

COMEDY  
AND  
TRAGEDY

A COMEDY.

FROM THE FRENCH OF  
M. R. FOURNIER.

TRANSLATED BY  
WILLIAM ROBSON.



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## COMEDY AND TRAGEDY.

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### CHARACTERS.

#### THE THEATRE DU GYMNASE.

Dubuisson,	( <i>a notary of Mans</i> )	M. KLEIN.
Adrien,	( <i>his son.</i> )	M. T. DESCHAMPS.
Mademoiselle Dumesnil,	( <i>an actress</i> )	Mme. L. VOLNEYS.
Louise,	( <i>her god-daughter</i> )	Mlle. FIGEAC.

#### THE ROYAL LYCEUM.

Dubuisson,	. . . . .	Mr. F. MATHEWS.
Adrien,	. . . . .	Mr. PARSELLE.
Mademoiselle Dumesnil,	. . . . .	Mrs STIRLING.
Louise,	. . . . .	MISS MARSHALL.

#### ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

Dubuisson,	. . . . .	Mr. ROBERTSON.
Adrien,	. . . . .	Mr. JOHNSON.
Dumesnil,	. . . . .	Mrs. SEYMOUR.
Louise,	. . . . .	Miss ROBERTSON.

SCENE.—At Paris, at the house of Mademoiselle Dumesnil.



### COSTUMES.

- DUBUISSON.—Long black coat, long waistcoat, breeches, boots, cravat, full black wig, three-cornered hat.
- ADRIEN.—Slate coloured, square cut, and long-waisted coat, waistcoat, and breeches, grey silk stockings, shoes and buckles, cravat, ringlet wig, three cornered hat, ruffles.
- DUMESNIL.—1st dress—Rich silk open dress, with short sleeves. 2nd, —Dressing gown and coif cap. 3rd,—Rich velvet embroidered robe satin petticoat, tiara.
- LOUISE.—Plain dark silk open dress, looped up at the sides, silk petticoat, small flat cap with ribbons.

## COMEDY AND TRAGEDY,



*The stage represents a chamber furnished in the style of Louis 15th. Several portraits of actors in the costumes of their parts, a door at the back, doors, R. 1 E. and R. 3 E. A window L. U. E., a toilette R. 3 E., several dresses lying upon the chairs.*

LOUISE. (*a parcel in her hand.*) To keep us waiting thus ! Not to bring home this dress before the middle of the day, when, this very evening Mademoiselle Dumesnil is to play Phèdre, for the first time! This is one of those persons who are perfectly indifferent to any uneasiness or trouble they may occasion. I know them. (*she places the parcel on a table.*) I am quite out of all patience when they tease my dear godmother, who is so kind! Show me another actress like her! I cannot tell how she does it, but I, who am one of the merriest girls in the world, when she wants to make me cry—Lord! lord! There I go crying for a set of people whom I know nothing of, just as if they were my born relations, particularly now, in that piece she played the day before yesterday, when they wanted to kill her daughter. (*throwing herself into an attitude.*) So—oh! If ever my godmother should have children, what a mother she will make. (*she talks as she folds up the dresses.*) When I think she was no more than myself, a girl without fortune, in the lower part of Picardy, and, that all at once, here she is, rich, with a great reputation, at Paris, a queen or a princess every evening!—As soon as we heard all this down yonder, my aunt says to me, " Go and find out Fanny, you will soon be sixteen—you're not a fool, she will instruct you—she is doing well—you will do the same. Well, yes, but my godmother seems not to understand

that—she says I have no vocation! and all because I don't learn to read very readily, and yet I feel something that says I know everything—I try to imitate all I see. And as Monsieur de Voltaire said here the other day " that whoever undertakes to represent the transports and vehemence of tragedy must have something of the devil in them." Well, I believe that is coming on; particularly in scenes of feeling. Ah! that will be my forte. (*declaiming.*) " Oh, dearest love," All those princes in tragedy are so amiable, so well bred, that's the sort of lover I should like, and, if I am not mistaken, I have found such a one; that young man, who is so constantly before our windows; and it can't be my godmother he is looking after; he seems so simple, so unaffected; he is not one of those fine marquises she is obliged to shew the door to, and who find means, impertinent fellows, to slip into her carriage, into her boudoir, and even into her clothes—(*in shaking a dress, she lets fall two small notes*) There now, why they come in showers! and all for her; my dear youth seems not to dare to write—and, for my part, I have not ventured to say a word about him to my godmother—how late she is this morning—that accident last night agitated her so! I have hardly got over it myself; oh dear! oh dear! But here she comes—bless me, how dejected she looks! is she ill?

*Enter* MADEMOISELLE DUMESNIL, R. D. 3 E. *tottering on to the stage.*

DUMES. " We'll go no further! stay! Enone dear!"

LOUISE. What do you say, dear godmother?

DUMES. (*seizes Louise's arm.*)

" I cannot stand—I feel my strength forsake me."

LOUISE. Here is a chair. (*aside.*) What can be the matter?

DUMES. " My eyes are dazzled by returning day;  
My trembling knees refuse me their support!  
Alas! Alas!" (*sinks into a chair.*)

LOUISE. She'll faint! good heavens, where are your salts? Smell this, dear godmother!

DUMES. (*rising.*) That will do then? That's very well!

LOUISE. Well! what's well?

DUMES. The entrance of Phedr !

LOUISE. Oh, it was your part, then.

DUMES. To be sure it was.

LOUISE. Law! I thought you were dying!

DUMES. That's exactly as it ought to be—that's what I call a real success, just like that of the other evening; when I was playing Cleopatra, an old officer who was upon the stage, outraged by my wickedness,—the brave fellow hit me a good hard blow on the back, exclaiming, "Go to the devil, you hussey!" I feel it still—ah! it is one of my most delightful remembrances!

LOUISE. Yes, it was rather flattering.

DUMES. In a few hours, the great trial will come! Heaven inspire me this evening.

LOUISE. I will pray for you, dear godmother.

DUMES. My good Louise—but what ails you, my child? you look fatigued; you have been sitting up late again, you silly girl! All the evening at the theatre, and then spending half your night before a glass, acting the young princess.

LOUISE. Well, I don't find it so difficult—I only want a lover to reply to me,—and he may be found.

DUMES. Child! child! You wish to enunciate Corneille and you cannot speak yourself.

LOUISE. Good heavens! What can one want with so many things? Why, you, yourself, godmother, I have often heard you say that instinct—

DUMES. A real instinct, Louise, against which I struggled so long; I knew nothing of the stage, and yet my mind was expanded to the charm of beautiful poetry, and revealed to me the energetic power of the great passions.

LOUISE. That's it.

DUMES. Ah! that gift which Heaven has granted me, I respect it, Louise, for I myself cannot account for it. When upon the stage, I forget myself, I am exalted, a magical illusion creates another nature around me—I dwell in marble palaces, the Heavens are open over my head, I breathe the air of Greece and Rome—I live, as it were, of another life, more intense, more ardent! But do not envy

me this, my poor Louise, for on the morrow, returned to my home, worn out with fatigue, and sometimes with ennui, alone with my own thoughts, I dream of those flowery and tranquil meads in which we ran together as children, in our dear country of Boulogne-sur-Mer, where I should so delight to live and expend all this wealth of emotions upon some single being who could love me—if such a one were to be found.

LOUISE. Ah ! that's the thing.

DUMES. But we must leave this subject—My costume.

LOUISE. (*pointing to the one she has taken from the parcel.*) There it is, is it not superb ?

DUMES. Yes—velvet, satin, gold fringe, and ostrich's feathers—that serves for all countries and all periods—I have tried to effect some changes in it, but prejudices ! prejudices ! some day others, perhaps, will be more fortunate.

LOUISE. And then, here are all these rolls of paper.

DUMES. Manuscripts—for ever ! How tiresome ! among the heaps of shapeless works which flow to the theatre from all parts, I have only found one, in the course of three years, with a particle of merit. But that one did strike me vividly ; with a splendid character for me, too ; what elevation of sentiments ! How delighted I should be to have an opportunity to express them.

LOUISE. (*presenting notes.*) Next, here is what you are well acquainted with—a little harvest of them. Three, four, five letters—Why, you don't even favour them with a look.

DUMES. Why should I ? They are all alike—homage dictated by vanity—all folly and nonsense ! These people will carry it so far, that, tired of the contest, I shall marry good Monsieur de Mallevaux, the old Counsellor of Parliament, who, at least, is a true friend—he writes me regularly four pages of advice in the morning, and every evening he comes to the theatre, takes his place in the orchestra, and thence he pays his court to me. (*clapping her hands as if applauding.*) Oh, I understand him perfectly well.

LOUISE. His servant has been here already this morning.

DUMES. Yes, I promised him a positive answer to-morrow, after the Phèdrè. So throw all that in the fire—but, stop! put that letter in verse on one side.

LOUISE. The letter in verse?

DUMES. Yes, you will find one, without a signature, as usual.

LOUISE. This must be it.

DUMES. Read it yourself, that I may judge of your progress,

LOUISE. (*reading very badly.*) Mad-e-moiselle, excuse me if I ap-ap-pear too pressing—but—at my age—one has not time to wait—for—

DUMES. What, do you call that verse?

LOUISE. Why, it's in straight lines.

DUMES. Oh, lud! some of Monsieur de Mallevaux's prose! my poor child, I begin to despair of your education. (*she searches among the papers LOUISE holds.*) Here is what I am looking for. (*reads.*) Very well, indeed! both sentiment and poetry. Ah! these verses must flow from a heart deeply penetrated.

LOUISE. (*warmly.*) That's exactly like him, when he speaks.

DUMES. Like him! who?

LOUISE. Ah! my dear godmother, I am afraid—

DUMES. Explain yourself.

LOUISE. I am so afraid you will scold.

DUMES. No, no; go on.

LOUISE. Well, it is that young man. You know very well that you must have seen him as well as I; he always stands *there* when we get into the carriage, and I find him in the same place when we get out. It is not you he looks at, you are always so well wrapped up. Oh, no, it is not you, I am very sure, so—

DUMES. So?

LOUISE. Ah! don't be angry, dear godmother; this has not been going on long. The first time he accosted me, you had just got out, and I was behind you. He said to me, "Ah! mams'selle!" in a tone, and with a manner! "Ah! ma'amselle! you are in the service of Mademoiselle Dumesnil?" "I am her goddaughter" he did just so! (*clasping her hands, and sighing deeply.*) "Ah!" And

then you called me, and he remained standing there. Another time, he said to me, as I passed him : " Ah ! ma'amselle!" still " Ah! ma'amselle! how happy should I be if"—but you turned round, and he disappeared. He could not finish his sentence, but that's of no consequence ; his intentions are plain enough, and I am sure that one of these days he will come and tell you all about it.

DUMES. Good Heavens! I cannot think whom you are talking about—I have observed nobody.

LOUISE. Oh! no; you have no eyes for any but the public.

DUMES. Oh! the person I wish to see, and whom all my researches cannot discover, is the intrepid man who risked his life to preserve me from a great danger. I tremble when I even think of it. Has not Robert told you all the particulars ? The countess de Verrieres yesterday evening seized upon an opportunity she has long sought for, of publicly insulting one, whom she calls, a mere actress! On leaving the opera, she ordered her coachman to drive against my carriage. The shock was terrible—the axletree was broken—the glasses were shattered—we were forced to get out at the risk of being run over, when, all at once, a man sprang to the heads of the countess' horses, and, in spite of the oaths and cries of her insolent servants, succeeded in stopping them. In the midst of this tumult, I was glad to escape from the curiosity of an impertinent crowd, without either seeing or thanking my deliverer. Heaven grant that he sustained no injury!

LOUISE. And have you heard nothing of him ?

DUMES. I will apply to Monsieur de Mallevaux, he has both credit and friends—he shall avenge me, in the first place, upon that vile countess—yes, even if I marry him for it. But what noise is that ? do I not hear the voice of a man in the ante-chamber ?

LOUISE. There certainly is—

DUMES. I desired to be denied to everybody.

LOUISE. It is some one forcing his way in—and Robert is trying to prevent him!

DUBUISSON. (*without* L. U. E.) Let me come in, I say—I will speak to her—the devil!

DUMES. Who can it be ?

LOUISE. (*taking refuge behind MADEMOISELLE DUMESNIL.*) Oh! my godmother!

*Enter DUBUISSON C. from L., speaking.*

DUBUIS. Zounds! I must and will speak to your lady! whether my appearance pleases her or not—that's of no consequence, (*taking a chair.*) And I will not budge from this spot, unless I am carried away by force. Ah! there she is, I suppose!

LOUISE. Oh! how he frightens me!

DUMES. Sir!

DUBUIS. (*advancing.*) Good day, madame.

DUMES. How dare you—

DUBUIS. Oh! my business has accustomed me to beat up people's quarters, and against their will, too.

DUMES. But, sir, what is your business with me?

DUBUIS. I have come fifty-three leagues on purpose to tell you.

DUMES. Well, sir, proceed.

DUBUIS. I am waiting till this young woman is gone.

LOUISE. I—who? my dear godmother, leave you alone with—

DUBUIS. With a brute, I suppose you would say! Parbleu! I knew beforehand that to get in here, I must have all the elegance of a Parisian petit maître—yes, yes! to see you, a man's appearance must be agreeable.

DUMES. Well, I will prove to you the contrary.

DUBUIS. And how so?

DUMES. By desiring *you* to remain, sir—stay where you are. Leave us, Louise, leave us, my child!

LOUISE. What can all this mean?

[*Exit R. D. 3 E., carrying away the costume, &c.*]

DUMES. I do not offer you a seat.

DUBUIS. Oh, no ceremony, pray. (*taking a chair.*)

DUMES. I beg to warn you that I am rather pressed for time.

DUBUIS. All the better! all the better! I will come to the point at once. (*MADMOISELLE DUMESNIL sits down.*) My name is Dubuisson—Pierre Antoine Dubuisson; I have for twenty-five years carried on the profession of a notary at Mans, my native city. I have a vast number of clients, madame, and I know how to carry on a law suit as

well as the best lawyer alive. But you must know that I have a son, an only son, a good lad, a young rascal, whom I love with all my heart; I have brought him up under my own eye; I have taught him myself the Roman law and the customs of the country. I wanted to make an advocate of him, madame, a good Mansian advocate, whom I would support with my counsels and my experience—between us we should make a complete practitioner; he would furnish speech, and I, intelligence.

DUMES. Well, but, monsieur, I do not see that prevents you and your son—

DUBUIS. Prevents him! why, madame, it is that it was necessary to send him to Paris to complete his law studies—it is that he has been here a whole week, watched closely by one of my colleagues of the capital, an officer, who has followed him, morbleu! as closely as if he had a writ to serve upon him; it is that he has not yet even called upon Monsieur Patru, the celebrated advocate, to whom I recommended him; it is that he has not yet set his foot in the courts, but on the contrary, spends all his evenings at the theatre. It is, in short, that he is bewitched by a woman of the theatre—a miss or a mistress—who can tell which? Yes, bewitched by the devil, in shape of an actress.

DUMES. Monsieur!

DUBUIS. I know them all! not that I have ever been at a play—but I know what they say of them yonder, at home, at St. Macloud's chapel, and elsewhere.

DUMES. Well, but are you quite sure—

DUBUIS. Why so they write me—Arrived at Paris on Sunday morning, he went to the play on Sunday evening—and there, by hearing rubbish about sighs, and flames, and other nonsense, the stupid boy took to sighing in earnest, and turned everything to tragedy; he neither eats nor drinks, he has no longer any inclination for the bar—he does nothing but dream of the Dumesnil.

DUMES. Of me! (*rising.*) What do you mean by that?

DUBUIS. Oh! that's all very fine! pretend, do, to know nothing about it.

DUMES. Really, this is the first I ever heard of it, and

you, my dear sir, absolutely make your son's declaration to me.

DUBUIS. Oh, yes ! pretty story, indeed!

DUMES. What sort of a young man is your son ?

DUBUIS. Parbleu! a good-looking lad—well made—rather like me—with a pleasing smile—white teeth.

DUMES. Oh! oh! indeed!

DUBUIS. At all events, you cannot deny you have received letters from him.

DUMES. Who, I ? Never!

DUBUIS. (*looking at the paper she still holds in her hand.*) Never! why look there, that's his writing—a superb hand—stupid boy, to employ it in this manner, when he might engross with it. (*taking the paper.*) Let us see—what is all this about ? (*reading, without stopping at the end of the verses.*) "My soul on ev'ry accent fondly dwells—and when thy pallid cheek thy anguish tells responsive owns the sympathetic tie which binds our hearts, and answers sigh for sigh."

DUMES. What, are these verses his ?

DUBUIS. Verses?

DUMES. Certainly they are. (*taking the paper.*)

DUBUIS. Why what do you take him for ? Where the devil could he learn to make verses ? The cunning rascal ! he must have bought them ready made—and there's another pretty expense.

DUMES. What! those sentiments whose exaltation has so charmed me ; those noble thoughts—that poetry, the accents of which penetrated to my very soul—was it he, your son, who paid me this homage ? Ah, sir!

DUBUIS. Stop, stop! It's my belief you are going to be affected now. I am doing things nicely. It is very clear that for this half-hour I have been labouring to make him interesting—and that pretty soft tone! Morbleu! we don't want any of that. I came here on purpose to recover my son, and I will have him. So speak, at once, if you please—where is he ?

DUMES. Once more, how can I tell ?

DUBUIS. Because he follows you everywhere.

DUMES. Except into my own house, where he certainly

will never come, unless, among other lessons in civil law, he may have been taught to force open people's doors.

DUBUIS. He! Yes, yes, perhaps I have been a little too hasty—too rude; but I beg you will tell me, dear lady, kindly tell me, if you have seen him?

DUMES. Never, I swear to you;—and I am sorry for it, as you say he bears such a resemblance to his father.

DUBUIS. You are very polite; and I begin to think—but his letters must have informed you—

DUMES. Particularly as they are not signed.

DUBUIS. Not signed?

DUMES. Look yourself.

DUBUIS. It is true. (*aside.*) She is always in the right. (*aloud.*) In that case it is clear that—oh, dear! oh, dear! I have no reason to complain. I had no business to make such a piece of work. What an extraordinary affair! You really are then a respectable woman?

DUMES. Sir!

DUBUIS. I beg your pardon—I beg your pardon! It was all owing to St. Macloud's chapel. Excuse the trouble and the despair of a father. My poor Adrien! This love will be his ruin. See, in the first place, it will make him neglect a profession for which he no longer feels a vocation; and then, his marriage with a rich heiress, for whom he has now no affection—the daughter of the receiver of the salt duties. Now that I have seen you, I must admit that an actress may have some merit; but put yourself in my place—everyone must maintain his rank.

DUMES. Oh, doubtless—the rank of a notary.

DUBUIS. But his future happiness depends upon it.

DUMES. (*with interest.*) His future—his happiness! Yes, I understand, and feel for you, sir. Well, we must try to cure him.

DUBUIS. Cure him? That's it! But how?

DUMES. It may not be a very easy matter, but we will endeavour. Come again to-morrow.

DUBUIS. To-morrow! that will never do.

DUMES. I am so pressed for time. I am to play a new part this evening.

DUBUIS. You play this evening? Good Heavens! why

the unfortunate boy will go and see you again. He will become worse and worse : he will become incurable. Oh, I implore you to see him to-day—immediately. Stop, stop ! (*approaching the window.*) there is still one coach left upon the stand. I will take it, and in a quarter of an hour—Ah! look yonder, close to the hosier's, opposite the window, that young man standing motionless !

DUMES. Is that he ?

DUBUIS. That's my poor son himself—bareheaded, with his nose in the air. The poor wretch takes no heed of the bad weather.

DUMES. Well, but he is really not a bad-looking young man.

DUBUIS. Is he now ?

DUMES. Does he know you are here ?

DUBUIS. Not yet.

DUMES. (*leading him from the window.*) Then don't show yourself.

DUBUIS. But—

DUMES. Will you allow me to act as I please?

DUBUIS. What! do you hope then ?

DUMES. Yes, yes. (*she rings.*) I will cure him, I promise you.

DUBUIS. You promise me ?

DUMES. (*holding out her hand to him.*) On the word of an actress.

DUBUIS. You are charming! (*aside.*) Zounds! she'll bewitch me next.

*Enter LOUISE, door R. 3 E.*

DUMES. Louise, do you see that young man standing before our window ?

LOUISE. That young man! Oh, dear! that is—

DUBUIS. That is my son, Adrien.

LOUISE. Your son—yours ! Well, I never should have thought that.

DUBUIS. What do you say ?

LOUISE. I beg your pardon—excuse me—if I had known—certainly—

DUMES. Tell Robert to ask him to walk up.

DUBUIS. I will get out of the way.

DUMES. (*pointing to the door R. 1 E.*) By that back staircase.

LOUISE. (*aside.*) What can all this mean ?

DUBUIS. (*aside*) I wish I knew how she is going to set about it. His heart must be cured of such a folly; therefore, I confide to you his life and his happiness.

DUMES. I will prove worthy of the trust. Make your retreat that way. (*to LOUISE.*) When he comes, be discreet, and let me know.

[Mlle. DUMESNIL and DUBUISSON *exeunt door R. 1 E.*

LOUISE. The father here in person, and he would not speak before me; and now my godmother sends for the son—it's all clear enough. And I to receive him so rudely! He came to make an offer—that's very kind on his part—and before she would reply, she desires to see the son—that makes it still clearer. One must never have been to a play  to understand that. (*she prepares to go out, but, in passing, takes a glance out at the window.*) Ah, there he stands! Oh, good lud! he's going away. (*throws up the window.*) Sir! sir! here—come up here! Humph! he does not need to be told twice. Doesn't he look glad—doesn't he look glad! But, lud, he is doing as his father did—overturning everybody to get in.

*Enter ADRIEN, C. from L. stopping at the door.*

ADRIEN. It is here—ah!

LOUISE. Be kind enough to walk in, Monsieur Adrien.

ADRIEN. Ah, mademoiselle! is it possible? Was it really me you called?

LOUISE. Certainly it was you—but come in.

ADRIEN. I cannot yet believe it—such happiness! Is it an illusion?

LOUISE. (*mysteriously.*) No, sir; there is a lady here who wishes to speak to you.

ADRIEN. She would deign to receive me. She—Mademoiselle Dumesnil?

LOUISE. Yes, she is my godmother. She has something interesting to say to you.

ADRIEN. To me? Oh, I cannot support it!

LOUISE. What is the matter ?

ADRIEN. A faintness!

LOUISE. Oh, dear! he is exactly as Phèdre was just now. Poor young man! what an effect it produces on him. (*aside.*) Here, take this chair.

ADRIEN. Who, I? What, sit down, here? Oh, no.

LOUISE. You will not have to wait long. My god-mother is coming.

ADRIEN. She is coming. Oh, what agitation I am in!

LOUISE. (*advancing.*) What did you say, sir?

ADRIEN. Oh, nothing! nothing! Go, mademoiselle—leave me. I must endeavour to collect myself.

LOUISE. (*aside.*) Ah, some people would have spoken—would have made fine speeches, but he—he says nothing. But one may guess, though—it's all the same; he's very genteel. (*aloud.*) Adrien—Monsieur Adrien! Take courage, Monsieur Adrien. [*Exit door R. 3 E.*]

ADRIEN. The sanctuary she inhabits; the air she breathes; to see her; to contemplate her close—her whom the crowd adores at such a distance; to open my heart to her who makes so many beat—oh, no! I shall never dare, unless on my knees—yes, on my knees I must alone venture to address this great, this sublime queen of hearts. Ah! in my poetic dreams I had already seen her—yes, it was she who had been the object of my presentiments, when I laboured with such love at that work in which I accumulated at pleasure all the wealth of my soul, to clothe with it an ideal figure; and those verses—those verses which every morning I have ventured to address to her, for the language of the gods is the only language worthy of her: how much are they beneath her genius, and that expressive beauty which holds me in a state of fascination. Those I composed just now, under her window, appear to me better; but I am so agitated, I cannot find them in my memory. Let me try—once again. Ah! even poetry escapes me when about to behold her. (*he remains in an attitude of meditation.*)

*Enter MADEMOISELLE DUMESNIL, in a coif and flowered gown, from door, R. U. E. She is slightly wrinkled.*

DUMES. (*aside, as she enters.*) Well, I have promised,

and must try to perform. There he is—humph! Very well—we must interrupt his reveries.

ADRIEN. (*composing.*)—

"Thou, whose noble brow with genius glows,  
Thou, whose beauty"—

DUMES. Good day to you, sir! (*she assumes a familiar and rather coarse style of speech and action.*)

ADRIEN. (*starting.*) Some one here! I beg your pardon, madame, I was—I was waiting for Mademoiselle Dumesnil.

DUMES. Tête-à-tête with your muse?

ADRIEN. My muse! it is *she*—she alone! what other could inspire me? does not everything here speak of her. Heavens! what a woman! what an actress! Ah, madame! how proud you must be of her, for she doubtless is a relation—that faint resemblance! accept my humble respects!

DUMES. (*laughing.*) Ha! ha! ha!

ADRIEN. Why do you laugh?

DUMES. Bravo! my young friend, bravo! go on, I beg you; it is the highest compliment you could pay to my talent!

ADRIEN. To your talent?

DUMES. Certainly. Why it is I—I myself.

ADRIEN. You! who?

DUMES. Who! why Dumesnil! *the* Dumesnil, as people call me.

ADRIEN. (*drawing back.*) You!

DUMES. Melpomene in coif and dishabille. The stage changes us a little, doesn't it!

ADRIEN. Can it change—

DUMES. Now I would lay a wager you are just come up from the country. They are all alike, those provincials! it is quite amusing! come nearer—are you afraid of me?

ADRIEN. (*embarrassed.*) Oh! no, madame—mademoiselle, I mean. According to that, you certainly have the greater merit. (*aside, and resuming his seat.*) In fact, when I look at her closely—and when her eyes become animated—and then, after all, is she not still the great artiste?

DUMES. I was told you wished to see me?

ADRIEN. Indeed, mademoiselle, for the last week I have

followed your very footsteps, this is an inexcusable liberty, I confess; but the admiration you inspired me with—I have been constantly seeking an opportunity of speaking to you, to implore a favour of you, perhaps.

DUMES. Oh! I understand, I understand—you want an order for the pit.

ADRIEN. An order for the pit!

DUMES. Well, I suppose you'll repay me for it? (*clapping with her hands, as if applauding.*) Keep it up well!

ADRIEN. Oh! mademoiselle! is there any need of that? with what enthusiasm I salute you every evening! Clytemnestra, Elizabeth, Cleopatra, I have seen them all, admired them all—such true pathos! such profound sensibility. Yours are genuine tears; I have seen them flow—yes, you weep first—it is no longer you who are acting, it is the character herself who speaks to us, who carries away our feelings, who transports us. It is plain that every one of your emotions emanates from your heart before it passes your lips!

DUMES. (*still seated, and examining him.*) Tut, tut, tut! now do you really believe all that?

ADRIEN. Did you speak, mademoiselle?

DUMES. (*aside.*) Well, this is naivete with a vengeance! and then, good heavens! how handsome he looks, with his real tears! he must be fresh from his province! But, my poor young friend, you give me pain; I must enlighten you a little—be seated—be seated, I say. (*she pushes a chair towards him, and almost forces him to sit down.*) Yes, my poor boy, all that you see with us is but an appearance, a seeming, an illusion; nothing is real, everything is conventional: the heavens themselves are but paste-board; the sun is but so many candles, which are snuffed from time to time, to revivify nature—a nature of painted cloth; and we, we the queens, we have cries, sobs and noted utterances of despair, all measured and cadenced. It must be so—the part requires it, but, the curtain once down, naturally, all that is over, and our sensibility takes its leave with our rouge, our fan, and our patches.

ADRIEN. (*quite aghast.*) Is it possible? what! those tears!

DUMES. Why, my dear boy, if we were to undergo such real griefs every evening, nature could not hold out.

ADRIEN. And, do you mean that those beautiful sentiments—

DUMES. Well, for my part, I never comprehended or liked those lofty tragedy queens. Did you fancy I resembled one of them? good lud! I should be an amiable personage, indeed! (*laughing.*) Ha, ha, ha! No, no, no! we are but women as others are. I beg you to believe a man may pay his court to us without dread of a poison or a dagger! every one of us has a train of admirers, adorers, or what not! for my part, I am sure I have a score.

ADRIEN. A score!

DUMES. Yes, we joke, we chat, and enjoy a little scandal; that's my delight—particularly when it concerns our comrades. As, yesterday for instance, young Champeaux.—Lord! what an agreeable creature he is! He told us anecdotes of little Duclos enough to make one die with laughter. I have quite a passion for those little racy *histoires*; try and bring me some, there's a dear young man. Instead of madrigals, write me some good keen epigrams, with plenty of bitter in them. There, there's your lesson ended, and I will say with Hermione: "I have consented to show you the means of pleasing me." (*offering her snuff box.*) Do you take any?

ADRIEN. (*starting.*) What, madame!

DUMES. (*taking a pinch with gusto.*) Oh! this is excellent! besides, it is useful—it excites the brain, and (*she sneezes.*) Oh, bless you!

ADRIEN. (*rising.*) Oh! I am, indeed, descending from the clouds!

DUMES. (*aside.*) I really pity him. (*aloud.*) What is the matter with you? You look pale—exhausted—perhaps you have had no breakfast? Poor boy, I am very sorry, but my hour is past, and I live such a regular, such an orderly life. Never indulge in silly expenses; without that, good Heavens! what would become of one! I must put by some little savings for my old age. I place all my money out at interest. Oh! I know how to calculate. My salary is ten thousand livres: I play about a hundred times in a year, and that yields me a hundred livres for

each representation—that's all clear and plain—I could tell you exactly how much each verse brings me: for instance, you know that famous speech of Clytemnestra's ?

ADRIEN. Oh! that which is so sublime!

DUMES.

" No, ne'er shall he by me to punishment be led.

Or double sacrifice shall to the Greeks be made."

That's one livre. (*changing her tone.*)

" Nor terror nor respect has power to sunder us,

All bleeding from my arms alone he must be torn,"

That's another.

" A barbarous husband and a ruthless sire,

Come ! force him if you dare, from his fond mother's breast."

ADRIEN. (*transported.*) Ah! that's it!

DUMES. Yes, that's worth three livres ten sous.

ADRIEN. (*sinking quite overcome into the chair.*) Oh, dear ! Oh, dear!

DUMES. (*aside.*) Poor youth! what a pity ! but I have given my word. (*aloud, and slapping him on the shoulder.*) And you, my friend, what is your employment ? What are your little resources? A young man ought to have something to do.

ADRIEN. (*in a disconsolate tone.*) I—I came to Paris to—to—be made an advocate.

DUMES. Oh! un petit Robin! A lawyer, eh? That's another species of actor—rather wearisome species, by-the-bye; now I understand you—you are quite capable of playing the serious part of that character.

"Come ye, poor babes, whom laws would orphans make!"

" Gentlemen, behold my tears!"

And he will weep away in earnest for his little clients.

ADRIEN. (*aside and rising again.*) I cannot bear it! she is laughing at me now!

DUMES. Well, but stop a moment! an advocate—that's well thought of—I have a little suit coming on—I will explain it to you.

ADRIEN. To me, madame! pardon me.

DUMES. (*taking him by the arm.*) I cannot get the lawyer to understand it at all, but that's all one—rather than yield an inch of my pretensions, I would suffer myself to be cut to pieces, do you see, as sure as my name is Fanny—ah ! ah ! that's my character !

ADRIEN. (*aside.*) Can I be dreaming ?

DUMES. (*still holding him by the arm.*) Now this is the affair! it happened one evening that I had no paint for the cheeks of Cleopatra—I was informed of a woman who fabricated a rouge—oh ! a rouge of such brilliancy, such freshness—you must have observed the complexion I have every evening—well, that is of her composition.

ADRIEN. (*endeavouring to get away from her.*) A thousand pardons, mademoiselle, but—

DUMES. (*continuing, as if she did not observe him.*) What an invaluable treasure—I made an agreement in writing, to pay her a very high price for it, upon condition that she should reserve it for me, for me alone in all Paris. You understand ? Every one is glad to preserve his own—such things are not to be lent—but guess my astonishment when I one evening, on the stage, saw Mademoiselle Dubois looking almost handsome! I immediately said to myself, Nothing can produce such an effect but my rouge! and so it proved. What did I do ? Why, I instantly attacked my lady perfumer—the traitress!

ADRIEN. A pressing affair, madame—(*trying to escape.*)

DUMES. (*holding him by the coat.*) I demanded damages—judgment—an opinion of the judges which should declare the rouge wrongly applied—

ADRIEN. Excuse me, I beg, but—

DUMES. An appeal on the part of the defendant—

ADRIEN. (*disengaging himself.*) I have the honour to wish you a good day!

DUMES. What! run away from me thus ? Oh! young man, young man ! our Parisians are much more gallant! Stay a little longer, we have not half had our chat out. If you have been so anxious to see me, if you have followed me with so much perseverance, was it not with some intention? (*simpering, and playing with her fan.*) Come! I will listen to you ! What have you to say to me ?

ADRIEN. I really do not—but apropos ! Yes! how could

I have forgotten it ? I come, madame, to inquire about my tragedy.

DUMES. A provincial tragedy !

ADRIEN. Which I composed in my father's office, unknown to him, and which I sent secretly to the theatre.

DUMES. And you called it—

ADRIEN. Tiridates.

DUMES. Tiridates!

ADRIEN. Yes. a hero who delivers the object of his love, or rather, a queen, who having become a captive of the Romans—

DUMES. What! that work—can you be the author of that?

ADRIEN. Ah! might I inquire—

DUMES. (*aside.*) That beautiful character which I admire so! which I study with absolute passion. (*aloud.*) Ah ! monsieur!

ADRIEN. Well, you think it—

DUMES. (*aside.*) Good Heavens! my fatal promise to his father! (*aloud.*) Romans, nothing but Romans! detestable, my dear monsieur—it grieves me to say so—but there is no poetry, no warmth ! Stick to your pleading, and scribble no more doggrel verse.

ADRIEN. Ah! This is the finishing stroke! What have I seen ? what have I heard! What a band of ignorance has fallen from my eyes! love, hope, fame, all gone, all, existence now odious to me.

(*rushes out C. and L.*)

DUMES. It is more than he can bear! his admiration yields to my artifice. The false impression I have created has rendered him furious—he will lose all hope, all faith, and everything relating to me must become odious to him. (*she takes off her coif and robe de chamber and sinks into a chair.*) I have put him to flight, indeed! He hurried off as if I were in pursuit of him. Never let my talent for comedy be disputed again. I never succeeded better in a part in my life. He is cured—as I promised; and yet, I don't know how or why, but I don't feel at all satisfied with myself; I thought I had to sport with a silly fool—and he is, a poet—I have wounded a poet to the heart! and, had I any right to do so ? It is these young hearts, so

rich in illusion and love, who best understand and appreciate our art; yes, it is this attraction, it is their power of feeling that makes us great, illustrious, and renowned. Cut them off from the world, and we should have before us nothing but an inert and gross crowd, against which our best efforts would fall powerless. Poor young man! what an agitated air he had at first! How sincere was he in his admiration, in his love! Oh! it is wrong, it is very wrong! I have gone much further than I wished, a hundred times further than was necessary—I have made myself out to be insensible, covetous, wicked—I have done it with a species of passion—of pitiless inveteracy—it is frightful—it is frightful!

*Enter LOUISE, C. from L., wiping her eyes.*

LOUISE. Oh, dear! oh, dear! who could have believed it? Oh, my dear godmother, what have you done to that poor young man? He is in a state of despair.

DUMES. Indeed! What did he say then?

LOUISE. He said nothing but "Ah, ma'amselle!" as he did before, and then he went away as if bowed down to the earth. He is so mild, so good; he did not deserve to be so badly received.

DUMES. Oh, no.

LOUISE. Well, why then—

DUMES. Leave me!—child, leave me! Don't you see that I am busy? Time flies: it will soon be two o'clock.

LOUISE. What is the matter with you then?

DUMES. (*warmly.*) And there is my costume. If anything should be wanting—these ladies of the court are so particular. Oh, dear! oh, dear! I've no head for that—none at all.

LOUISE. Nor I neither; for I forgot—there is another affair—

DUMES. What is that?

LOUISE. Just now the Countess de Verrieres—the great lady who broke your vis-à-vis—sent one of her people here—

DUMES. To make an apology?

LOUISE. On the contrary, to require one.

DUMES. Ah!

LOUISE. For some one having had the audacity to stop her horses, and beat her servant. It was the servant himself who came, with his face disfigured. The countess insists upon knowing who the insolent person was—she says you know him.

DUMES. I!

LOUISE. Because, in the squabble, he let fall a little pocket book, in which your name is written underneath your portraits, in all your characters. Look!

DUMES. (*opening the book.*) Ah!

LOUISE. What is it?

DUMES. He again!

LOUISE. He! Who?

DUMES. He—Adrien, I tell you.

LOUISE. Monsieur Adrien?

DUMES. It was he who preserved me. I did not recognise him, and I did not thank him. Such intrepidity! such noble disinterestedness! for he never said a word about it. And how I have treated him! What a recompense for his devotedness! Where is he now?

LOUISE. Good Heavens! I dont know.

DUMES. Did the countess's servant follow him?

LOUISE. Oh, no—on the contrary. As soon as he recognised him, he set off, the other way, as fast as he could. He had enough of him yesterday.

DUMES. I must see him; he must be found; I will tell him—

LOUISE. (*going towards the back.*) There is somebody there, godmother.

DUMES. I am not at home.

LOUISE. It is the gentleman who was here this morning.

DUMES. His father! Oh, let him come in—let him come in! Go, Louise.

LOUISE. But, godmother—

DUMES. Leave us!

LOUISE. (*aside.*) How will all this end? [*Exit C. and L.*]

*Enter DUBUISSON, C. from L.*

DUBUIS. Oh, mademoiselle! what have you done?

DUMES. How?

DUBUIS. My unfortunate boy ! I waited for him in the passage. Oh, it is worse than ever now.

DUMES. What is the matter with him then ?

DUBUIS. The matter, Mademoiselle! the matter is that he is mad, and will kill himself.

DUMES. Kill himself?

DUBUIS. Yes, yes, kill himself. Oh, he is quite capable of it, and all on your account.

DUMES. What, does he love me still ?

DUBUIS. Oh, no, he no longer loves you—that is the misfortune. He is fallen into the other extreme. He detests you; he abhors you; he is furious—in despair. He says all his ideas are confounded ; all his illusions destroyed !

DUMES. Good Heaven!

DUBUIS. He maintains that you have neither heart, nor grace, nor understanding—in short, he raves. He no longer loves anything—neither you nor me, nor life itself. "I have no longer faith in anything," he exclaims; "everything is false, everything is deceitful. What should I do upon the face of the earth?" I tried to reason with him ; what could I get from him ? Nothing but despair, imprecations and threats.

DUMES. Then what have you done ?

DUBUIS. I have done that which is safest. I have shut him up in his room—have double-locked the door, and have run away to ask your advice,

DUMES. Alas ! you perceive I am not able—

DUBUIS. On the contrary, you only succeeded too well. The remedy was violent, more violent than the disease. Ah! would to heaven he loved you still!—My poor Adrien! He is odd, he is wild, he is flighty ; but—but he is my son : I have no other. He must live, must he not! Oh, I implore you, restore him to me—restore me my child!

DUMES. What can be done ? Bring him to the theatre this evening.

DUBUIS. No hopes of that.

DUMES. Send him to me here.

DUBUIS. He would rather fly to the antipodes.

DUMES. Good heavens! what means?—Oh, I have it—I have it!

DUBUIS. What—what?

DUMES. Yes, he's an author—that's it. Talk to him about *Tiridates*.

DUBUIS. Who ! whom do you wish me to talk about?

DUMES. About *Tiridates*.

DUBUIS. And what the deuce is that? *Tiridates!* is it a man ? is it a—

DUMES. It's his tragedy.

DUBUIS. His tragedy!

DUMES. Oh, I forgot—you know nothing about it. He composed it in secret, in your office. (*she goes to the table.*)

DUBUIS. A tragedy—made in my office ? and by him ?

DUMES. To be sure he did. Stop! carry this note to him. (*she sits and writes.*)

DUBUIS. Here's something fresh, however. Instead of minding my business, to be scribbling about *Tiridates*. I'll teach him to—

DUMES. Where are you going ?

DUBUIS. I'm in a rage. Turn author, indeed! Well, that's the heaviest blow of all. Did ever I set him such a low example ? I deny him for my son; I abandon him to his fate!

DUMES. Oh, no, no—your heart is not so bad as that. Think of his despair : a mind like his must be soothed. Never tell me that you wish his ruin—you, who love him so much. Why you said just now, " the life of my son before everything." Now I, in my turn, repeat to you—save him ! save him !

DUBUIS. Ah, my dear lady, your eloquence overcomes me! I have not the power to resist your kind and sweet voice.

DUMES. Begone, then—quick! Time presses. Calm his agitated feelings; give way to the kindness of your own heart.

DUBUIS. Well, well, but to turn author, I shall never be able to hold up my head again; poor devil! ah, it all comes of his being too clever; but that is not his fault.

DUMES. No, nor yours.

DUBUIS. Certainly not.

DUMES. Let your affection prevail; forgive the past.

DUBUIS. Well, in all but *Tiridates*, I may; but to turn author! ah, what a trial for a father! [*Exit.*]

DUMES. Well, I declare—I'm all in a tremble. I never felt so agitated—I, whose profession it is to express the passions. But it is very silly to alarm myself so. This plan is sure to succeed—he will come back.

*Enter LOUISE, C. from L.*

LOUISE. He will come back ? Do you think so ?

DUMES. Yes—yes.

LOUISE. Ah, dear godmother, how kind you are! And will he marry me ?

DUMES. What! marry you? Are you mad? What have you got in your head now ? and what do you want ?

LOUISE. Pardon, dear godmother, I—I—Monsieur de Mallevaux's servant has been here an hour. He is waiting for the answer you promised his master.

DUMES. (*absent.*) What!—What answer? To whom?

LOUISE. TO the old counsellor, who is to be your husband.

DUMES. He ? Pooh! a cold being, without either soul or energy. For heaven's sake, let them allow me to breathe awhile. To-morrow—the day after to-morrow—

LOUISE. What can be the matter with her ? This is the first time that—

DUMES. What a passion! what love! what—because I do not resemble the object of his dreams, he carries his despair so far as to wish even to quit life. But, fortunately, it was not me he saw this morning ; whilst her he adores, whom he has imagined—thank heaven! that's me—myself!

LOUISE. What ? Then it is—oh, dear! oh, dear!

DUMES. Heavens! and there's the theatre—my costume to be tried on! They are coming! I hear them ! Shall I remain here, and see him thus again ? No ! but presently—yes, I presently will speak to him. Come, Louise, come! I shall need your assistance.

*[Exit, door R. 3 E.*

LOUISE. Yes, godmother. (*remaining behind.*) How ? She!—no, no ! I claim him ; I was first—he must have explained himself badly—but here he comes. Oh, how depressed he looks! I dare not speak to him; but when godmother speaks to him, I'll take care to be there.

*[Exit, door R. 3 E.*

*Enter DUBUISSON and ADRIEN, C. from L.*

DUBUIS. (*supporting ADRIEN.*) Come, my boy, come. I tell you it is about the tragedy; I know all—Hum ! you sly young dog! At least, listen to what she has to say to you. I won't be angry—I won't, indeed. Come, sit down here, good Monsieur Tiridates. (*placing chair L.*)

ADRIEN. Oh! I did not wish to come. The very place inspires me with horror. It was here I saw her—that woman once so sublime. That ideal, which I had myself set up, here descended from her pedestal. Oh! reality—reality! art thou worth the pain of living for ?

DUBUIS. There's no question about that. Your tragedy, my boy, your tragedy!

ADRIEN. (*rising.*) Oh, that is the only link that attaches me to life. She writes to me, father, that she was mistaken; that she confounded my work with another ; that the committee of the Comédie Française have already approved it.

DUBUIS. Why not? (*aside.*) His mania must be flattered. (*aloud.*) A fine idea, that. But, Adrien, how did you do it ? I suppose, now, it came upon you all at once?

ADRIEN. Yes, all at once.

DUBUIS. In my office ?

ADRIEN. When you were absent.

DUBUIS. Now, I dare say you said to yourself, " My father is not here; he is about his business, and, in the meantime—(*aside.*) the lazy young scoundrel! (*aloud.*) Bravo, my boy! (*aside.*) The Lord forgive me! They say your verses are superb ?

ADRIEN. Indeed!

DUBUIS. (*aside.*) A heap of rubbish, I'll be bound. (*aloud.*) You have genius—say no more about it.

ADRIEN. At least I had soul. But the blow that has reached me has broken my lyre for ever.

DUBUIS. That's it, my son; we understand each other perfectly. As for your tragedy—it is done, and let it take its chance. So be it: it appears that it is the fashion, now-a-days. Every one must scribble his little tragedy. It seems to form a part of the education of young people. All very well; but, now your lyre is, as

you say, cracked—I beg your pardon, broken—the best thing you can do is, to devote your mind to the study of the laws, and of the customs of the kingdom. I will introduce you to my clients ; you will gain their confidence; you must take care to conceal your genius, for if the public do not know it, you may succeed very well, and plead just as well as if you had never written a tragedy.

ADRIEN. Never, father!

DUBUIS. What?

ADRIEN. Never!

DUBUIS. But, you unhappy boy, that is the condition of your marriage with the daughter of the receiver of the salt duties.

ADRIEN. Oh, pray, say no more to me about that marriage.

DUBUIS. But, I have promised—

ADRIEN. (*firmly.*) And, on my part, I refuse.

DUBUIS. Oh, dear!

ADRIEN. Never, never any other wife—no, no! I will live alone—always alone, in Paris.

DUBUIS. There now! there now! we are going to have it all over again. And you take it up again in that way, do you? Well, then, I will resume my authority. I I have been too indulgent. It's all very well for a little while, but I will not hear any more of these freaks. You are mad—completely mad; and, in virtue of my paternal authority, I seize on your body. Throw all your silly ideas to the wind—adopt mine, and take the coach for Mans. Come, obey!

ADRIEN. (*with energy.*) No, father. Since you urge me so far, and have no pity for me, I must seek refuge in my despair.

DUBUIS. What!

ADRIEN. Yes, I will give myself up to the last extremities!

DUBUIS. Good lord! good lord!

ADRIEN. I renounce life.

DUBUIS. Unhappy boy!

ADRIEN. (*going towards the C. door.*) And I will now end it.  
(MADEMOISELLE DUMESNIL *appears at the door* R. 3 E. *in full tragic costume, followed by* LOUISE.

DUMES. (striking out her arm, with an air of authority.  
'Stay!')

ADRIEN. Heavens! what do I see ?

DUBUIS. Why, it is she herself!

DUMES. "—Moderate such lively grief,  
And lend an ear attentive to my voice.  
I come to signify the still firm will  
Of a proud queen, though in misfortune fallen,  
Who will not lay down with her diadem  
The empire a great heart has always o'er itself."

ADRIEN. (L.) Ah! those verses—

DUMES. (C.) Are yours.

DUBUIS. (R.) His! Why they sound very well!

ADRIEN. What, mademoiselle!

DUMES. Yes, Adrien, I dissembled with you; but that part, composed by you with a feeling of love, struck me as a sort of revelation. I seemed at once to enter into the spirit and comprehend the sense of it. I studied it and searched for the true tone to give to that unfortunate queen, the captive of those Romans who despised her race, her country and her gods; to that unhappy woman who so nobly sacrifices her love to their barbarous prejudices, particularly in that scene in which, in the presence of the angry consul and the young Roman lady promised to her lover, she bids adieu to the hero.

ADRIEN. Can it be her I am listening to ?

DUMES. (to DUBUISSON.) Fall into the situation! you, Monsieur, I mean, you are the consul—the irritated father.

DUBUIS. Who ! I ?

DUMES. You are about to curse him—I stop you.

DUBUIS. But I—

ADRIEN. Father! father! for Heaven's sake!

DUMES. (to LONISE.) You are the young Roman lady.

LOUISE. I have as much cause to be sad.

DUMES. You are restless, anxious, you must watch his looks, his words.

LOUISE. (R. C. *aside*.) Who would have made me believe that my godmother—

DUMES. (C.) And I—I thus address my Tiberius :

" Of a stern sire obey the rigid law:

Far, far from me, in camps, since so he wills,

To your proud standard victory enchain:  
 No more of me, alone of glory think.  
 But still one moment, in my present state,  
 In vain I would conceal from you my grief;  
 My weakness conquers this great sacrifice.  
 I finish weeping, for, alas ! I love!  
 I love, yet quit you. Your proud Roman sire  
 For you has scorned the hand of a great queen.  
 He views in me one of a race proscribed:  
 This regal circle glittering on my brow,  
 On which the world such mighty virtue sees,  
 Is, in a Roman's eyes, an object of contempt."

DUBUIS. (R.) Then, they are wrong; I say, a woman like you—

ADRIEN. (L.) Silence, father, pray!

DUMES. (*turning to LONISE*)

" But thou, fair girl, canst't think in thy young soul,  
 A queen's heart beats not with a woman's throb—  
 That I can neither suffer, weep nor love,  
 Or can be crushed, nor refuge seek in death.  
 Oh, Heaven, this fatal union wilt avert,  
 And then, bestowing, on thy rival, tears,  
 Wilt dread to strike two hearts desponding, which  
 Would die at once, if rudely torn apart.

LOUISE. No, no, godmother, I would not wish you to die of grief, certainly, and if I have any claims, I—

DUMES. Hold your tongue—you put me out.

DUBUIS. It's very affecting, though !

ADRIEN. Is it not? (*to MADEMOISELLE DUMESNIL*.) Ah! for Heaven's sake, go on, go on! (*prompting*.) "And thou, who with dry eyes—"

DUMES. (*turning towards DUBUISSON*.)

" And thou, who with dry eye behold'st such tears,  
 Oh! may the gods avert my sad alarms!  
 Some day, perhaps, by their fierce bolts o'erwhelmed,  
 In mourning veiled, alone upon the earth,  
 Casting in empty space a backward glance,  
 In vain you'll seek a son in life's career,  
 Your days' support you'll find, alas, is fallen :—  
 Bow'd by remorse, for ever you'll remain.

DUBUIS. My son, my son! what does that mean?  
 Don't joke, don't joke!

ADRIEN. (*giving the reply, and crossing over to R. C.*)—  
" Prevent, prevent a destiny so sad,  
There still is time, command that she remain."

DUMES. " My lord, degrade not your proud heart with  
prayers."

ADRIEN. "You're silent! well, a glorious death, then,  
shall,

Ending my days, avenge me on yourself;  
Adieu, adieu, adieu!"

DUBUIS. (*stopping him.*) Will you stay where you are?  
will you stay where you are, you unhappy boy? this is  
the third time to-day.

ADRIEN. Why, father, you are crying!

DUBUIS. How the deuce can I help it? I feel quite  
melted.

LOUISE. And so do I, hi, hi, hi! (*sobbing.*)

ADRIEN. And this is all the effect of my verses! Oh!  
Heavens! and that voice—that voice which impresses  
such value upon them. Oh! let me listen to it again,  
enchantress! yes, that queen, that is you! that lover,  
that is I! Upon my knees I await your reply.

DUMES. My reply? You still must dictate.

" Live, live, because I love you ;  
You, who from danger saved my threatened life,  
That life belongs to him who could protect it,  
'Gainst such a claim what rival can pretend ?  
Pledge of my faith, my lord, I render up  
This gage, which, lost in battles fought for me,  
Attests the valour of thy generous arm;  
By it the memory of our love shall live—  
Some victories gained—you'll proudly bring it back.  
Take it."

ADRIEN. My pocket book!

DUBUIS. His pocket book ! what the devil is *that* in the  
tragedy? Which is the false? Which is the true? I can't  
make it out! I'm quite bewildered!

ADRIEN. (*to MADEMOISELLE DUMESNIL.*) Oh,  
madame, say that all is true.

DUMES. Yes, all, except the deformities I assumed to  
disgust you. Oh, how dearly did that cost me. (*crosses to  
Dubuisson.*) Well, sir, are you disarmed, do you relent?

DUBUIS. Needs must when—why the young dog made his

father cry! but he, the son of a notary, too. And you—  
you! this then is what is called an actress! Zounds! I  
can't help yielding.

LOUISE. (*sobbing, L.*) Nor I neither, dear godmother.

DUMES. (*embracing her.*) Generous rival! that is well!  
very well, my child! You have evinced some precocious  
dispositions! So, in a few days I will make you—

LOUISE. Come out?

DUMES. No; I will make you leave Paris for Boulogne-  
sur-Mur.

LOUISE. Oh! why?

DUMES. I will follow you thither, as soon as I have,  
secured the success of Adrien's tragedy, and perhaps,  
some day, Dumesnil may abdicate her crown, and change  
her name.

ADRIEN. To assume mine, I hope.

DUMES. The hour approaches. Come, gentlemen, to the  
theatre! I can fancy I hear the bell—all to our parts!  
The great night is come. (*to the PUBLIC.*)

" When I, with lessons harsh and rude,  
The illusions crushed of a young heart,  
In me 'twas plain ingratitude,  
For, on such dreams exists our art.  
I feel it now, and tremble too!  
Kind friends around, my part is o'er,  
I dream of triumph, but if you  
Reject my claim, wake me no more !

DUBUIS.  
R.

DUMES.

ADRIEN.

LOUISE.  
L.

CURTAIN