

BELPHEGOR:

OR, THE

MOUNTEBANK AND HIS WIFE.

A Drama,

IN FOUR ACTS.

ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY

J. COURTNEY,

Author of "Time Tries All," "Aged Forty," "Taken by Surprise,"
"The Musician's Daughter," "Tricks and Trials,"
"Vanity, or the Will and the Word,"
"The Two Polts," "Lizzie
Leigh," &c. &c.



HAILES LACY,

WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,

LONDON.

*First produced at the Royal Surrey Theatre, on Monday,
January 20, 1851.*

CHARACTERS.

The Duke de Montbazon	Mr. BRUCE NORTON.
The Grand Bailli de Coargement	Mr. RAYMOND.
The Count de Castel Blangy	Mr. W. MONTAGUE.
The Vicomte Hercules	Mr. H. WIDDICOMB.
The Judge d'Arpignol	Mr. FENTON.
Commander of the Pouffieres	Mr. J. PARRY.
The Chevalier de Rollac	Mr. T. MEAD.
Doctor	Mr. BUTLER.
Beaumesnil	Mr.
Duperon	Mr.
Grelu ... (<i>Proprietor and Deputy Prefet</i>)	Mr. FITZROY.
Jean Joson ... (<i>the Deputy's Deputy</i>)	Mr. J. W. COLLIER.
Guillaume, surnamed Belphegor	Mr. CRESWICK.
Grain d'Amour	Mr. RIVERS.
Henri ... (<i>Son to Belphegor</i>)	Miss MANDLEBERT.
Madeline ... (<i>Wife to Belphegor</i>)	Miss COOPER.
Nini Flora ... (<i>Dancer at the Academie</i>)	Miss J. COVENEY.
Catherine	Miss H. COVENEY.

Masqueraders, Peasants, Soldiers, Servants, &c.

Time, in Representation, Two Hours Twenty-five Minutes.

COSTUME—PERIOD, 1814.

DUKE—Dark court dress and ribbon, powder, cocked hat.
GRAND BAILIE—Full court dress, powder, cocked hat.
BLANGY—White frock, pantaloons, Hessian boots, powder, cocked hat.
HERCULES—Light frock trimmed with frogs and fur, pantaloons, Hessian boots, powder, cocked hat.
JUDGE—Court suit.
COMMANDER OF POUFFIERS—Court suit.
CHEVALIER—Brown frock trimmed with frogs and dark fur, pantaloons, Hessians, hat, no powder. 2nd Dress—Blouse, trowsers, red wig, whiskers and beard, cap with large peak.
GRELU—Old-fashioned French dress, white cravat over chin, breeches, stockings.
JEAN—Blouse, breeches, and high boots.
BELPHEGOR—Loose white jacket and trunks cross-striped with red, frills of the same at knee and wrist, large broad-brimmed conical hat, overcoat to put on. 2nd Dress—Apron and brown trunks, loose coat. 3rd Dress—Handsome puce velvet embroidered suit, powdered wig, cocked hat, &c. 4th Dress—Dark blouse and trowsers.
GRAIN D'AMOUR—Tight jacket, breeches and shoes, high-crowned hat, and peacock's feather.
HENRI—Trunks and vest, white shirt, hose, and half-boots.
PEASANTS—Blouses, trowsers, hats and caps.
SOLDIERS—French uniforms.
SERVANTS—Rich liveries.
MADEMOISELLE VERMANDOIS—Old-fashioned silk dress, powder and feathers.
CATHERINE—French dress, large cap.
MADELINE—Dark faded dress, round velvet cap and drooping feathers. 2nd Dress—French, high body and long sleeves, cap. 3rd Dress—Embroidered open dress, short body and sleeves, feathers, &c. 4th Dress—Pelisse, hat and feathers.
FLORA—Blue satin pelisse, hat and feathers.
FEMALE PEASANTS—French dresses, high caps.
MASQUERADERS—Fancy costumes.

BELPHEGOR.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The open space of the Village of Courgemont, in the Commune of Landreci—An Inn, R.H., the Golden Sun—A wall, L.H., against which is a trellis, with fruit—Fruit Trees also overhang the wall—Stalls at the back, prepared for a Village Fête—Country people, with flowers in their hats, discovered—GRELU stands upon a chair by his own door, reading paper—JEAN JOSON is by him.*

GRELU. Countrymen, and inhabitants of the hamlet of Courgemont, I have summoned you all to communicate to you the order of the Under Prefect, date, June 2nd, 1814, which contains these words—hem (*very importantly*). "That they be joyous—very joyous—exceedingly joyous, in order to receive the Grand Bailli de Courgemont, who has returned to France after years passed out of the kingdom, for the purpose of meeting his vassals and servants—that they may have the honour and supreme delight of for an instant contemplating their legitimate lord and master."

JEAN. I shall go and pick my knuckle of veal; and return when the bell rings for the *fête*.

OMNES. Aye, aye.

Music—they are going different ways.

JEAN. Holloa! who are those people, just alighting? Ha, ha, ha!—they seem a queer set.

OMNES *laugh*.

GRELU. (*anxiously*.) Quick, all prepare to meet him.

They go off at various places.

— Here, within!

Enter GARCONS.

— Make haste—go and march before the travellers, while I run to the kitchen.

Exit GARCONS—he enters the house.

Music.—*Enter DE BLANGY and DE COURGEMONT, the Judge D'ARPIGNAL, Mademoiselle VERMANDOIS, and HERCULES DE MONTBAZON, R.H.U.E.*

COUR. This way, Madame—all my good vassals prepare to meet you.

Madlle. V. But I do not see any one of them,

COUR. You see, they are preparing for the *fête*—we shall have a pretty, pouting, little girl peeping forth at every corner soon.

HER. I wish they'd make haste. I'm fond of pretty girls.

Looking about, and up.

Madlle. V. Hercules!

HER. Yes, grand aunt.

Returns, bowing each time.

Madlle. V. For shame, Sir, remember that your twenty-first year is completed in one month from this, and that I must give a proper account to your great uncle, the Duke de Montbazon, of your conduct. I die of thirst.

COUR. Within, there—landlord. (*calls.*)

Enter GRELU, from Inn.

GRELU (*takes off his hat*). You did me, gentlemen, the honour to call me.

COUR. Quick, a glass of lemonade, for this lady.

GRELU. In one moment, Monsieur.

Exit.

COUR. You see, in him, *one* of my vassals, and how *obedient* he is. I am now on my own lands, and can offer you some fruit.

about to gather some fruit from wall, when JEAN JOSON appears upon the top, armed with a pitchfork.

JEAN. Come, I say, stand off; I'm here to take care of this fruit, and the first who attempts to touch it, I'll fork him (*flourishes his fork*).

Enter GRELU with lemonade.

GRELU. Here it is, Madame.

Madlle. V. Mademoiselle, if you please.

GRELU. Certainly, Mademoiselle.

Bows—She takes the glass and drinks.

Madlle. V. It's very good; thanks, my brave man (*gives back the glass*)—go.

GRELU. Tenpence, if you please, Mademoiselle.

all stare.

COUR. Tenpence! What, pay on my own lands?

GRELU. Your lands!

stares again.

COUR. My lands, Sir. I insist, therefore, you prepare to conduct me to my chateau.

GRELU. I beg your pardon, Monsieur the ex-Grand Bailli, but I must observe, with due respect, that you have no lands here.

COUR. Ridiculous! Where are my farms—where is my chateau?

GRELU. The farms belong to the Under Prefect, and your chateau as been pulled down.

COUR. My farms sold, my chateau pulled down?

GRELU. There's nothing left but the pigeon-house.

COUR. What! all my estate, but a pigeon-house?

JEAN. (*on wall*) And I keep my cocks and hens in that.

Madlle. V. (*to GRELU*) You'll prepare our rooms, Sir?

GRELU. Rooms! I have only three, and they are taken by a lady who arrived here this morning.

Madlle. V. Then we must go instantly.

COUR. But I have discharged the post-boy who brought us. Is there a post-master here?

GRELU. (*bows*) I am the post-master.

JEAN. (*riding on the wall*) And I'm the post-boy.

Madlle. V. Put horses to the carriages.

GRELU. I have only four—and they are hired.

Madlle. V. By whom.

GRELU. The lady who arrived this morning.

Madlle. V. The lady can take two—and *we* must have the others.

GRELU. That's impossible—she has already paid for them.

Madlle. V. Where can you put us?

GRELU. I have a beautiful smoking-room at your service.

Madlle. V. Oh, oh!

HER. Then I can have a pipe.

Madlle. V. Hercules.

HER. Yes, grand aunt.

Madlle. V. I shall faint.

HER. I'll catch you, grand aunt.

GRELU. Perhaps the lady will give up one of her rooms—I'll go and see. *Exit into house.*

JEAN. And I'll go to dinner. I say, don't you touch the fruit while I am gone. I don't much like the looks of any of you. The old woman seems a regular queer one. *Exit.*

Enter NINI FLORA, followed by a SERVANT, with a basket, R.H.U.E.

FLORA. Who can want to speak to me?

BLANGY. A very beautiful creature.

HER. (*approaching FLORA*) A very beautiful——

Madlle. V. Hercules!

HER. Yes, grand aunt.

FLORA (*aside R.H.*) Some returned emigrants, I suppose (*to Mademoiselle*). Madame!

Madlle. V. (R.C.) Mademoiselle, if you please (FLORA *curtsies*). I hear, Madame, that you have engaged all the rooms, and all the horses of the hotel.

FLORA. I have, Mademoiselle.

Madlle. V. I must inform you, that you speak to persons of rank—these gentlemen and myself—I am Mademoiselle de Vermandois, and this, the Vicomte Hercules.

FLORA. Oh, Mademoiselle. (*she curtsies, they bow.*)

Madlle. V. Are you of quality?

FLORA. Of full quality.

Madlle. V. Countess?

FLORA. No.

Madlle. V. Duchess?

FLORA. No.

Madlle. V. Princess?

FLORA. Yes—(*aside*) I am often each and all, at the opera.

Madlle. V. (*with reverence*) Madame!

FLORA. Messieurs.

OMNES. She's adorable.

HER. Oh, yes, adorable.

Madlle. V. Hercules!

HER. Yes, grand aunt.

FLORA. What a queer little fellow.

Madlle. V. I have to request, Madame, that you will cede to us two of the horses you have engaged here, or two seats in your carriage for the Vicomte (*points to HERCULES*) and myself; but lest you should feel any scruples I'll inform you who we are, my name is Athenais Rosalba de Vermandois, of the noble family of the Duke de Beaumont.

FLORA. I'll seat you with pleasure; but lest you should feel any scruples, I'll inform you who I am—my name is Nini Flora, otherwise, Camargo, dancer at the Académie Royale.

OMNES. A dancer!

BLANGY. (L.) Ha, ha, ha!

Madlle. V. Horror (*hastens to the inn*). Follow me, Hercules.

FLORA (*laughs.*)

HER. Yes, grand aunt (*giggles*). She's uncommonly pretty for a dancer. (*approaching FLORA.*)

Madlle. V. Hercules!

HER. Yes, grand aunt.

Follows her—all exit but BLANGY through gateway of inn.

FLORA. (R.) Ha, ha, ha! An army in retreat—how is it that I have not frightened you. Sir?

BLANGY. (L.) Me, Mademoiselle!—I never knew fear, much more of a pretty——

FLORA. That's gallant, and spirited, and if you want any of my horses——

BLANGY. I accept your offer with pleasure.

*Music—piano, BLANGY takes her hand, and conducts her to the Hotel—
A noise heard, R.H.U.E., with cries of joy.*

Enter GRELU, from gateway.

GRELU. What the deuce is that? Ah, it is some conjurors coming to the *fête*. I must go and examine them.

BLANGY. Examine poor devils like those?

GRELU. (R.H.C.) In my quality of deputy—do you not know, Monsieur, that many suspected individuals have penetrated the frontier? I have the list—Lacour, Margrat, Lavarenes——

BLANGY. (L.H.C.) Lavarenes! that traitor by turns to the Republican army, and that of the Condé, condemned to death in 1794, for robbing and assassinating the pay-master of the Royalist army, the most adroit and dangerous villain of the day.

Noise and cries—Enter a mock Drum-Major, with his stick, before two musicians with clarionets, then an old Berline and horse, GRAIN D'AMOUR behind, with large drum—HENRI on the horse's back, with cymbals—BELPHEGOR standing up in the Berline—MADELINE and the little JEANNE are seated. U.E.R.H.

BELPHEGOR *bows to the country people, who have followed, and ranged around.*

BEL. Call our friends around us.

HEN. Yes, noble master.

Hits a clash upon cymbals—GRAIN D'AMOUR strikes drum and flourishes stick comically.

BEL. My friends, it is with the permission of Monsieur the Prefect—sound—Jaquenet.

HEN. Yes, noble master.

He and GRAIN D'AMOUR sound one stroke each.

BEL. It is with the permission of these respectable authorities that we have the honour of exhibiting before you our most extraordinary wonders and works. Works of grace, elegance, and address, exercises and achievements, which have proved the admiration of every foreign court—sound Jaquenet.

HEN. Yes, noble master. *(they sound again.)*

BEL. We offer you the sciences of ventriloquy, of necromancy, cartomancy, chiromancy, or any mancy you may fancy. We inform young maidens the year, the month, the week, the day, the hour, the minute of their approaching marriage—we give to young men the number they will draw in the conscription; and to married men, all their spouses have done, do do, and mean to do. *(Music sound again.)* I am the great Paillegoe—My grandfather, Belphégor the First, swallowed pen-knives, carving knives, scissors, and razors—My father, Belphégor the Second, swallowed swords, sabres, and bayonets—I, Belphégor the Third, swallow pistols, carbines, and blunderbusses, and *(lifting JACQUENET in the air)* Jaquenet, my son, will one day swallow cannons, mortars, and howitzers.

HEN. Yes, papa.

BEL. The performance will commence at two o'clock, with the representation and feats of two Indians—the labours of Hercules, by myself—and will conclude with the feats of this noble charger, who, after speaking Chinese, Arabic, French, Dutch, and thirty-six other languages, will swallow himself before this noble company. Sound your music.

Music as before—he raises his hat—they all applaud, salute him, and go off different ways, U.E.R.H. and L.H. BELPHEGOR descends, assists his wife and the little JEANNE down, then HENRI, embracing them as he places them on the ground.

BEL. Grain D'Amour!

GRAIN. Most noble master?

BEL. Unharness Mouton, and pay him the respect due to so noble a charger.

GRAIN. Yes, noble master.

GRAIN D'AMOUR *signs to a Garçon of the Inn, who assists him—the horse is led off, gateway.*

BEL. My poor Mouton, after my wife and children, I love you better than anything else in the world.

BLANGY. (*to GRELU*) You have nothing to suspect here ?

GRELU. I don't know—my duty is to examine him.—(*he goes towards Belphegor, and rudely*) Approach!

BEL. (C.) Is it to Monsieur the Prefect, I have the honour of speaking?

GRELU. (R. *rather reduced*) Not quite—but I am the Prefect's Deputy.

BEL. The Prefect's Deputy!—bow all to the Deputy of the Prefect.

HENRI. Yes, noble master.

They bow, as he introduces each, with little JEANNE, who curtsies, L.H.

GRELU. (*condescendingly*) Very well—you have your passport?

BEL. It is here.

GRELU. (R.C.) You must go with me to the Mayor's office.

BEL. (L.H.C.) I am ready, Monsieur.

MAD. (L.H.) While you are gone, William, I will enter the inn, and put the children to rest.

BEL. Very well, let them rest; and do you take some, too, my sweet (*very kindly*)—and don't let them forget the poor horse; he has brought us nine miles this morning.

MAD. Be sure I'll not.

BEL. Bless you, Madeline.

MAD. Come, children. (*they exeunt to the Inn, through gateway.*)

BLANGY. You know, I suppose, my good man, that your wife is very pretty?

BEL. Ha, ha, ha! You don't think I'm a fool, do you? I know she's more than that—she's good, good as she's pretty. She's the joy of my house—that is, she would be, if I had a house as others have (*laughing*). But, pshaw, that does not prevent our being happy.

BLANGY. Happy—are you happy?

BEL. Happy as the day.

BLANGY. In spite of the life you lead.

BEL. What's in it to make me unhappy? There are four of us so, you see, we have each three to love. When one sings, the others sing without asking why; and were it not for one thing—my little girl, who is sickly and very weak—we should never know a moment's melancholy—(*he embraces little JEANNE, who comes from the Inn with a cup of wine, L.H.—he drinks it*) Run to your mamma, my pet. *She exits.*

BLANGY. But the fatigue—the travelling?

BEL. Travelling, pah! that's the very groundwork of our gaiety, there we all sit in our nest, while I whistle some lively air, and they chorus it. Wherever we stop, we find light hearts and smiling faces to welcome us; at night, if the receipts have been good, we sup gaily, and thank Heaven for its bounty. When bad, we repine not; but look with confidence to Him, for that which He will bestow upon the morrow.

BLANGY. Bravo! You are a philosopher.

BEL. Me?—no—I am a poor mountebank.

During this, GRAIN D'AMOUR and GARCON have been arranging the platform under wall, L.H.U.E., taking out dresses, cups, &c.

GRELU. Come, we must to the Mayor's office.

BEL. *(having been helped on with a cape coat)* I am at your service.

Exit with GRELU, R.U.E. HERCULES comes from gate of Hotel.

HER. It's quite settled that we can't go.

BLANGY. Where have you been?

HER. I've been in search of some horses. Aunt sent me round to all the farms to find some vehicle to continue our journey; but the deuce a bit can I find anything—but a dung-cart.

BLANGY. Ha, ha, ha! I have been more fortunate, thanks to the lady. Adieu!

HER. Good bye, Count.

BLANGY *exits*, U.E.R.H.

Enter FLORA from gateway.

FLORA. (L.) There he is.

HER. (R.) There she is, there's the dancer. *(bows, and is going in.)*

FLORA. I have frightened you, Sir, as well as the rest.

HER. Frightened me!—no—yes—that is to say—I—it was grand aunt who frightened me. I was afraid that— *(looks sheepish.)*

FLORA. Was that your grand aunt that I spoke to?

HER. *(in agitation)* Yes, Mademoiselle.

FLORA. She is a very silly woman, isn't she?

HER. Rather droll.

FLORA. And you are as silly, I think.

HER. I'm afraid I am.

FLORA. You are the age of a man, are you not?

HER. *(lively)* Oh, yes.

FLORA. I'll pay these people for their haughty pride, and if possible drive this Mademoiselle Vermandois crazy for the loss of her nephew; I'll persuade him to elope with me, and then leave him on the road. *(aside)* Should you not like to get rid of your aunt?

HER. Oh, shouldn't I.

FLORA. (R.) Will you run away with me?

HER. (L.) Shouldn't I like, but I've got no horses.

FLORA. Take mine.

HER. I'll go and ask aunt.

FLORA. Here, come back—are you mad?

HER. Not quite, yet, but I think I shall be, before I get far on the road.

Enter JEANJOSON, booted, and with whip, gateway.

JEAN. The carriage is ready, Mademoiselle.

HER. So are we.

FLORA. Come along.

Exit, gateway

Madlle. V. (without) Hercules—where is he? *(appears at window over gateway of Inn)* Hercules!

HER. I can't come, grand aunt, I'm going to travel with Mademoiselle.

Madlle. V. Monstrous, horrible—dare you?

HER. I'll dare Old Nick himself, for a pretty girl like her, so good bye, aunt. (*runs off, gateway, Mademoiselle screams, and disappears.*)

Music—A noise is heard as of distant quarrelling, R.H.U.E.

Enter MADELINE *from gateway.*

MAD. (*looks off R.U.E.*) Ah, heavens—what is this? a quarrel yonder, and my husband in the midst of those men—let me fly (*about to go*); they come this way.

Enter DE BLANGY, *the Chevalier* ROLLAC, BELPHEGOR, GRELU, *and Peasants,* U.E.R.H.

GRELU. Go, go all of you, and remain on your duty in the fields.

Some of the Peasants exit, R.H.U.E.

MAD. William!

BEL. Madeline.

GRELU. (R.C.) You have borne yourself most bravely, Belphégor.

ROL. Belphégor! it is the man I seek (*aside.*)

MAD. Oh, husband—what is this?

BEL. Not much, my love. Egad, I never dreamed that I was half so strong—swallowing so much iron, I suppose.

BLANGY. The matter is this, Madame, your husband has in the bravest manner defended us.

BEL. (*to her*) And tossed the rascals about like a ball, too.

BLANGY. This gentleman (*points to ROLLAC*) had quarrelled with the countrymen—when I came up to him there were four upon one, so I fell upon the four with my whip.

BEL. And when I arrived there were eight upon two, armed with sticks and pitchforks, and talking of death, so as this gentleman had fallen upon four, I fell upon eight; if you had but seen me, at each blow I gave—thus, down went one! till they all lay before me, one upon another, like a hand of cards, and in about a minute, they all sat squatting on the ground, gazing at me with astonishment; but, to tell you the truth, I was much more astonished than they were, to discover, for the first time in my life, that I possessed the strength of an ox, or a lion. Egad! I would embrace you, my love, but, upon my life, I'm afraid of my strength.

MAD. My good William, but you are not wounded?

BEL. Haven't a scratch. Would you have believed it?—I, who never quarrelled with a single soul in my life before, to knock down eight men. As for fighting, I never had occasion till this hour to try my strength—but my children, when they exhibit with me do their tender limbs suffer from my grasp? My little sickly one—my Jeanne—does she (*trembles*)? Is it this that has made her droop, pine, sink? Madeline! did I think that —

MAD. My good, kind husband—she was weakly born, you know?

BEL. Yes, yes—I know: and I should not take her in these arms

but to caress—to press gently her sweet lips. My children! I shall have no more courage to work with them now—none—none.

MAD. Nay, nay—be composed, I beg, entreat you, William!

BLANGY. (*aside.*) This is a brave fellow.

BEL. Well, well, here is my permit, let us prepare, Madeline.

They go up as preparing paraphernalia, and place them on a stand made by boards and tressels.

ROL. I must now give you my thanks, Count.

BLANGY. To whom, Sir, may I have the honour of speaking?

ROL. The Chevalier de Rollac.

BLANGY. (L.U.C.) Indeed! Lately, I believe, from America?

ROL. (R.U.C. *in embarrassment*) Ye—yes.

BLANGY. Was it not in your arms that the Marquis De Montbazon died, in Germany?

ROL. (*hesitating*) The—ye—yes—he died in my arms.

BLANGY. But have I not met you in past times?

ROL. (*with hesitation*) You—may—

BLANGY. When young—in fact, almost a boy—in the army of the Condé.

ROL. Yes—you are right.

BLANGY. I am brother-in-law to the Marquis; and we have in this inn Mademoiselle de Vermandois, his aunt, with the young Vicomte his nephew—they will be happy to see you (*going up.*)

ROL. Your pardon—the Marquis, when dying, told me he left an infant daughter?

BLANGY. She was lost during the Revolution, and all search for her has been in vain.

ROL. I think I have some trace of her.

BLANGY. Indeed! Where?

ROL. In this inn, the Golden Sun.

BLANGY. Ha! I will rejoin you on the instant. *Exit gateway, R.H.*

ROL. Ha, ha ha! Courage, Lavarenes! You will be received and accepted in the name of Rollac—the true Rollac is dead—supposed to be drowned; but was, in fact, killed by me, in a duel in America. Ha, ha, ha! I have his family papers, and amongst them have I found one that must make my fortune, when I have rendered to the Montbazons this lost daughter; whom, by this writing, I have found. I shall then be rich; and, shielded by them, have nothing to fear from justice. My friend (*to BELPHEGOR, who is busy at his stand preparing*)—I would speak to you, my friend.

BEL. Me, Monsieur?

ROL. I have long been in search of you. Your name is William, surnamed Belphégor? You see I know you.

BEL. A thousand fools in France know that.

ROL. Will you give me your hand?

BEL. Of course, I will. Which will you have—the right or the left? (*turns them*)

ROL. No matter which.—(*looks on hand given*) You were married about twelve years ago?

BEL. Well, considering I have a boy, eleven years old, that's no great wonder.

ROL. This marriage shall bring you happiness.

BEL. Shall! It has already—two little cherubs!

ROL. You married your wife in a village in Brittany, but she was not the daughter of the poor workman who gave her to you. He told you that a man of wretched exterior one night confided her to his care, promising to return in three days, but who never re-appeared.

BEL. Yes. Nothing strange still.

ROL. So much for the past: now for the present and the future. Your wife shall prove to you the source of a handsome fortune. She is of an illustrious family, noble as the princes of the blood, and rich to millions.

BEL. What, she!—my wife! What, Madeline, rich!—and shall my children be rich too? Princes!—my Henri, and my little—Oh, bah! you are hoaxing a poor devil.

ROL. 'Tis true—in a moment I'll give you the proof. Here are some of the arrears of her fortune—a trifle—(*gives the contents of a purse, which BELPHEGOR turns quickly, and counts*)—await me here, and in an instant your doubts shall be dissipated.—(*going, and aside*) Rollac, your fortune is secured. *Exit R.H.U.E.*

BEL. (*stands as stupified*) Madeline, Madeline! Henri—my children! Come here, come all—but come quickly.

Enter MADELINE and Children from Gateway, BELPHEGOR, R.C., MADELINE, L.H., with JEANNE and HENRI each side.

MAD. Husband—dear husband—what is the matter? What have you got?

BEL. What have I *got!*—hold your hand (*to HENRI*). There! that's what I've got (*throws it in*)—and that's nothing to what we are going to have.

HEN. Oh, what beautiful yellow money!

MAD. Gold!

BEL. A little. A mere trifle to you, my love—the daughter of a Count, a Duke, a Prince, for what I know.

MAD. What, me!—of high birth and fortune?

BEL. Yes. Embrace me, Madeline—embrace me, children. All the proofs will be in our hands in an instant.

MAD. And shall we, indeed, be rich? Oh, my children, my heart then will no longer sink and sicken in beholding you covered with these rags—even as vagrants.

BEL. (*aside*) What says she?

MAD. Oh, no more shall I have to stifle my sighs and conceal my tears—no more behold, with shuddering fear, disgust, and dread, the torturing of your limbs. No, no, my infants—now—I shall now be happy.

BEL. Madeline, there is something in your joy which saddens me.

MAD. Pardon, William—I may now speak, for we are rich. I

own that I have often blushed at our calling—my blood, too, has revolted against my misery.

BEL. But—did you ever blush for me?

MAD. No, no, William. But no more of suffering. We shall be happy—oh, how happy!

Re-enter ROLLAC, from gateway.

ROL. I am here.

MAD. Our friend, Madeline—he brings the proofs.

ROL. (C.) You are aware, Madame, that you were placed by an unknown hand in the care of your supposed father? That man was noble, but was compelled to join the army of the Condé without reclaiming you, as that of the Republic lay between you and him. In a few days they gave battle, and the Marquis, your father, was slain.

BEL. (R.H.) There's a little Marquis. (*swings HENRI.*)

ROL. But a friend was near him—that friend was myself.

MAD. (L.H.) You—my father's friend?

ROL. He fell in my arms, and, dying, traced these lines—(*reads paper*): " My child is in the hands of Pierre Valin, labourer at Chamont, near Briene. I, dying, declare this child to be my daughter. I leave to the Chevalier Rollac the task of finding her.
" (Signed) MARQUISE DE———."

BEL. His name.

ROL. You shall know in good time.

BEL. As quick as you like, for we are rather anxious—but you are a Marquis, you little rogue. (*to HENRI, and plays with him.*)

MAD. And—my mother?

ROL. She was lost in giving you birth. Do you doubt me?

BEL. Oh, no—we believe you. You are a Marquis, you little rogue. (*to HENRI.*)

ROL. Then our bargain rests, but upon two conditions.

BEL. Our bargain!

ROL. Her family is rich—one of the first in France.

BEL. So much the better for us. Take us to them at once.

ROL. How!—you do not dream——

BEL. I hope not—I hope it's all true.

MAD. What is this, Sir?

BEL. Yes—out with it. What have you got to say?

ROL. Simply this: they cannot introduce to the world the wife of the mountebank Belphégor, or the children of the juggler.

MAD. Monsieur!

BEL. (*crosses to her, L.H.*) Madeline, remove these children—they have not yet learned to blush for their father.

MAD. Nay, William. (*she removes them to a building, L.H. 2 E.*)

BEL. Now, Monsieur, explain clearly, and, above all, quickly.

ROL. I think I can offer, on the part of the father of the late Marquis, this much:—She must no longer remain with you—she must be presented to the world as the widow of some foreign nobleman——

MAD. (*with great force*) What!—the widow of—

BEL. (*restraining her.*) Go on, Monsieur.

ROL. She can, if her heart insists, have one of her children.

MAD. } Go on, Monsieur.
BEL. }

ROL. They will assure her of the safety of the other.

BEL. (*coldly*) And the husband, we have not heard what they propose doing with the husband.

ROL. What expect you? It is for you to name the sum.

BEL. The sum! Is it with gold you think to tempt my poverty? Is it in the broad and open face of day—is it in the face of Heaven—you ask a father to sell his wife and children?

MAD. William, lose not your manhood.

BEL. I'll not, wife; but I *must* uphold it. Chevalier, I am of no high-born rank, I own. My father, a good, respected man in trade, shared the fate of too many in the wild struggle of a people against their besotted rulers; he was no wild partizan on either side, content if he could live with honesty—a wild and savage enemy entered our small town, I saw that father, defending his own door, struck dead. My mother, flying with me, perished on a road-side bank; I called to her—she answered not, my child's strength yielding to my grief, I fell, slumbering, on that mother's corse; on waking, saw, to me, wild-looking people round; and, asking for my mother, they told me she was happy, and had gone to meet my father. They were travelling mountebanks, who having given her an humble grave, protected me; was this a crime in me or mine?

ROL. No, certainly, it was charity.

BEL. The mountebanks' charity—they made me useful in their calling. Manhood came, I lodged some time at Chamont with Pierre Valin, her protector; at his last request, I named to her my love, to which she, in love, responded; we now have children, loving us as we love them—I knew not that she was rich. Now, tell me, Sir, if her family were placed upon the highest pinnacle of worldly pride, name or rank, what is there in act of mine, in what have I so disgraced her name, my name, that they should dare ask her to discard me?

MAD. Sir, this family, of whom I know nothing, adopts him, or adopts not me. You may depart.

ROL. A marriage like this the law allows not—repudiates.

BEL. The law!

ROL. Will force you to deliver up one who belongs not to you—we shall see quickly. *Exit U.E.R.H.*

MAD. Fear not, William, fear not the law, for I'll not consent to part.

BEL. You may not; but their laws have tyrannic power, against which the poor man has but little chance.

MAD. Be firm.

BEL. Be firm! tell me that ten men stand armed to slay me, and I'll be so, but they would bear you from me—all—you, Henri, my little Jeanne.

MAD. What is to be done?

BEL. I know not—I see no way—ah— yes, yes.

MAD. What?

BEL. Flight—instant flight—with my family.

MAD. Quick—quick then—let us prepare.

BEL. Grain D'Amour!

Enter GRAIND'AMOUR, from back.

GRAIN. My noble master!

BEL. No words, fool—the horse, the chaise!

GRAIN. But we haven't finished our dinner.

BEL. Obey me—(D'AMOUR *runs.*) Henri! Jeanne!

Enter HENRI and JEANNE. L. 2. E.

HEN. We are here, pa.

BEL. Be speedy—prepare the things: we must fly—the dresses, carpet—all in the chaise.

They throw the various things in, while GRAIN D'AMOUR, who has called GARCON, puts the horse in chaise,—all aid.

BEL. My poor Montore—'tis you must save us this day. Garcon!

GRAIN. Garcon, Garcon.

BEL. Now, to distribute this villain's gold, and against himself. (to GARCON) You have post-horses—you let them, do you not?

GAR. Yes—but we have only four, and they are let for the day.

BEL. Now, mark! I am agent for a high and powerful personage—he is travelling this road. Take these Louis; and, till he arrives here—it may not be for three days—retain all your horses, and those you can hire. Let them wait here in readiness. A heavy penalty falls on your master, if the Prince's orders be disobeyed. Serve him well. Here is for yourself. (*gives him money.*)

GAR. He should have a hundred horses, if we had 'em.

BEL. Ready. (*mounting.*)

MAD. Yes—yes.

HEN. All right, pa.

BEL. Three days gained. I know each lane and cross-road. (*gathering reins*) You guard your fortune, Duke, while I bear off my treasure. (*drives off, as drop falls.*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A Garret—Fireplace, with pot boiling, ladle hanging.—
A set opening, which goes to a Gallery, in which is an open space,
through the roofs of the houses is seen a distant country beyond—A
General Entrance from the Gallery—Door R.H. and L.H.

BEL. (*discovered preparing a meal*) There, everything's in apple-pie order. All's ready for my dear little wife, when she gets up (*listens*). Hark, I fancy poor little Jeanne is crying, if so, she'll wake her (*goes to door R. and peeps in*)—No, they both sleep—sleep on, dear Madeline, and forget even to dream of that you lately heard. Yet although I study her every word, action, thought, wish, I fancy she is pettish, choleric (*sighs*). Oh, dear! oh, dear! that fellow's news has made me very wretched.

Enter GRAIN D'AMOUR, carrying greens, carrots, &c. L.D.

— Oh, here you are. Where's Henri?

GRAIN.(L.H.) He was with me in the Square. He's coming up the back-stairs, I think.

Enter HENRI, L.D.

HEN. It's such a fine day—the sun shines. Where we go to work, father, I'm sure we shall take such lots of money.

BEL. Hush! don't make a noise, child—your poor mother is asleep.

HEN. I'll be as quiet as a mouse. (*takes BELPHEGOR down mysteriously.*) Do you know, father, she took us both in her arms yesterday—my little sitter and myself—kissed our hands, and cheeks, and lips; and did cry so, oh, very bitterly, poor thing! and then, looking upon us both, said, " No—no—no—I'll never quit you—never."

BEL. She said that—and cried bitterly, did she? (*turns, and seeing GRAIN D'AMOUR*) Now, what do you stand hugging those things in your arms for, instead of putting them into the pot? Come, Sir, scrape the carrots—quick.

GRAIN. Yes, master—I won't be two minutes.

(begins to scrape a carrot with clumsiness, and upside down.)

BEL. Ah, you stupid fool, do you think carrots will be scraped in that brutal manner—against the grain? How would you like it? Look here, Sir—take it thus (*taking one from the bundle*), between the thumb and fore-finger, and gently pass the knife over it in this fashion, taking off its coat, but not wounding it. Go and lay the cloth—don't make a noise.

HEN. (R.H. *by table.*) Here it is. (*covering table with cloth.*)

GRAIN D'AMOUR *takes the plates, from shelf, R. back, and lets one fall.*

BEL. You stupid scoundrel, I told you not to make a noise, didn't I? (*kicks him behind, and GRAIN DAMOUR lets the others fall.*)

HEN. There goes the last.

BEL. Then there's no more to break. Come here. (*to HENRI.*) Here is your jacket—I've had it mended. Now, when you give the double somersault, hold fast to your jacket—as I've told you a hundred times—and gather yourself up like a ball, or you'll burst it again, and there'll be more work for your poor mother.

HEN. I'll squeeze myself into nothing, father; for my heart tells me I should act well and cleverly for you and my mother—I'll do my work well, or——

BEL. My poor boy, you have your mother's heart at sacrifice—embrace me. (*as they embrace,*)

CATHERINE *enters*, L.D.

CATH. What a pleasing sight to be sure. Good day, neighbour.

BEL. Ah, Catherine—I'm glad to see, perhaps, the only one in the world who feels interested for us.

CATH. Oh you flatter me—but Madeline——(*looks about.*)

BEL. She sleeps at present.

HENRI (*goes up*, L.H., *prepares dinner.*)

CATH. While you, I see, are preparing dinner for her—kind soul.

BEL. Her hands, you know, are so small and delicate. Have you ever observed what dear little fingers my wife has? (*sits by fire making soup and cutting bread.*)

CATH. Very often. Is the little girl asleep too? How is she this morning?

BEL. (*sighing*) Ah, like her mother—delicate—pale, and——

GRAIN. (*who has been busy preparing.*) There's no wine, master.

BEL. Why, there was a bottle full yesterday?

GRAIN. But I broke the bottle.

BEL. I'll break your head some day (*threatens, then gives him money*)—go along. (*taking him by the ear*, GRAIN D'AMOUR *exits*, L.D.) — Henri, I hear your mother—go, step and see if she wants anything. (*HENRI runs into MADELINE'S room.*) A fine boy that, though I say it—a heart of gold and muscles of steel. Well, I hope my wife and little one are a little recovered from our long journey—right across France to Angoulême, here, so quick to.

CATH. But why in such haste to arrive?

BEL. Oh, it wasn't the haste to arrive—it was the haste to fly. (*CATHERINE starts.*) Oh, don't be alarmed—I have not stolen anything. On the contrary, they wanted to steal from me (*tasting soup*)—Oh, when I think, if I dared (*in a passion*)——but excuse me—these things don't interest you.

CATH. I beg your pardon; you know I have a very great respect for you—and I am sure if you want protection in Angoulême, only say so. I know persons who are rich.

BEL. (*cutting bread*) What! great people—Dukes, Chevaliers!—thank you for nothing. I don't want their protection. No, no; happiness consists not in riches, titles, chateaus—but in the love of a man's wife and children (*goes to find a plate*); in *their* love for him; in eating with a sweet relish the bread one has earned. You can say as much to my wife if you like (*winks*), when you are alone you know. All women listen to what others tell them.

CATH. Oh fear not that, Madeline cares for your poverty, she must be ungrateful, indeed, to have one regret with so good a husband (BELPHEGOR *has gone up to the fireplace, and is attending to the pot*). What can she desire?

BEL. I don't know; nothing, I hope.

CATH. Are you not preparing everything for her—soup?

BEL. Yes, but what sort of soup? Rich people, I'm afraid, make their soup very differently to mine, and they don't live upon soup. (*pouring the soup on the bread.*)

Enter MADELINE *and* HENRI, R.D.

—They eat all sorts of things, all sorts of ways—and at all times of the day. (*whistles, having burnt his fingers, pouring the soup.*)

CATH. Ah, my good friend, we were speaking of you and the little girl—how is she?

MAD. Very ill, and it distresses me much.

BEL. Arn't you any better, my pet? (*kindly.*)

Enter GRAIN D'AMOUR, D. *with a bottle of wine.*

MAD. Yes—yes (*aside*) let me conceal my fears.

BEL. Well, come, sit down (*places chair for MADELINE*). Will you join us?

CATH I'll not refuse—I can then stay and have a chat with Madeline, while you are at work in the Square.

BEL. So you can. (*they sit, gives GRAIN D'AMOUR a small quantity, he wants more.*)

GRAIN. Oh, Sir.

BEL. (*helps GRAIN to soup, winks at CATHERINE*) Don't forget (*having served MADELINE, and the rest*)—I say, my dear, you don't eat?

MAD. I have no appetite.

BEL. Try, my love—I've heard the appetite comes with eating.

GRAIN. (*eating fast.*) Mine does.

BEL. Hold your tongue, Sir. Come try, dear.

MAD. I cannot. (*having essayed to eat, but cannot.*)

BEL. Ah, I haven't made it to your taste; or perhaps that scoundrel Grain D'Amour has smoked it.

GRAIN. (*his mouth full*) I think it is smoked—give yours to me, master. It's very nasty.

BEL. For shame, your soup is horrible—I can't touch it.

MAD. William, the soup was never better. (*rises.*)

BEL. No, my dear, I don't think it was. (*about to eat.*)

MAD. But I don't feel inclined.

BEL. Nor I either. Well, we'll be off to work. Grain D'Amour? (*rises C., puts on his coat.*)

GRAIN. But I haven't half done.

BEL. I'm going to commence (GRAIN D'AMOUR *gets up, looking at the table with grief*). Henri, get the trumpet.

HEN. Yes, father. (*gets it.*)

BEL. The carpet, my balancing chair, sabres, my tow, my goblets (HENRI *brings all*). Have you got the hoop, Grain D'Amour?

GRAIN. Yes, master.

HEN. Come along, papa—I'll take the great chair.

BEL. We have a new feat to-day, Catherine. Jaquenot spins round upon his head—I put my hands to his feet, thus—place him on my head, walk round with the cap, while he plays the cornet-a-piston.

MAD. William, to hear you——

BEL. No, my love, that was only an artistical fancy of mine.

HEN. Don't you be afraid, mother, the Square where we work, you know, is opposite our garret window, and if I but look towards it, and think of you, it will give me courage.

MAD. Dear boy. (*embraces and kisses him.*)

BEL. Good bye, Madeline—adieu, Catherine.

CATH. Good bye.

BEL. Where are you, Henri?

HEN. Here, papa.

BEL. Adieu—(*as he turns back to say this, he hits GRAIN D'AMOUR with the chair at his back, by accident.*)

GRAIN. Oh, oh!

BEL. You stupid rascal, why don't you look where you're going?
They exit, R.D.U.E.

MAD. I am glad to be alone with you, Catherine, for I would speak with you. My daughter—I dare not let him know how very ill the child is.

CATH. 'Tis an affliction to which you must resign yourself.

MAD. Resign myself, say you? Resign myself to see my little one pining, wasting, day by day—in lack of that aid I might procure but for my poverty! Oh, no, no! I cannot resign myself to that, without a mother's effort. A doctor resides in the lower part of this large house: he is, they tell me,—of great skill—the first in the city. I must—will—have his opinion on my child.

CATH. Why, do you know he makes no visits under ten francs?

MAD. Ten francs! My poor girl. (*weeps.*)

CATH. That is why I say you must be resigned—when a woman, poor as you are, is married to a miserable man.

MAD. That man is my husband—and the child, whose affliction I so mourn, his offspring.

CATH. I know, I know.—(*aside*) She is right, but I must not neglect my promise.—(*aloud*) But you'll not deny that the rich, in comparison with the poor, have got much to aid them—happy partners, healthy children: or, if sickly by chance, they have the means of restoration in their hands. When grown up, they can leave them fortunes—marry them to friends, wealthy gentlemen. Now, you are a kind mother—love your child—and were you but rich——

MAD. Rich! Oh, but what good would wealth be to me, if that which I possessed cankered my very heart? You know well that——

CATH. Yes, I do know—that if you chose——

MAD. Ha! Heavens! has my husband told you?

CATH. William, no, he is very careful of his secrets; but another;

an excellent, good man, has told me, he has sought, found, and would cherish you and the children, you so love.

MAD. Discovered! Oh! did my husband know this.

CATH. 'Tis he who has spoken to me about you.

ROLLAC *appears at the door*, L.H.

MAD. Great heavens!

CATH. Now, Madeline, be reasonable, hush! he is in this house—he is here.

MAD. Here!

Chevalier de ROLLAC advances.

ROL. (*to CATHERINE, C.*) Leave us. (*CATHERINE exits*, L.H.)

Madame you behold me here a second time to salute the heritress of one of the proudest names of France—the daughter of the Marquis de Montbazon.

MAD. Oh, leave me, if my husband should come.

ROL. Before I followed your steps, I wrote to the Duke, your grandfather, the joy that had entered his heart at your recovery, was in some part damped by your flight; but all is not quite lost, if you now consent to accompany me.

MAD. No, no, no! I cannot.

ROL. By the Duke's order—your nearest relative—the Count de Blangy, has arrived here to bear you to him—his carriage and people are not two paces from your door—with but one word of yours, the entire family are ready to embrace you, whom they have so long mourned lost, till by a miracle you were discovered; there is wealth for you, happiness.

MAD. And my husband?

ROL. They assure you of their care of him.

MAD. But they repulse him. Would drive him from me—to exile—oh they will part us, and I shall never see him more.

ROL. You will forget him.

MAD. Forget—forget him—my husband—to whom before Heaven's Altar I pledged myself for happiness or misery—prosperity or adversity—I'll not violate that sacred oath, nor will I abandon him—you have my answer, and again I tell you, that whether I be Countess or Princess, that man is still my husband.

ROL. But the Marquis de Montbazon was your father, and you must renounce his name and memory, or this shameless vagabond.

MAD. Vagabond! he's my husband (*scarcely able to restrain herself*) By insulting the father of my children, you insult me.

ROL. Your family—expect—wait—call for you.

MAD. They may, but, without my husband and my children, they must expect—wait—call in vain.

ROL. Yet, think of your children, whom misery makes pale—who each hour sinks in the brute strength of a father, living by their agony of mind and tortured frames—who even now exposes them to the chance of death—who——

MAD. It is too much! Heaven support me in this heavy trial—this sad heart test—(*a loud noise is heard of the drum and trumpet*;

clapping of hands and murmurs; she runs to the window and looks out.) He is there—William! ah! (*utters a cry*) you will kill the child! (*noise of distant bravoës.*) No, no—he laughs at his peril. William receives him in his arms—he embraces him. Their eyes are raised to this window—to me—they waft their kisses hither—again—still, for ever, *my love.*—(*as she motions her hand to them*) You may retire, Sir. Your words made my heart waver for an instant—but 'tis again itself. I am Madeline, daughter of the workman. I am not the child of those great ones you name—who rememeber me only because they want a name to their race, and a drop added to their high blood.—Go! (*with disgust and determination.*)

ROL. (*aside*) I go, to return quickly, and not again to fail.—(*aloud.*) Madame, adieu. *Exits L.H.*

MAD. Yes, heaven judges and approves my act—but my child—she sleeps—the doctor—but, ten francs (*counts money*) five, six, and the sous—seven francs, it is all we have for our rent. No, I must not dream of it.

Enter Belphegor, does not see Madeline.

A man passed me on the dark stairs, who turned his face away in agitation, I feel in a cold sweat all over. I fancied it was—but pshaw! my fears deceived me, I dare say—if it were (*his eye falling suddenly upon his sword he has in his hand*) Ha, if it was him!

MAD. William, you make me tremble.

BEL. I make you tremble, do I? and why?

MAD. Why, to see you with so strange an air—what is the cause?

BEL. Nothing—nothing.

MAD. The collection has not been good, perhaps.

BEL. Very good, three francs six sous.

MAD. And Henri, where is he?

BEL. Henri! (*musings.*)

MAD. William, what is this?

BEL. Has any one been here during my absence?

MAD. Yes (*embarrassed*) Catherine, and we were speaking of little Jeanne.

BEL. (*aside*) She is in trouble. Is it because she is deceiving me?

MAD. If I could, without distressing him, complete my sum for the——

BEL. (*aside*) She mutters to herself. What are you thinking about?

MAD. Of money—I was wishing——

BEL. For money! a large sum, I've no doubt, as much as they could give you—these great people, I mean.

MAD. Oh, husband! you are wrong to speak thus, and you wrong me, still more so to speak so at this moment, have you ever heard me complain?

BEL. Not in speech, but with the tear in your eye and heaving of your heart, that give pain more than words; besides, have you not found that your heart would no longer tremble at seeing our

children attired in rags, as vagrants, that was your Duchess's blood, I suppose.

MAD. (*she sits L. of table.*) Husband, you insult me.

BEL. Fool!—weak fool!—poor man!—go—go! What is there thou couldst do or say, to make her forget her birth, seek, divine, invent—rack heart, soul, (*sits*) spirit, to see how you can make your princess happy. Have you gold, palaces, vehicles, domestics. No, no, you have none of these she sighs for; you are but a poor moun-tebank, she cannot love you; see you not she stands unmoved before you, without a look or word; ah! I guess—I see—you would quit me—fly from me. Well—well—go—go—leave me, Madeline!

MAD. Husband—William!

BEL. (*in a great passion*) Oh, I could kill!

MAD. (*retreating*) Great heaven!

BEL. (*after a pause goes to her, she's weeping*) Madeline, Madeline—what have I said? Pardon—take no heed of my wild words. I have had doubts, fears—thoughts that made me mad. A man but now passed me on the stairs—in the darkness I could not recognize him—he turned from me and fled. I feel enraged, but against myself—that I cannot make you happy as I would (*MADÉLINE sighs*). Ah, that sigh—it is for me—your pardon (*she turns to him*). Not yet, not yet—till I am at your feet—your hands in mine. I am forgiven?

MAD. Yes, yes.

BEL. Oh ! my dear little wife (*jumps up—they embrace*). Do the rich regale themselves with love like this?—(*aside*) I was mistaken—it could not be him. Now, tell me, what can I do to make you happy ?

MAD. Give me the three francs you have gained this morning.

BEL. Umph!—that's to buy a bonnet, I suppose, to look a lady as you are?

MAD. Yes—and you must pardon me for that.

BEL. And flowers and ribbons fit for a Countess—eh?

MAD. Yes—yes.

BEL. (*admiring her*) Well, you really are too pretty for a man like me—but I can't help loving you, my soul, I can't. Here, hold your hand (*gives the money*). Will you have the pence?

MAD. No, no—thanks, William, thanks. (*going quickly up the stage.*)

BEL. Where the deuce are you going?

MAD. In search of my bonnet—(*aside*) for advice for my child.

Exit R.H.

BEL. A bonnet won't do. She has nothing to wear with it but an old cloak and a villainous little shawl. I've ten francs in the corner of my pocket-handkerchief, that I've saved up for a new hat and a new pair of boots—for my hat's not the best (*looks at it*), and my books are a couple, but no longer a pair in size or quality.

Enter CATHERINE.

CATH. What, returned already!

BEL. I'm going again. If Madeline returns before me, say I've gone to fetch Henri, who is resting in the market-place, to take him round the city. By-the-bye, tell me how much a splendid coloured shawl will cost?

CATH. Cachmere?

BEL. Oh, yes, Cachmere—nothing less.

CATH. Real India?

BEL. Yes, Real India, of course.

CATH. Do you want one?

BEL. Yes. Tell me about the price.

CATH. You can get a tolerably good one, if you go to about fifteen hundred francs.

BEL (*quite aghast*) Fifteen hundred francs!

CATH. You may, by chance, get one for fourteen hundred.

BEL. Fourteen hundred! But are there none a *leetle* cheaper? I could stretch as far as a dozen francs.

CATH. A very pleasant joke of you, certainly. Why didn't you say you wanted a woollen shawl?

BEL. But is a woollen shawl very pretty, showy, and is it always in fashion? What a fool I am, I recollect my wife always prefers woollen shawls—good bye, Catherine! (*going—returns*) As my wife knows nothing about shawls that cost fifteen hundred francs, you'd better not mention them, she might not like the joke, you know, its all very well between ourselves. *Exit.*

CATH. Very odd! I do not like giving this poor fellow pain; but 'tis for Madeline's happiness—ah, she comes!

Enter MADELINE and DOCTOR.

MAD. Tell me, pray, Sir, is there any hope?

DOCTOR. (*aside*) I fear not much, poor woman (*looks round*) What misery!

MAD. You do not answer me!

DOC. You are wife of the man who exhibits in the square?

MAD. I am, Sir; but pardon me (*offers money.*)

DOC. Keep it—keep it, my child.

MAD. Oh! I entreat you, tell me, my daughter, can I do aught to save it?

DOC. Seven years—a dangerous age.

CATH. What, Sir, would you advise for the child?

DOC. If I must advise, the child is not formed for the existence imposed upon her.

CATH. (*to MADELINE.*) She is born poor.

DOC. You exaggerate my meaning.

CATH. But, if the child were with wealthy persons?

DOC. 'Tis not the care of strangers she requires, it is a mother, who could do as much as a mother's heart would dictate, and with the means at hand——

CATH. But, were the mother rich—if her relations were so——

MAD. (*to her*) No—no.

DOC. If such were the case, and she could attend, watch her

child, tend it night and day, indulge its weak frame in soothing rest, with her eye ever on the trembling balance of its little life—could consult *the* best skill of Paris—give it the air of the Pyrenees, the sun of Italy——

ROLLAC *and* DE BLANGY *appear at door.*

MAD. Then——

DOC. Then, Madame, she might live.

MAD. Oh heaven! (*aside*) but without all this——

DOC. I fear she is lost to you; but did you say her family was rich?

ROLLAC *and* DE BLANGY *advance.*

ROL. Yes, Monsieur, and the child shall be saved.

MAD. He, again!

ROL. You have no right to hesitate, Madame, this is no question between wealth and misery, it is one of life or death to your child that you have to choose.

CATH. My dear Madeline, have some reason.

MAD. Oh, 'tis horrible! to place a mother between her duty to her husband and her child—between the life of *his* child, or of his curse.

BLAN. You have heard, Madame, what this gentleman has pronounced—you kill your child, or save it.

MAD. Heaven inspire me!

BLAN. There is no time to hesitate.

MAD. You swear, Sir, before heaven——

DOC. That I have spoken the truth alone. (*she indicates the chamber, the DOCTOR and ROLLAC Enter and returns with JEANNE.*)

CATH. Take it by the side door into the gallery and you will be soon in the street. *Exit ROLLAC, the DOCTOR, and CATHERINE.*

MAD. (*to BLANGY.*) You read in my face the agony of my heart. (*goes up.*)

BLAN. You seem to hesitate.

MAD. (*at door.*) Ha! they bear away my child. No—no.

BLAN. It must be saved.

MAD. I'll not quit my child.

BLAN. Come then with me.

MAD. (*to CATHERINE who Enters.*) Catherine, explain to him, say I still love him—that 'tis not for long—that he must pardon—but I could not bear to see my child sink day by day, dying before my eyes, for that aid, which one word from me would procure, tell my husband that, and say that it shall not be for long; I leave him but to save his child.

BLANGY, MADELINE, *and* CATHERINE *Exit*

Pause—then Enter BELPHEGOR, R.U.E. and HENRI, BELPHEGOR has a red and blue shawl on his arm.

BEL. Here we are!—no one here, I'm glad of that—as we shall have some fun in the surprise. I think this is the thing to make your mother happy. (*discovers the shawl.*)



child, tend it night and day, indulge its weak frame in soothing rest, with her eye ever on the trembling balance of its little life—could consult the best skill of Paris—give it the air of the Pyrenees, the sun of Italy——

ROLLAC *and* DE BLANGY *appear at door.*

MAD. Then——

DOC. Then, Madame, she might live.

MAD. Oh heaven! (*aside*) but without all this——

DOC I fear she is lost to you; but did you say her family was rich?

ROLLAC *and* DE BLANGY *advance.*

ROL. Yes, Monsieur, and the child shall he saved.

MAC. He, again!

ROL. You have no right to hesitate, Madame, this is no question between wealth and misery, it is one of life or death to your child that you have to choose.

CATH. My dear Madeline, have some reason.

MAD. Oh, 'tis horrible! to place a mother between her duty to her husband and her child—between the life of *his* child, or of his curse.

BLAN. You have heard, Madame, what this gentleman has pronounced—you kill your child, or save it.

MAD. Heaven inspire me!

BLAN. There is no time to hesitate.

MAD. You swear, Sir, before heaven——

DOC That I have spoken the truth alone. (*she indicates the chamber, the DOCTOR and ROLLAC Enter and returns with JEANNE.*)

CATH. Take it by the side door into the gallery and you will be soon in the street. *Exit* ROLLAC, the DOCTOR, and CATHERINE.

MAD. (*to* BLANGY.) You read in my face the agony of my heart. (*goes up.*)

BLAN. You seem to hesitate.

MAD. (*at door.*) Ha! they bear away my child. No—no.

BLAN. It must be saved.

MAD. I'll not quit my child.

BLAN. Come then with me.

MAD. (*to* CATHERINE *who Enters.*) Catherine, explain to him, say I still love him—that 'tis not for long—that he must pardon—but I could not bear to see my child sink day by day, dying before my eyes, for that aid, which one word from me would procure, tell my husband that, and say that it shall not be for long; I leave him but to save his child.

BLANGY, MADELINE, *and* CATHERINE *Exit*

Pause—then Enter Belphegor, R.U.E. *and* Henri, Belphegor *has a red and blue shawl on his arm.*

BEL. Here we are!—no one here, I'm glad of that—as we shall have some fun in the surprise. I think this is the thing to make your mother happy. (*discovers the shawl.*)

[At the request of various Country Managers, I have published the Act which I had not introduced into the piece, as represented at the Surrey Theatre.—T. C.]

ACT III.

Grounds of a chateau near Bordeaux, in the possession of HERCULES DE MONTBAZON—A large tent fitted up, occupies the stage, opening at back C.

Enter Duke DE MONTBAZON, as returning from the chase, attended by COURGEMONT, Judge D'ARPIGNOL, and GENTLEMEN.

DUKE. (L.H.) Inform my nephew, that his uncle, would have some words with him. (*to Servant who precedes them—Servant bows and exits.*)

COUR. Your nephew has chosen a most beautiful retreat.

DUKE. Yes, near the gates of Bourdeaux, but a little too distant from my villa of Craignon. I am glad the chase drew us on this side of the city, as it affords me an opportunity of testing how he proceeds with his studies; he is at present the sole heritor of the name and house of Montbazon, and I would see him worthy of such honour.

Enter HERCULES, R.H.

HER. Ah, my dear uncle—I'm quite rejoiced—you sent for me?

DUKE. I did, I was somewhat surprised at your not meeting me at the gate.

HER. Oh, really—excuse me, but I was deeply in my studies, engaged with my professor.

DUKE. Your professor—of what?

HER. Of—of—I hope he does not suspect it was Flora. (*aside.*)

DUKE. Your professor of philosophy, I dare say.

HER. Yes—yes, uncle, of philosophy.

DUKE. I should like to see the man.

HER. The man!

DUKE. It is a man, I suppose?

HER. Oh, yes.

DUKE. Go and request the professor to come to me, or any person you find in my nephew's apartment. (*to one of his attendants, who exits, R.H.*)

HER. Stay.

DUKE. Go.

HER. But, my dear uncle, he's such a queer old fish, and she—that is he—he's as deaf as a beetle, added to which his physiognomy is absolutely horrid.

DUKE. Never mind, if he is a man of talent.

Attendant enters with FLORA, R.H.

FLORA. Did you send for me, Hercules?

HER. I'm done for. (*aside.*)

FLORA. Good gracious, who are these?

DUKE. Approach, Mademoiselle, fear not.

FLORA. Fear, bless you, I don't fear you—I fear none, much less an old gentleman of the old school.

COUR. Why absolutely, 'tis the dancer. (*stares.*)

FLORA. At your service. (*curtsies.*)

DUKE. (*takes HERCULES by the ear*) So, you villain, this s^your professor, eh?

HER. Of grace, uncle, of grace. (*pirouettes.*)

DUKE. Mademoiselle, you are a very pretty girl.

FLORA. You are not the first who has informed me of the fact.

DUKE. And now tell me, what are your views towards my nephew. (*aside to her.*)

FLORA. Really, sport, Monsieur, and nothing more; my own residence is close at hand. I met your nephew some weeks back with a silly, antiquated, and pride-starched aunt; they had no horses, so I brought him here in my carriage to tease her.

DUKE. For no other purpose?

FLORA. Oh, if you think so, you are very much deceived; for though but a dancer, as that gentleman observes, I have too much care for myself than to play the fool with such a fool as your nephew, believe me. Good day, most noble Duke De Montbazon.

Exit R.

DUKE. This girl has sense.

JUDGE. Sense—that's the word.

Enter DE BLANGY, C.

BLAN. Madeline has arrived, and I have, according to Rollac's orders, had her conducted to your villa at Craignon.

DUKE. Poor girl! You hear, Hercules, this newly-found lady is the daughter of my son, who died in Germany, and is your cousin.

HER. Oh, yes, I know—the wife of a juggler! an uncommonly odd affair.

DUKE. However odd, 'tis true. You, therefore, through her, lose your claim and inheritance to my name and estates—be therefore, careful that my purse continues open to you.

HER. I'll be uncommonly careful, uncle.

DUKE. (*to BLANGY*) But where is the Chevalier Rollac?

BLAN. I heard from him at Chantillac, where the state of Madeline and her child compelled us to stay for some time. He then stated that he had been compelled to remain at Angouleme, to watch this Belphégor.

DUKE. And by which, I trust, he rids us altogether of this man.

BLAN. That is his purpose. He has thrown upon him the suspicions of the Prefect of the Gironde, and also of Charente—by which he is chased from each post or place of his attempted stay. The Chevalier is in great hopes that the fellow will be forced by misery to accept our offers. By his last letters, I fancy he will arrive here to-day, and give his own news of his success.

DUKE. 'Tis well. You'll go to Craignon. Console Madeline—tell her that I am prevented this day from embracing her. To-

morrow, the Count d'Artois will be in Bordeaux, and I shall myself personally entreat his favour and power to quit us of this Belphegor. Hercules, adieu. Remember you are now without patrimony, and, if you wish continuance of my favour and protection, respect your cousin Madeline. Now, gentlemen, to horse. *They exit C.*

HER. Pleasant, to be robbed of one's rights by the wife of a mountebank, upon my word.

Re-enter FLORA, R.

FLORA. Ha, ha, ha! what a nice, fine old gentleman your uncle is, Hercules!

HER. Umph, yes, tolerable in his way, but I wish he'd keep out of mine; but now about our bal-masque, have you given all the invitations?

FLORA. Yes, and a charming affair it will be, the handsomest men in all Bourdeaux.

HER. Now, that's personal, a positive personal remark.

FLORA. Personal, how so? I did not mean you—come, I see our friends arriving—lets go and receive them.

HER. But about the handsome men?

FLORA. Come along.

HER. I don't like handsome men.

FLORA. That accounts for your being so much in love with yourself.

HER. That's doubly personal.

Enter BEAUMESNIL as Harlequin, very fat, DUPERON as Polichinello, FANNY, ANASTASIE, and masqueraders, C.

BEAU. 'Pon my life, this is really beautiful—very handsome indeed.

FANNY. It is delicious.

FLORA. My friends, I rejoice to meet you.

ALL. Oh, Mademoiselle. *(they bow.)*

FLORA. Welcome—welcome all! *(noise of laughter, U.E.L.H.)*

ANAS. What's that?

DUP. *(runs up)* I'll run and see.

FLORA. What can it be?

DUP. Why, bless me *(laughs)*, how uncommon odd. It's a mountebank—a real mountebank, and his boy, standing at the gate, asking for charity—ha, ha, ha!

OMNES. Ha, ha, ha! Look—look.

BEAU. Why, he's coming this way, I declare.

Enter HERCULES, attired as a Turk—BELPHEGOR and HENRI appear at back, L.H.C.

HER. Come along, you ragged rascal—*(aside)* I rather think I am handsomer than this fellow.

FLORA. I do not know him. *(as BELPHEGOR and HENRI come down.)*

ANAS. Nor I.

FANNY. Nor I.

DUP. Nor I.

BEL. Your pardon, ladies and gentlemen ☹️ I fear I have come at an unlucky moment—in the midst of *a fete*.

BEAU. Perfect, perfect—I declare: one would imagine it real—he acts the character splendidly.

HER. How a man can look so miserable as that, without being so, I can't conceive—and the boy, too. You gave all the invitations—do you guess which of our guests it is?

FLORA. No.

HER. I don't much like the looks of them.

FLORA. I am sure the boy is very handsome.

HER. Where the deuce did you get that mountebank's dress from?

BEAU. From Paris direct, I dare say—ha, ha!

BEL. I've worn it long, Messieurs, and the late journey, the heavy roads we have travelled, the rain, mud, dust, has not improved its appearance; but I keep my little Jacquinet as neat as I can—bow, Jacquinet, to the ladies and gentlemen.

FLORA. Come and kiss me, boy.

HER. Ha, ha, ha!—'pon my life he's alarmed!

DUP. (*aside to FLORA.*) Don't let them guess that we see it's a joke, treat them as if they were really vagabonds, and see how they'll keep it up. It will be capital fun—I'll manage it. (*aloud.*) Now, Mountebank, where do you come from; give us some of your history, and what you have been about?

BEL. I come far from this; there were three of us when we quitted Angouleme for Bordeaux, in search of one I hoped to find there,—and I started for Bordeaux, with my boy and horse Mouton; but, on our second day's journey, I found my poor horse was carrying beyond his strength, so I dismounted, and led him on by the bridle; but at the town, where we stopped to rest for the night, the Mayor said, he had heard this and that about us, and they chased us thence; we again travelled all night, I talking to my poor Mouton, who knew and understood my trouble; when day dawned, as with a sudden stroke, he stopped, looking on me, as if he had said—"you see, master, I can go no further;" but my boy was cold, and I was obliged to travel on—poor Mouton, his strength was gone—he trembled—fell—I ran to him, his limbs shivered, his eyes glazed, and then—and then—my poor horse was dead. (*all laugh and clap their hands.*) My boy and myself then took the road afoot, and now, alas! he is faint, tired and heart-sick.

HEN. Yes, father,—dear father, and I am hungry—so very, very hungry.

FLORA. Oh, if all this were true!

BEAU. Pshaw! now do you, for one moment, think, 'tis anything but acting?

DUP. It's really quite droll.

HER. I see nothing droll in it.

ANAS. It almost makes me cry.

BEL. Your pardon, I had forgot that I had solicited you to allow

} *all aside.*

me to exhibit before you, for they drive me from all the public places; and I am forced to petition for leave to perform in the houses I come to on the road.

HER. Oh! certainly, to be sure, and make us laugh, that's a good fellow.

OMNES. Aye, aye.

BEL. Laugh! and that wretch, Grain D'Amour, has left me, stolen, too, all my goblets,—all that I most depended on. Come, Henri, you must supply his place.

HEN. Father!

BEL. Courage!—courage! 'tis a chance, and must not be lost, to gain a morsel of bread, and some money wherewith to travel on to Bordeaux; but six miles now. Come, boy—courage—courage!

HER. Come—come—begin; but above all do make us laugh.

BEL. Laugh, with death in my very heart (*aside—then aloud*) Here, here, here—come Jacquinet—quick, quick, quick—roll about—fly about—flip flap—hey! presto!

HEN. Yes, great master.

BEL. Now, Messieurs and Mademoiselles, young, old, short, tall, pretty and ugly—I ask pardon—which among you will have the kindness to favour me with a hat.

OMNES. I will—I will.

BEL. One only, if you please; now, will any lady oblige me with a rose from her fair tresses—quick, a rose.

FANNY. Here is mine.

BEL. Thanks, my beautiful Mademoiselle, this rose is an emblem of yourself.

HER. Ah! he means a rose without a thorn—how very pretty! (*aside to them.*)

BEL. Now, attention! and you will behold the miracle of the rose.

HEN. Ladies and Gentlemen, you will now see the miracle of the rose, abracadabara-bi-bo-bum.

BEL. Jacquinet, my friend, will you do me a favour?

HEN. Now for the favour, ladies—now for the favour. (*with great effort.*)

BEL. Tell me, Sir, what have you eaten to-day, to make you so gay and joyous?

HEN. Oh! this morning I was hungry—very hungry, and would you believe, great master, that I eat—(*stops—and fainting.*)

BEL. (*aside to him.*) Pardon—pardon me, boy.

HEN. Go on—go on, father.

BEL. Do me the honour to recount your history, and when you were born.

HEN. (*as recounting a lesson.*) When I was born?—I was born at the age of six years.

BEL. What, born six years old!

HER. Why the boy's a fool!

BEL. You hear, Jacquinet, it's impossible you can have entered the world at six years old.

ROL. I thank you, Monsieur.

DUP. At the Prefect's—you don't say so!

BEAU. Yes, touching that affair relative to Lavarenes.

ROL. Lavarenes; (*aside—thinking*) Pardon, Messieurs, you speak, I believe, of a man called Lavarenes?

BEAU. Yes, Monsieur, they are upon the fellow's track.

ROL. Indeed! that's lucky, and you say that——

DUP. Upon my life, I don't know the particulars, only that he is in France, and calls himself, I believe, the Chevalier de Rollac.

ROL. Ah! (*aside*) the devil!—I am lost. (*all go up except ROLLAC and Exeunt different ways.*) Discovered, just as I had reached port, and thought, by getting rid of the husband, to sue for Madeline's hand as my reward; as one of the family I should have been free—quick, let me escape. (*BELPHEGOR seizes him by the arm, having Entered R.H.U.E. he is masked and enveloped in a cloak.*)

BEL. Stay—a word.

ROL. (*trembles*) What?

BEL. I'd speak to you without witness.

ROL. (*aside*) That's fortunate.—(*aloud*) You are very strong—you really hurt me.

BEL. You have hurt me more than I do you.

ROL. You will bruise my arm.

BEL. You have bruised my heart.

ROL. Me! Who are you?

BEL. The Mountebank Belphégor! (*throws off his mask and cloak.*)

ROL. Heaven!

BEL. Where is she?

ROL. Who?

BEL. Oh, no more deceit. Catherine has told me all she knew—that you, in my absence, came like a vile thief, and bore from me my wife—to Bordeaux, was it not? Speak—speak.

ROL. A word, Belphégor—the moments are precious. In one word: make but the least noise or disturbance, you alone will suffer—the disgrace will fall upon yourself.

BEL. I ask you but one thing—where is she?

ROL. You have seen on your road the proofs of my power—how you have been chased, hunted, tracked.

BEL. Where is she?

ROL. If I but point my finger, it is your destruction: you are cast into a dungeon, dragged before the judgment-seat; and—ere the sun has twice set—shot.

BEL. You have not told me where she is?

ROL. Ha! a thought. (*aside*) All I have told you is but deceit—she is no more the daughter of the Duke than you or I—she pleased me, and I would have borne her off.

BEL. Wretch! would you deceive me? (*throws him to his feet.*)

ROL. Help—help!

Enter HERCULES, FLORA, and all the MASQUERADERS, C.

HER. He will strangle him!

BELPHEGOR *flourishes a stick or staff which he takes from* HERCULES.

BEL. He who advances one step, I strike him down—(then to ROLLAC) Where is she?

ROL. At the residence of the Montbazons.

BEL. The proof—the proof!

ROL. (*taking from his pocket a small portfolio.*) It is here!—my letters—my correspondence.

BEL. (*snatches it.*) Give it me!

ROL. (*aside.*) Ha!—you take my letters—my correspondence!—she is lost to you!

BEL. (*to FLORA.*) Mademoiselle, you will in pity guard and protect that boy—I would go alone.

FLORA. With my life!

ROL. (*aside.*) I am saved!

BEL. Now, make way—I have done! Farewell, Messieurs! Way for the mountebank! (*he bounds through them, off C.*)

TABLEAU.

ACT. IV.

SCENE I.—*House of the Duke DE MONTBAZON*—A saloon, very richly furnished—A large table, R.—*Escrutoire* with papers, L.

Enter DE COURGEMONT, preceded by SERVANT, C.D.

COUR. (C.) Very well; as the Duke is not here, I'll wait for him. (SERVANT bows and exits, C.) The Duke is now in great favour, and I entreated his good offices—(*looks off.*) The Count de Blangy! What the devil brings him here? An intriguing—plotting—fawning (DE BLANGY, *having entered, comes down, R.*) Ah! my dear Count, this is a pleasure; I am delighted to see you.

BLAN. The Grand Bailli!

COUR. You surprise me here, in coming to pay my respects to your noble cousin;—not that I am like the rest of the world here only with an interested or ambitious motive—I've not come to ask for anything.

BLAN. (*aside.*) The lying hypocrite!

COUR. And you?

BLAN. Me? Oh! I want nothing.

Enter the DUKE, the JUDGE D'ARPIGNOL, the COMMANDER of the Pouffieres, C.—The DUKE and the COMMANDER have appeared at the back during these last words, the DUKE having despatches in his hand.

DUKE. (R. *by table*.) What rapid despatch to my request. Messieurs, here are two despatches, I fancy, concern you.

BLAN. (*eagerly, going to the DUKE*.) My appointment!

COUR. (*the same*.) My nomination!—allow me. (*they both take their letters*.)

DUKE. (*to COMMANDER and JUDGE*.) Messieurs, the King has been so kind as to compliment me on the recovery of my son's child. (*he sits at official table, R.H.*)

COM.

and

JUDGE.

BLAN. (*disappointed*.) What's this—substitute to the King's procurer?

COUR. (*with joy*.) Commissaire extraordinary of the department of the Gironde! I am commissaire extraordinary! (*struts across with great importance*.) Gentlemen, I receive your compliments (*then to C.*)

BLAN. Oh! there's some mistake. It's impossible—the King has been deceived.

COUR. The King's never deceived, Sir—the king is infallible.

BLAN. (*who cast his eye upon the address of his envelope*.) But you'll allow me, if you please—this is not my address—'tis not directed to me.

COUR. I have nothing to do with your address.

BLAN. But you have with your own;—this is to you. (*gives it*.)

COUR. Me? (*reads the direction to the letter in his own hand*.) His own "Castle Blan—Castle Blan"——

BLAN. "Castle Blangy." You have got my letter and I have got yours. (*laughs*.)

COUR. Well, but——

BLAN. You are always in such a hurry.

COUR. But am I no more than a wretched substitute? (*crossing to L.*) It's impossible!—it's absurd!—the King has been imposed upon!

BLAN. The King's never deceived, Sir—the King is *infallible*.

COUR. Eh! (*looks foolish—aside*.) Insolent intriguer! (*goes up in a passion*.)

BLAN. (C.) Oh! here are my instructions. (*reads*.) Ah, Heavens! Lavarenes, under the name of Rollac!

DUKE. What is that?

BLANGY. Nothing—duty calls me instantly to the Prefecture—excuse me, cousin, I must bid you adieu for the present. Monsieur the Substitute, I want you—follow me. (*goes up to C.D.*)

COUR. What's that you say?

BLANGY. (*with polite authority*) Will you follow me?

COUR. (*obsequiously*) Oh, certainly, Monsieur (*bowing—apart to the DUKE*) You'll see this mistake set to rights. (*to BLANGY*) I'll follow you, Monsieur Commissary of the Gironde. *They Exit, C. and L.*

DUKE. (C.) Yes, my good friends, the King is in the best disposition as regards our lost one—so miraculously recovered—he has

restored to us all our rights:—my son's child will inherit title, wealth, and estates.

COM. (R.) But in the midst of this, you will own, Duke, it is necessary to conceal from the King's knowledge, the miserable sphere in which she was found, for the reputation of our family—no one, I hope, knows——

DUKE. No one, except yourself, my cousin De Blangy, and the Chevalier Rollac—his letters inform me that he has completely got rid of this wretched man, the husband, and enforced him to sail for America.

COM. You owe him much for his zeal and devotion in your cause.

Enter SERVANT, C.

SERVANT. The Chevalier de Rollac.

DUKE. Admit him—then the man has safely embarked.

Enter Belphegor, C. in a Court suit, powdered wig, white breeches sword, &c. His bearing is rather outre, but not in exaggeration.

BEL. (R.C.) Messieurs, allow me to salute you.

DUKE. (R.) I am delighted to see you, Chevalier, you are here at last.

BEL. I came as soon as possible believe me—we never met before—but you are the Duke de Montbazon.

DUKE. (*turns to COMMANDER and JUDGE, conversing*) You are right, Chevalier.

BEL. (*aside, in front*) I know I am, by the letters of the villain Rollac, whom I tracked on his way—I struck him down like a dog—secured his pocket book—and am here as himself, his letters have told me of all.

JUDGE. (L.H.) He has a noble, manly figure.

COM. (L.C.) He looks the gentleman of a distinguished family.

JUDGE. Carries his head nobly on his shoulders.

COM. And his shoulders carry a noble head.

BEL. (*aside*) They are casting me up. If I could see Madeline before they recognise me (*looks about anxiously*).

DUKE. (R.) Chevalier—Monsieur de Rollac.

BEL. (*starts—comes down R.C.*) I beg your pardon——

DUKE. Permit me to present to you two of the principal members of my family—this gentleman, the Commander of Pouffieres.

COM. Monsieur (*bows*).

BEL. Oh, I see—you are a Commander of Pouf-fieres, are you? (*crosses to him.*)

COM. I am, Monsieur, I am proud to say.

DUKE. The Judge d'Arpignol, a relative of the ninth Touraines.

BEL. (*crosses to him, L.C.*) Oh, you are of the Tureen family, are you?—then, I suppose, you are first-cousin to the Spoons (*they stare.*)

DUKE. You are merry, Chevalier!

BEL. Always—bless you! I'm a complete Merry Andrew—we shall have rare sport together.

Enter HERCULES, C

HER. (R.) Ah, my dear uncle!

BEL. Is this one of the spoons?

HER. (*stares.*) Great uncle!

DUKE. Silence, this is the Chevalier Rollac—Chevalier, my nephew.

BEL. (*crosses to him, R.*) This is your nephew, eh?—your hand.

HER. (*with some pride gives his hand, as BELPHEGOR shakes it. cries out*) Oh, oh! I say, great uncle.

BEL. (*goes up while they attend HERCULES, who groans—then comes down.*) Duke—You have introduced me to Monsieur Touffier and to Monsieur Rigmarole.

JUDGE. D'Arpignol.

BEL. Well, didn't I say so? but I don't see my—that is—I don't see the newly-recovered lady.

DUKE. You ought to know that it is impossible, at the instant.

BEL. How, impossible?

DUKE. Why, she is there.

BEL. There—where? (*looks about—HERCULES sits L. H. 1 E.*)

DUKE. Where you, yourself, instructed De Blangy to take her.

BEL. Oh, ah!—yes, I recollect.

DUKE. And an excellent idea it was.

BEL. Capital—wasn't it? I am very inventive; but I shall see her soon?

DUKE. Certainly.

HER. What a fidget the Chevalier seems to be in.

DUKE. Silence, nephew.

HER. Yes, great uncle.

DUKE. (*to BELPHEGOR.*) You'll pardon me, Chevalier; but you have not informed me of your projects.

BEL. Projects! (*aside*) Now, what the devil projects, had this scoundrel Rollac?

DUKE. This vagabond—this mountebank—are we quite clear of him?

BEL. (*aside*) Holloa!

DUKE. Ha! have you still fear of him?

BEL. What—me fear him? While I am here, Duke, I give you my promise, he'll not appear at your gate.

DUKE. Thanks for your information.

BEL. But this Belphégor—

JUDGE (*laughing*) What—is he called Belphegor?

HER. (*aside*) What a devilish funny name!

BEL. (*laughs with the JUDGE*) Yes, Belphégor, ha, ha, ha! Yes, he is called Belphégor. Is it not funny, eh? Belphegor!—ha, ha, ha! (*JUDGE and HERCULES laugh immoderately.*)

DUKE. (*to BELPHEGOR*) But what is your opinion of this man?

BEL. My opinion is that he is not far off.

DUKE. (*surprised*) Indeed!

BEL. You know what these fellows are—these mountebanks, they

are so confoundedly clever—so nimble—so light—whichever way you throw them, they are sure to come upon their feet.

DUKE. But we will trip him up. (*goes up to table, R.H.*)

BEL. But are we not as great rogues as he! Now if this conjuring rascal had introduced himself here, in borrowed plumes, or name, to seek his wife. If he had come as a gentleman, like you or me, with the perpendicular assurance of this gentleman (to COMMANDER—*who is L.H.*) taking snuff out of his mounted box, dirtying his nose, and soiling his frill—as this (*takes snuff from the JUDGE'S box*) or pirouetting on his heel, with his hat under his arm, in this fashion—and you had not discovered him to be a vile rascal, then we might have been surprised. (*strikes the JUDGE on the belly*) Ha, ha, ha! the idea is enough to make one burst with laughter—is it not? (*crosses to C.*)

JUDGE. (*L. groans*) Burst—yes—that's the word.

DUKE. (*sits at table*) I see that your visit to America has rendered you somewhat eccentric.

BEL. Eh—oh—yes. I know lots of tricks.

COM. (*R.*) If I am not mistaken, Chevalier, you were at Biberach?

BEL. Biberach—me!—Biberach! Who's Biberach? No.

DUKE. What, were you not presented to his Majesty on the night of the battle?

BEL. Oh, ah—yes, yes.

COM. Oblige us by a description of that great fight.

BEL. (*aside*) How the devil am I to describe a fight!

HER. If it's only to oblige me, Chevalier—I think of entering the army.

COM. With my interest, a post in the Pouffiers.

BEL. The whole details?

DUKE. No, they will recall too fatal remembrances.

BEL. You must know, gentlemen (*taking COMMANDER and JUDGE by the arm*), when Grain D'Amour sounded the trumpet for the performance to commence

HER. (*L.*) Grain D'Amour?

JUDGE (*L.C.*) Performance?

COM. (*R. of BEL.*) A very odd expression for a military man!

BEL. (*C., aside*) Grain D'Amour, the head trumpeter of our legion; and it was a wonderful performance, this Battle of Bib

COM. -erach.

BEL. Don't interrupt me, if you please. (*COMMANDER bows.*) Beberawach!

HER. (*to DUKE.*) That serves him right.

DUKE (*at table.*) Hold your tongue, fool!

HER. Yes, uncle.

BEL. As I was saying, it was a wonderful battle—the balls flying about like hail, and the men falling like so many bees. We were sixty thousand strong, and we were ranged to receive the enemy in a circle—that is, in two circles;—the first circle marched on first, and discharged their sixty thousand firelocks loaded with ball.

COM. Sixty thousand men fire at once, in two circles?

BEL. The inner circle fired over the others' heads—so, you see, the outer circle balls told there—(*hits JUDGE on the stomach, who gets away*)—and the inner circle there—(*hits COMMANDER on the head, whose hat goes over his eyes*). The skirmish then commenced; we marched on the enemy, and the enemy marched on us—they gave way, we gave way—they fired, we fired—they charge, we charge—the cavalry on the infantry, the infantry on the cavalry. The sixty thousand fired again—we were covered with smoke—and nothing else was seen;—that's the way, gentlemen, we gained the victory! (*struts about.*)

COM. Victory?

OMNES. Victory?

BEL. Victory!

COM. I always thought it was a defeat.

BEL. (*returning to C.*) Defeat?—who said it was not?

COM. You said it was a victory.

BEL. I said it was a victory, while we couldn't see ourselves for smoke; but when that cleared away, of course we saw it was a defeat. (*goes up.*)

COM. (*aside*) A very smoky account, certainly.

HER. I think I shall decline entering the army at present, there might be a war, and the Pouffieres might be in the first circle.

BEL. (*comes down*) But come, I am anxious to see the lady.

The COMMANDER and JUDGE at table. R.H., take a map and seem to explain the battle.

DUKE. On the instant (*rings*).

BEL. That's right.

SERVANT enters door, U.E.L.

DUKE. Conduct the Chevalier to his apartment—she will be here shortly, Chevalier.

BEL. (*bowing*) Your grace—gentlemen (*bows to them*) It was a glorious battle, was it not, though it was a defeat? (*bows to SERVANT as offering him precedence, SERVANT declines, BELPHEGOR recollects himself, and goes off pompously*).

DUKE. Our cousin De Blangy has not deceived us in reporting the Chevalier to be rather vulgarised by his American sojourn.

JUDGE. I have travelled a very great deal, but it never changed my manners or ideas. (*taking snuff, goes up L.H.*)

COM. As great an ass as ever.

Enter SERVANT, R.H. 3 E.

SERVANT. Mademoiselle Vermandois, and Madame Madeline.

Enter Mademoiselle VERMANDOIS, R. 3 E.

Madlle. V. Approach neice.

Enter MADELINE, R. 3 E.

—Now, carry your head high, as the daughter of a Montbazon.

MAD. Oh, pray excuse me, but I know that I am unfit to meet such society—I tremble lest—

DUKE. (L.C.) Cast aside all fear, my child, you have here a father, with open arms, to receive you—a family, loving and respecting you—nay, do not tremble, we forget all, we love you.

MAD. Oh, for this kind assurance, my thanks—my grateful thanks.

DUKE. (*embracing her*) Look, gentlemen, see you not the features of her unhappy father; after twenty years exile, I return to find his child, and my title, wealth, estates restored, should I not be joyous, and you, my child, should be happy. You are now in your proper sphere amongst those of birth.

MAD. Yet you must know, Monsieur, that I regret the absence of those from whom they have torn me.

Madlle. V. Have you not quitted them voluntarily, child?

MAD. I have quitted them to save my daughter, Madame.

Madlle. V. Oh, don't annoy yourself. Your daughter is out of danger now.

MAD. But my husband—it was to plead his cause that I insisted on coming here.

DUKE. But, my child, I cannot dream——

MAD. Hear me, Duke. The man who has acted in your name has o'erstepped your orders, I am certain.

Madlle. V. What?

MAD. One moment, Madame, if you please.—(*to DUKE*) A female, living in the same house in which we dwelt at Angouleme, was, I fear, induced by him to act as his accomplice. I was enabled on my arrival at Bordeaux, to communicate with her, and from her I learnt that my husband had been subjected to the cruel persecutions of this man, and in the lowest, most abject state of misery and distress, enforced to fly. Oh, Duke, had you instructed him to separate us from each other, you would not, I am sure, cruelly and wantonly have given orders that would inflict severest suffering on him—my husband—and my poor boy.

DUKE. No, no, my child—they have deceived you (*rings*)

Enter SERVANT.

— Tell the Chevalier Rollac I wait for him.

MAD. The Chevalier Rollac—is he here?

DUKE. From himself you can learn the truth.

Enter BELPHEGOR, D.L.U.E.

BEL. (*as he enters*) The Duke wants me—eh?

MAD. (*aside*) That voice!

BEL. We shall see the lady, then, I dare say. (*sees MADELINE*) Ah!

MAD. (*aside*) It is him—my husband!

DUKE. Present your respects, Chevalier. (*goes to table* R.U.)

BEL. (*approaching MADELINE, L.C.*) More beautiful than ever.

Madlle. V. Yes, she looks better, of course, than in her mountebank rags.

BEL. Yes, yes, much better.—(to MADELINE) Receive my best compliments, Madame—you are really more than beautiful.

MAD. Monsieur—(almost betraying herself) William!

BEL. (interrupting her) Madame (aside, kissing her hand) Oh, you should be happy, Madame, surrounded by riches, luxury—you should not hesitate between so noble a family, and that of a wretched wanderer, a mountebank.

DUKE. Oblige me, Chevalier, by stating the mission with which you were charged to this man—the offers made by me, and the way in which they were received by him.

BEL. Ah, she wishes to know—I'll tell her—Imagine my offering him gold, which he indignantly refused, and the more I offered, the more strongly he refused, rejected, "It is my wife," said he "it is my child, I want them, and not your paltry coin;" so finding him stupidly obstinate, we had him seized, pitched him into a coach, drove him off, and threw him on board a vessel, the captain of which we had previously paid to bear him away.

MAD. (aside) Oh, 'tis horrible.

BEL. From that day we have seen him but once, and he again asked where his wife was. There was a struggle between us, but that struggle was not for long. (with marked accent.)

DUKE. (as if prompting him) Oblige me by repeating to her that which you stated to me in your letters—that since his separation from her, his life has been a scandal, his days and nights spent in disorder and dissipation.

BEL. Ha, ha, I wrote that to you did I? (strikes his pocket, where he indicates ROLLAC'S paper are) quite true. (aside) I have the villain's letter here—quite true—you may suppose, Madame, his cheeks are pale, his eyes swollen, his existence misery, his heart broken by a cruel separation from a wife and child, on whom that heart doated, but you may be mistaken—the Chevalier de Rollac assures you that you are forgotten by Belphégor, whose days and nights are spent in degrading forgetfulness, and mad hilarity.

DUKE. You hinted, too, he was ever at the low gaming house, ever in the tavern.

BEL. (with bitterness) The tavern—yes, yes, you well know Madame that drink was his only joy, all his love, his very life. The tavern, oh, yes—when you fled, drink became his hourly habit, he was seen in every quarter, street, lane, seeking his family, watching for them at each house, scanning each window; one day he saw the face of a fair and sickly child peeping from a silk-curtained window, "Ah," cried he, "'tis my Jeanne, my loved one." He rushed past each lackey, bounded each stair, entered each room, found, clasped, the child in his arms, she cried (imitates the small cry of a child) and 'twas but that cry told him his heart had deceived him; he was about to depart—but, overpowered, they dragged him to the Prefecture for robbery, attempting to steal the child. Singular, was it not, quite amusing was it not, Messieurs? Ha, ha, ha! But you don't laugh, you'll laugh, Madame, I am sure. (crosses to them, and then to her.)

MAD. (*L buries her face in her hands*) Oh, fearful, horrible recital.

DUKE. Chevalier, here is a letter I have addressed to the King, in my own name and yours, which, as the friend and executor of my son, you will oblige me by signing.

BEL. (*reading.*) To beg him to empower me to seize and force this Belphégor on board a vessel, never to return; and also, that Madeline, in the meantime, be duly authorised to pass in the eyes of the world as the widow of a German officer, who died in the service of his Majesty.

DUKE. Will you sign, Chevalier?

MAD. No—no—no! (*as endeavouring to make him hear.*) Oh! 'tis fearful.

BEL. You are a widow, Madame—Belphégor is dead to you; gone to die in a far off land—unmourned, perhaps—when dead, ungraved! Poor Belphégor, go! Heaven may have more pity towards you than a bitter world!

JUDGE. What! pity on such a fellow?

MAD. (*angrily.*) Sir!

BEL. He is right; what pity should such vermin have from Heaven or man! (*goes up towards DUKE.*)

DUKE. (*as fatigued at argument, gives the pen.*) Will you sign?

BEL. What? sign for the separation of two hearts knit in fond and fervent love—hands, too, joined in Heaven's name? No, proud Duke, I'll not! (*tears or breaks up the pen and casts it on the table before him.*)

DUKE. (*in great rage, C.*) Ha! know you, Sir, it is to the Duke de Montbazon you speak?

MAD. (*L., aside.*) Oh, Heaven guard him!

BEL. (*with a loud laugh.*) Ha, ha, ha! they know not, (these idiot fashion's fools), they guess not, although they see my almost suffocating rage, hear my wild laugh, drowned in the tears they've wrung, and yet they guess not, know not!

DUKE. (*by table.*) Ha! you are then——

BEL. (*throwing off his wig.*) I am—I am Belphégor!

ALL. Belphégor! (*Tableau.*)

BEL. Yes, the mountebank—the miserable, degraded wretch—the brute—but this brute has a wife—children—and comes here to redeem them all! Do you hear me, thieves? (*all make a movement of indignation towards him.*) Ah! take care—the mountebank may make them laugh upon the public square, but he can here bring tears.

DUKE. You menace!

BEL. And if I do, what then? (*with a proud, threatening look at him and all.*)

MAD. William—husband—here me!

BEL. I hear nothing—I am your husband, your master. The law! there is a law above yours, Messieurs, under that law's sacred power this is my wife; and I'll take her in spite of you. (*to MADELINE*) Madame, I go with you to Jeanne, my child, the child you stole from me.

MAD. (*approaching*) Stole—oh, husband! that child was dying.

BEL. Ha, dying! I knew not.

MAD. 'Tis true, I was told of but one resource to save her—to that I flew—assured I had no other hope of life for her—I quitted you—bore her from you, but to preserve her, as I have soul or hope!

BEL. Where is she?

MAD. She is here.

BEL. Let me see her—embrace her.

MAD. Come—come. (*as they go up*)

A SERVANT *enters*.

SERVANT. The substitute of the Procureur of the King.

Enter DE COURGEMONT, and GUARDS.

OMNES. What means this?

COUR. It means this, Duke, that a man has introduced himself here under the false name of Rollac.

BEL. What says he?

MAD. Oh, William, William!

COUR. And that we are officially informed that man is no other than Lavarences.

DUKE. Him—him, Lavarences! (*with satisfaction.*)

MAD. (*by DUKE. R.H.*) No, no, 'tis false, 'tis malice, he—

COUR. I arrest you in the King's name! (*they arrest him.*)

Guards cross round in front of him, as he is dragged up.

BEL. Madeline—my child—my child, let me but see and embrace my child. (*as they drag him away.*)

MAD. William! (*flying after him.*)

DUKE. (*detaining her.*) Silence, in respect for me, in pity for him.

MADELINE sinks as overpowered, they drag BELPHEGOR off as the scene closes—COMMANDER, R., JUDGE, L.

SCENE II.—*Apartment in the Hotel of FLORA NINA, near the Citadel of Blaye.*

Enter FLORA NINA, with HENRI, (dressed neatly) R.

HENRI. (R.) Oh, pray, Madame, do take me to my father.

FLORA. (C.) I will, my dear; but you know, when your father and yourself arrived here three days since, you were both in great distress.

HENRI. Oh, yes, indeed we were, which you kindly relieved.

FLORA. You entered the garden, requesting permission to perform before the guests of our Masque; but your father saw one amongst them—the man who had caused your mother's flight,—he watched him alone, and struck him down.

HENRI. I hope he killed the villain! I would have done it, for his taking mother from us.

FLORA. Your father feared he might be arrested, and fled—but first begged me to take care of his child for a few days, until he could return with safety, which I have done.

HENRI. Oh yes, and kindly; but you are not my mother (*weeps.*)

FLORA. Dear boy, you shall see her shortly. I have heard of your father; go, get you ready, and I'll take you to him. (*puts him L.H.*)

HENRI. Thanks—thanks! (*she kisses him.*)

Enter HERCULES, L.—sees FLORA and HENRI—he starts, and HENRI goes off, R.1 E.

HER. Ha! I've caught you, have I? (*in great passion.*)

FLORA. (R.C.) Caught me?

HER. That boy?

FLORA. Well, what of him?

HER. Ah! that's what I want to know. I heard of him yesterday—to-day, I have seen him. The little scoundrel!

FLORA. Scoundrel, Sir?

HER. (*making a horrible face*) Oh, Flora, Nina Flora, here have I been for the last four months adoring you as fast as I could find strength; and, just as I am on the tip-top of the Parnassus of happiness, I find you with a thumping boy to your back, half as big as myself.

FLORA. Well, Sir?

HER. It may be well, Sir—but it is not well, *Madame*. What do you think of that boy?

FLORA. Much more than I do of you—but that boy is not mine.

HER. Oh, ah, yes—I see—the old tale (*mysteriously*). If he's not your boy, what does the boy here?

FLORA. (*in the same tone*) What's that to you?

HER. What's that to me! Suppose I was your husband?

FLORA. I cannot suppose that which can never be.

HER. Not be—not be! No, not under these circumstances.

FLORA. Nor any other.

HER. Do you tell me you don't love me?

FLORA. Ha, ha, ha! Do you think I'm out of my mind?

HER. How dare you let me fall in love with *you*, then?

FLORA. How could I help your making yourself a fool?

HER. *Madame*, I *never made* myself a fool.

FLORA. No, you were a fool, ready-made.

HER. Do you know the consequence of such language to a man of noble blood?

FLORA. Noble fiddlestick!

HER. That's enough!—after the fiddlestick, I've done (*buttons his coat, and slaps his hat upon his head*). Know, *Madame*, I did intend to honour you with my person, name, and fortune!

FLORA. Your name I laugh at—your person I reject—and your fortune I would not pick up!

HER. What did you persuade me to run away with you for?

FLORA. To tease your stiff-starched old grand aunt, annoy your stupidly proud family, and amuse myself at their expense. Adieu, adieu, most noble and high-blooded Hercules. Ha, ha, ha! *Exit, R.*

HER. Oh, oh, oh, my heart, it feels so weak, dear me, I'm quite

staggered; and this girl's behaviour, really, oh, bless me, I'm afraid I'm going to lose my senses. If my grand aunt did but know how I've been treated, oh (*nearly falls*) my knees are as weak as my head. *Exit R.*

SCENE III.—*The Platform of the Citadel of Blaye, various Entrances from the Citadel, and high ramparts—Two Sentinels discovered on duty at back—Music.*

Enter DE COURGEMONT, R.U.E., with Guards, who pass at back.

COUR. Tell the Provost Marshal that I am here. (*then to himself*) I have luckily had good guards placed over this shabby red-bearded fellow—he is here.

Enter ROLLAC, L. 3 E., he wears a disguise.

—Approach.

ROL. (*aside*) Now, for a high tone.

COUR. Now, Sir, who are you?

ROL. (L.C.) This is fine treatment to a man who has been useful to you, and may be so again.

COUR. (R.C.) You certainly *pretend* that you sent the letter which enabled us to arrest Lavarenes this morning.

ROL. Quite true. I'll tell you the contents of the letter:—"I write this to inform you that Lavarenes is disguised, and passing under the name of Rollac; and that he will present himself this morning at the residence of the Duke de Montbazou; he has also passed for a long time as the mountebank Belphégor;" I told you where he had passed the sight, and where you would find the rags he cast off, to take the dress of a man of fashion. You see the service I have rendered you, and, in common gratitude, you should reward me as a friend, not imprison me as a felon.

COUR. On the contrary, if all this is true, I'll give you your liberty, you shall remain in my especial service. Go—they are conducting the prisoner to this spot—his fate will be at once decided.

ROL. I submit. (*aside.*) They'll not dream of seeking me in this place, that's one comfort. *Exit L. 3 E.*

Enter Belpégor, guarded, L. H. 2 E.

COUR. Take him to the judges.

BEL. One word, Monsieur; I hear they talk of shooting me—I want to know for what?

COUR. Are you not Lavarenes?

BEL. Lavarenes? I tell you I am not!

COUR. I say you are, or the Chevalier Rollac.

BEL. No!

COUR. Guilliame, then.

BEL. Yes!

COUR. Ah! Belphégor—the mountebank!

BEL. Yes, true enough.

COUR. I know;—William—Belphégor—Rollac —Lavarennes—mountebank—vagabond—traitor—thief—assassin—you shall be shot!

BEL. Oh! I see you are convinced; so are the ministers and judges—wise judges, you all are, to know a man's name better than he does himself.

Enter FLORA NINA, L. 3 E.

FLORA. I would speak to the substitute.

COUR. What do you want with him, Madame?

FLORA. (*C. sees BELPHEGOR*) 'Tis he!

COUR. Of course it is; I am he!

BEL. (*L.*) If I am not deceived—no—no!

COUR. Why, bless me, it's the pretty dancer! I had quite forgotten my office. What have you to say, Mademoiselle?

FLORA. I merely have to request permission to deliver a letter to the governor, for a friend.

COUR. Ah, I see! (*takes the letter, about to read.*)

FLORA. (*aside to BELPHEGOR*) A word—you remember me?

BEL. (*aside*) Yes, yes—my boy—my Henri!

FLORA. He is safe; it is for him that I have come for you.

COUR. (*looking and twisting letter*) What writing! "My dear substitute!"

BEL. Tell me—where is he? Let me see him—embrace him.

FLORA. Be firm—you shall—he is safe!

BEL. Ha! I guess, you have seen his mother?

FLORA. I have.

BEL. And she?

COUR. (*closing the letter*) This letter requests that you may be allowed to speak to a prisoner.

FLORA. It does. Chevalier——

COUR. Sorry to refuse, but I am compelled. Prisoners are allowed to converse with no one.

FLORA. But I want to inform him a lady will shortly be here.

BEL. (*aside*) My wife—she's coming.

COUR. It's impossible: she can have no business here.

FLORA. Yes; to save this prisoner.

BEL. (*aside*) Ah! she can save me—she will.

COUR. Save—ridiculous!

BEL. Save—oh, thanks, Mademoiselle.

COUR. Why, do you know that this is the man, and he has heard every word?

FLORA. (*laughing, aside*) Adieu, Monsieur. Of course, if you won't let me speak to him, I can't tell him what I came to say. (*she curtsies, and goes off L. 3 E.*)

COUR. It's my firm opinion, she would humbug me if she could. Conduct your prisoner——

BEL. She—Madeline—will come, and I have nothing to fear.

Exit, guarded, R.H. 3 E

Enter DUKE and DE BLANGY, R.U.E.

BLAN. Now, Duke, we are alone, and moments are precious. I tell you that this man is not Lavarences.

DUKE. (R.C.) I know it, cousin.

BLAN. (L.C.) I have seen this Lavarences, under the name of Rollac.

DUKE. I know all you would say; and have in my possession this man's pardon—but he shall not possess it, unless he consent to leave France for ever.

BLAN. I am charged with this message from her:—" That she insists on being confronted with him." What answer give you to this? She comes.

MADLINE appears up steps, R.H.U.E.

DUKE. (*after a moment*) Tell the judges she is ready to appear.

Exit BLANGY, R. 3 E.

MAD. (*advances*) Duke.

DUKE. (R.C.) What brought you here?

MAD. (L.C.) A sacred duty, the accomplishment of which nothing shall prevent—I have sworn it, Duke.

DUKE. You own, this man for twelve years has been called Belphégor, and 'tis proved that for twenty years he's not been called Lavarences.

MAD. I said that I had lived under his roof, that I had shared his misery, that I had witnessed his poverty, his misfortune, and suffering—but that I never knew him commit one single act at which the proudest might blush; he is not the man you say—he is no thief, no villain!

DUKE. It is in seeking to save, that you destroy him, for I have here his pardon. (*shows it.*)

MAD. His pardon?

DUKE. Which he shall have, at the price of your silence; and if one word of yours avows him to be Belphégor, he is lost!

MAD. Do you mean this?

DUKE. (*holding pardon*) I do. If but one word fall from your lips, acknowledging him your husband, he is doomed. This pardon, obtained by my interest, is destroyed, and no power shall save him.

MAD. And you ask me, even in his very presence, to deny, to renounce my husband.

DUKE. I am the guardian of my house's honour, I am the parent of your father, the preserver of your child, and tell you solemnly that on your lips depend his pardon or his death.

Enter COURGEMONT, JAILOR, two JUDGES of the Court, MARSHAL, GUARDS, SOLDIERS, GENDARMES, R. 3 E.

DUKE. (*crosses to L.*) He is here.

MAD. (R.C., *aside*) Oh, brain.

BELPHEGOR is brought on, R. 3 E.

DUKE. My daughter, Messieurs.

COUR. (C.) Madame—approach, Lavarences.

BEL. (R.C., *seeing her*) 'Tis she, and I am safe.

COUR. You will please, Madame, to reply to my questions.

BEL. She will do so, and to your confusion.

COUR. (C.) Madame, oblige me by casting your eyes around.

MAD. (*hesitating*) Ye—yes, Monsieur.

COUR. Now, say—do you know this man?

BEL. Speak, Madeline, and fear not.

DUKE (*aside to her*) Remember that his life is in your hands.
(*about to tear pardon.*)

MAD. (*after an effort, looks at BELPHEGOR*) I—I know him not.

BEL. (*staggered*) You do not know me?

COUR. (*signing to take him away*) Guards, do your duty.

BEL. (*disengages himself, and springs towards MADELINE*) Madeline, do I dream this—look up—look on me, then say you know me not.

MAD. (L.C.) Heaven have pity upon me and him.

COUR. (C.) And you hear, Messieurs, this man dares to pretend (*turns towards the DUKE*) that this lady is his wife, and the mother of his two children.

BEL. Yes; of children, given to me by heaven at her hands—that she, with me, have taught to lisp each night the prayer of childhood and bless us both as father!—mother!—that have pillowed on our arms, in sweet and slumbering innocence—that she has loved with all a mother's love.—(*seeing her failing*) Ha! speak—speak!

DUKE. (L.) Madeline! (*about to tear the pardon.*)

MAD. (L.C.) That man is not my husband.

BEL. (*aghast*) I'll ask no more if you are my wife—but I demand of you, are you not the mother of our children?

Enter FLORA and HENRI, U.E.R.H.

— Answer, Madame, do you know this child? (HENRI, C.)

HEN. (*runs to her*) Mother, my dear mother, have I again found you? Oh, embrace me!

MAD. (*to DUKE.*) It is my son—my son! My heart will surely break.

BEL. (*to MADELINE*) Look—behold that child—speak but a word to save you from lasting, from eternal shame.

MAD. (*sees the DUKE with the paper*) Ah! (*trembling.*)

HEN. Mother, mother!—Oh, why do you not answer?

MAD. Leave me—you are deceived—I—I am not your mother!

BEL. (C.) Oh! (*clasps his hands, with an inward groan.*)

HEN. Father, father—what says she? (*crosses to him, R.H.*)

BEL. She says thou art not her child, boy. Well, think no more of this woman—we must forget her, as she has forgotten us.

HEN. (*kneeling, and taking MADELINE'S hand*) Mother, is this true—that I am not your child?

MAD. (*the DUKE looks upon her*) Oh, pity!—mercy!—my strength is gone. (*to the DUKE, he again offers to destroy the paper*) No, no—I have spoken—you are not my child!

BEL. It is not in nature—and all nature must have flown from

out her heart and breast. (*aside*)—Well, well, I'll not wait for their fire to reach my heart, No, you shall see me perish before your eyes! (*he makes a bound towards the parapet of the platform,*) Madeline you have denied, abandoned me. I have now neither happiness nor hope, there is no future for me, that I should live for; and from this rampart I pass to a world where poverty is not punished as the worst of crimes—farewell (*is about to throw himself from the ramparts, when MADELINE screams.*)

HEN. (*runs up, C.*) Father—father!

MAD. (*by DUKE, L.C.*) Great heavens, hold! for your children's sake—hold!

BEL. Speak—say—are they mine and yours?

DUKE. Madeline!

MAD. Away—leave me (*runs to BELPHEGOR.*) Yes, yes, his children are mine. I am—I am his wife.

BEL. (*jumps from rampart and kneels to her.*) Ha, Madeline, be thou blessed!

MAD. (*runs to DUKE*) Father—Duke—dare you destroy that pardon!

BEL. (*to COURGEMONT*) You see now, most sapient magistrate, that the lady is my wife—the mother of my two children.

COUR. (R.C.) But 'tis still for the Court to decide if you are to be shot, or not.

MAD. Oh—in mercy!

DUKE. (*crosses to COURGEMONT*) Stay, Sir, will you oblige me by retiring for a short time, I would speak in private with this man. (*they bow and retire, R. AND L. 3 E.*)

BELPHEGOR *takes FLORA'S hand, who goes with MADELINE, L. 3 E.*

DUKE. (R.C.) Madeline has proclaimed you as her husband; but to the eyes of your judges, you are still Lavarences, the presumptive proofs are too strong. Your death would save the honour of my house; but, notwithstanding this, you shall live—here is your pardon. (*gives pardon.*)

BEL. (L.C.) I thank your Grace, I thought you'd not allow them to assassinate me, when you knew this to be my wife.

DUKE. Your wife—see her united to a man who has lived as a mendicant upon the public streets! no—there is your pardon, but you must go—to exile—to oblivion.

BEL. 'Tis of little import to me—you keep your pride; but I take my wife and children.

Enter MADELINE, L. 3 E. coming between them quickly with HENRI and JEANNE.

MAD. (C.) William, here is your daughter, your little Jeanne.

BEL. (C.) My little lost one—my own dove—ah! that face, too, in bloom of health—yes—yes, restored safe—for this my thankful tears. (*on his knees.*)

DUKE. (R.) Look on your child—health beaming in her face, and in her eye.

BEL. (*caressing her*) My beautiful.

DUKE. She shall be happy, give her to me, she shall be as my daughter—what do you reply?

BEL. My eyes are open now—my poor children, I must not love you in selfishness, but as a father (*rises*); her now bright eyes and health-tinted cheeks, inform me so. Give me your oath, you will rear this boy also in honour and respect.

DUKE. I swear it.

BEL. You'll love him as you love my—your pretty Jeanne.

DUKE. He shall be my son, as Jeanne is my daughter.

BEL. I believe you (*takes the DUKE apart*). You can now, Monsieur, break my marriage, you shall never see me more. I bear myself away, where you will—'tis the same to me—to Cayenne, as this pardon insists. I will swear, in my turn, never to behold my wife or children again (*struggling with his feelings*)—pardon these tears; but I am still a man, though a despised one. Suffer me to embrace them (*with choked utterance*) for the last time—adieu, Henri, adieu—when you are happy, sometimes think of me, Jeanne (*embraces her*). Farewell, Madeline! pardon what you have suffered for me, it is my misery, not my sin, that I am poor—I loved you—shall love you ever—adieu!

MAD. No—no, I will not part with you, I will not suffer you to depart alone, where you go, so do I. (*goes up C. to him*)

DUKE. What means this?

MAD. It means, Duke, that I am not alone a mother—I am a wife. By your protection my children may be led to happiness and honour; but from him, my husband (*goes to him*) I part not.

HEN. (*running to them—dragging his sister L.C.*) Father—mother, do not leave us, if you go, pray—pray, take us with you?

MAD. My children!

BEL. Ah! you see, Duke—we cannot part, you see.

DUKE (R.H., *embraces Children*) Oh, childhood! thy voice pleads strongly: and, casting pride aside, I yield to its holy impulse. The trial has been severe, but your mutual love will be the dearer for its tested faith. Belphégor, it was to save thy life I forced denial of thee from her lips. I shall now be alone. I would have saved our house's honours in our house's blood—therefore, sought thy child—

BEL. Duke—when a mother's reason, when her heart, can bear the parting, they shall be rendered to you. Madeline, you'll bring your mind to bear their loss.

MAD. Yes, in time—their loss, not yours. (*embracing.*)

COURGEMENT *and the rest re-enter.*

COUR. Duke, the Court awaits you.

DUKE. It is useless—this man is pardoned.

COUR. Lavarenes pardoned!

ROLLAC *enters*, L. 3 E.

ROL. Oh, oh! I am happy to hear it—Lavarenes pardoned! Monsieur, I'll thank you for my passport to Portugal. (*taking off his wig and false whiskers.*)

BEL. He!—this man, Rollac!

ROL. No, my good fellow—I am Lavarenes—I am saved! Ha, ha, ha!

BEL. (*gives paper to CORGEMONT.*) Read this, Sir.

COUR. (*R. reads*) Saved from being shot, but not from transportation to Cayenne.

ROL. The devil!

BEL. (*L.H.*) Don't be in a hurry for that gentleman—he'll wait on you quite soon enough.

Exit ROLLAC, guarded, L. 1 E.

MAD. (*L.C.*) Thus, William, pride ever sinks before truth's radiant eye!

BEL. And man, whatever his chance of birth, may still be happy in his heart's affection, so that that heart be true to honour and itself.

R.H.

L.H.

Guards.

Guards.

DE COURGEMENT. DUKE. HENRI. BELPHEGOR. JEANNE. MADELINE.

Curtain.