oh! traitor! how well you dissemble!

LEL. What! do you imagine I foster a thought which need disturb his mind? Would you slander me by accusing me of such a cowardly action?

CEL. Speak, speak to himself; he can enlighten you.

SGAN. (\_To Celia\_), No, no, you can argue much better than I can, and have treated the matter in the right way.

SCENE XXII.--CELIA, LELIO, SGANARELLE, SGANARELLE'S WIFE, CELIA'S MAID.

SGAN.'S WIFE. (\_To Celia\_). I am not inclined, Madam, to show that I am over-jealous; but I am no fool, and can see what is going on. There are certain amours which appear very strange; you should be better employed than in seducing a heart which ought to be mine alone.

CEL. This declaration of her love is plain enough.

[Footnote: Some commentators think it is Lelio who utters these words, but they are clearly Celia's.]

SGAN. (\_To his wife\_). Who sent for you, baggage? You come and scold her because she takes my part, whilst you are afraid of losing your gallant.

CEL. Do not suppose anybody has a mind to him. (\_Turning towards Lelio\_). You see whether I have told a falsehood, and I am very glad of it.

LEL. What can be the meaning of this?

MAID. Upon my word, I do not know when this entanglement will be unravelled. I have tried for a pretty long time to comprehend it, but the more I hear the less I understand. Really I think I must interfere at last. (\_Placing herself between Lelio and Celia\_). Answer me one after another, and (\_To Lelio\_) allow me to ask what do you accuse this lady of?

LEL. That she broke her word and forsook me for another. As soon as I heard she was going to be married I hastened hither, carried away by an irrepressible love, and not believing I could be forgotten; but discovered, when I arrived here, that she was married.

MAID. Married! To whom?

LEL. (\_Pointing to Sganarelle\_). To him.

MAID. How! to him?

LEL. Yes, to him.

MAID. Who told you so?

LEL. Himself, this very day.

MAID. (\_To Sganarelle\_)Is this true?

SGAN. I? I told him I was married to my own wife.

LEL. Just now, whilst you looked at my picture, you seemed greatly moved.

SGAN. True, here it is.

LEL. (\_To Sganarelle). You also told me that she, from whose hands you had received this pledge of her love, was joined to you in the bonds of wedlock.

SGAN. No doubt (\_pointing to his wife\_), for I snatched it from her, and should not have discovered her wickedness had I not done so.

SGAN.'S WIFE. What do you mean by your groundless complaint? I found this portrait at my feet by accident. After you had stormed without telling me the cause of your rage, I saw this gentleman (\_pointing to Lelio\_)nearly fainting, asked him to come in, but did not even then discover that he was the original of the picture.

CEL. I was the cause of the portrait being lost; I let it fall when swooning, and when you (\_to Sganarelle\_) kindly carried me into the house.

MAID. You see that without my help you had still been at a loss, and that you had some need of hellebore.

[Footnote: Among the ancients the \_helleborus officinalis\_ or \_orientalis\_ was held to cure insanity; hence the allusion.]

SGAN. (\_Aside\_). Shall we believe all this? I have been very much frightened for my brow.

SGAN.'S WIFE. I have not quite recovered from my fear; however agreeable credulity may be, I am both to be deceived.

SGAN. (\_To his wife\_). Well, let us mutually suppose ourselves to be people of honour. I risk more on my side than you do on yours; accept, therefore, without much ado, what I propose.

SGAN.'S WIFE. Be it so, but wo be to you if I discover anything.

CEL. (\_To Lelio, after whispering together\_). Ye heavens! if it be so, what have I done? I ought to fear the consequences of my own anger! Thinking you false, and wishing to be avenged, I in an unhappy moment complied with my father's wishes, and but a minute since engaged myself to marry a man whose hand, until then, I always had refused. I have made a promise to my father, and what grieves me most is... But I see him coming.

LEL. He shall keep his word with me.

SCENE XXIII.--GORGIBUS, CELIA, LELIO, SGANARELLE, SGANARELLE'S WIFE, CELIA'S MAID.

LEL. Sir, you see I have returned to this town, inflamed with the same ardour, and now I suppose you will keep your promise, which made me hope to marry Celia, and thus reward my intense love.

GORG. Sir, whom I see returned to this town inflamed with the same ardour, and who now supposes I will keep my promise, which made you hope to marry Celia, and thus reward your intense love, I am your lordship's very humble servant.

LEL. What, sir, is it thus you frustrate my expectations?

GORG. Ay, sir, it is thus I do my duty, and my daughter obeys me too.

CEL. My duty compels me, father, to make good your promise to him.

GORG. Is this obeying my commands as a daughter ought to do? Just now you were very kindly disposed towards Valère, but you change quickly... I see his father approaching, who certainly comes to arrange about the marriage.

SCENE XXIV.--VILLEBREQUIN, GORGIBUS, CELIA, LELIO, SGANARELLE, SGANARELLE'S WIFE, CELIA'S MAID.

GORG. What brings you hither, M. Villebrequin?

VILL. An important secret, which I only discovered this morning, and which completely prevents me from keeping the engagement I made with you. My son, whom your daughter was going to espouse, has deceived everybody, and been secretly married these four months past to Lise. Her friends, her fortune, and her family connections, make it impossible for me to break off this alliance; and hence I come to you....

GORG. Pray, say no more. If Valère has married some one else without your permission, I cannot disguise from you, that I myself long ago, promised my daughter Celia to Lelio, endowed with every virtue, and that his return today prevents me from choosing any other husband for her.

VILL. Such a choice pleases me very much.

LEL. This honest intention will crown my days with eternal bliss.

GORG. Let us go and fix the day for the wedding.

SGAN. (*\_Alone\_*). Was there ever a man who had more cause to think himself victimized? You perceive that in such matters the strongest probability may create in the mind a wrong belief. Therefore remember, never to believe anything even if you should see everything.

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