

MARGUERITE'S COLOURS



OR

PASSING THE FRONTIER

A Comic Drama

IN

TWO ACTS

[ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH]

BY

THOMAS ARCHER, COMEDIAN,

AUTHOR OF

Asmodeus—The King's Ransom—Blood Royal—the Inundation
—Don Caesar de Bazan—Three Red Men—Asmodeus.
&c. &c. &c.



LONDON:

THOMAS HAILES LACY.

89, STRAND, W.C.,

Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market.

MARGUERITE'S COLOURS.

*First produced at the Lyceum Theatre.
July 5th, 1847.*

CHARACTERS.

DUKE DE CROISSY, *Governor of Verdun* Mr. EMERY.
COUNT LANNOY, *Commander of the
Citadel*..... Mr. F. VINING.
COLONEL D'AUBREUIL..... Mr. J. T. JOHNSON.
CAPTAIN SANSPEUR..... Mr. A. WIGAM.
MARGUERITE, *Duchess de Croissy*..... Miss VILLARS.
HELEN DE MONTBRUN..... Miss DICKINSON.
MADAME THIBAUT, *Hostess of the "White
Lion"*..... Mrs. GRIFFITHS.
BABET, *Marguerite's Maid*..... Miss ARDEN.

SCENE.—Verdun, the frontier of France and Lorraine.

TIME—1745.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION—1 hour and 30 minutes.

COSTUMES.

DUKE DE CROISSY.—Purple velvet coat, amber satin waistcoat, purple velvet small clothes, sword, cocked hat, tagged epaulettes, high black boots, white silk sash, powdered wig of the period.
COUNT LANNOY.—Crimson velvet coat, white satin waistcoat, crimson velvet small clothes, black velvet shoes with diamond buckles, powdered wig of the period.
COLONEL D'AUBREUIL.—Green velvet coat, white satin waistcoat, green velvet small clothes, cocked hat with feathered edge, white sash, wig of the period.
CAPTAIN SANSPEUR.—Blue military coat, white small clothes, black boots, feather edged cocked hat, wig of the period. *2nd dress*.—Green velvet riding habit, black hat with feathers, long curled powdered wig, amber satin petticoat
MARGUERITE.—Amber satin dress of the time.
MADAME THIBAUT.—Brocade dress, silk apron—lace cap.
HELEN.—Claret-coloured velvet coat, blue satin waistcoat, white small clothes, high black boots, drab hat with gold cord and tassel, *2nd dress*.—White bridal dress.
BABET.—Red petticoat, flowered gown.

This Drama is the property of Thomas Hailes Lacy.

MARGUERITE'S COLOURS.



ACT FIRST

SCENE.—*The Garden of Madame Thibaut's Inn*—"The White Lion," at Verdun. Gateway at back—country seen beyond—a house, L.—a round table, and chair, B.

MADAME THIBAUT. (*speaks within, L.*) Oh, yes, sir, mine's the first inn in Verdun. You may rely on every attention.

Enter MADAME THIBAUT.

Ah, as I live, the governor !

Enter the DUKE OF CROISSY, MARGUERITE, his wife, hanging on his arm, c. from L

DUKE. (L. C.) My dear, make yourself easy, you have full half an hour to spare.

MAR. (C.) And where are we now ?

DUKE. This is the "White Lion," Madame Thibaut's Inn.

MADAME. (R.—*who has been continually curtseying*) At your ladyship's service ; for I need not ask if I have the honour to see his lordship's fair bride, the loveliest in Verdun, a town famed for beauty.

DUKE. Yes—Verdun's the place for sweetmeats and pretty women!

MAR. I have often heard of Madame Thibault as one much attached to your family.

DUKE. Yes, yes—we have known her some time.

MADAME. Oh, yes, my lady, I have known the duke above thirty years.

MAR. So long ?

DUKE. Yes, yes—she was nurse in the family.

MADAME. True. And then your lordship was a grown-up handsome soldier.

DUKE. NO, no—you're mistaken, (*aside*) What a bore the woman is—a regular old almanac !

MADAME. NO, no, your lordship. I perfectly remember, a very short time after I entered the family, how disappointed you were when another obtained the rank to which seniority entitled you.

MAR. And that is thirty years ago ?

DUKE. Oh, nonsense ! The woman's in her dotage. I was so very young when I entered the service, that—

MADAME. It was but the other day three officers breakfasting here, were saying his lordship would soon be promoted to the rank of general.

MAR. Indeed !

DUKE. That's true enough.

MADAME. Yes, and very just, too, as they said—he being the *oldest* colonel in the army.

DUKE, (*trying to laugh*) Ha, h-h-a ! (*aside*) Infernally agreeable ! (*goes up—passes behind MAUGURITE*)

MAR. (*aside*) Very flattering !

DUKE, (*aside to MADAME*) Zounds, madame, your tongue and your memory are both too long !

MADAME. I beg your lordship's pardon—I hope I haven't offended your lordship—I'm sure I shall never forget your lordship's kindness in permitting me to open the inn.

DUKE. (L. C.) Which some fine day I may close again.

MADAME. Oh, dear! your lordship—

MAR. But why, my dear ? I must take Madame Thibaut under my protection.

DUKE. We are here on the frontiers of France and Lorraine, and the new convention between the two countries exacts a more active watchfulness on the one side, to render to the good King Stanislaus such of his subjects as may run away from him, and on the other, to keep an eye on those of Louis the Fifteenth, as may have the curiosity to pass into Lorraine. The orders are peremptory, and Madame Thibaut is accused of giving shelter to—

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MADAME. All travellers who stop at my house—that's all—and at this moment I have nobody but traders and servants.

DUKE, (*observing her*) And not one gentleman ?

MADAME. Yes, one—one very young gentleman.—he arrived in the night, and went to bed directly.

DUKE, (*quickly*) He came from Paris ?

MADAME. NO, from Lorraine.

DUKE. Are you sure of that ?

MADAME. Quite sure. I know the postilion who drove him.

DUKE. Then 'tis not the same, (*crosses to L. C.*)

MAR. (R.) Are you, then, looking for any one?

MADAME. Dear me, I'm all of a tremble!

DUKE. Silence! (*mysteriously*) He is a young madman.

Enter the COUNT LANNOY, C. from L.

LANNOY. (L.) Ah, Madame Thibaut! (*touches her on shoulder*)

MADAME. Oh dear! how you made me jump!

LANNOY. AS I live, the governor and the duchess ! (*they bow*)

DUKE. The Count de Lannoy!

LANNOY. I am most happy to meet your ladyship! (*to MARGUERITE*) We had hoped to have seen you at the Duchess of Aiguillon's ball.

MAR. Ball! has there been a ball ?

DUKE. Yes. But I never received an invitation—it was lost, or mislaid, I suppose.

MAR. Oh, what a pity! I should have so liked to have danced—

DUKE. Marguerite!

MAR. With my husband.

LANNOY. True. Ladies should always dance with their husbands—at least, at first. But how is it, my lord duke, when you were a bachelor, you used to give charming fetes, and now—

DUKE. But my wife, who has just left a convent, is not fond of company.

MAR. On the contrary, my dear, I adore company. It's so tiresome to be always at home, *tete-a-tete* with—
(*looks at DUKE—recollects herself, and drops her eyes to the ground.*)

DUKE. Adieu, count—we are going.

LANNOY. And I also. I just called on Madame Thibaut for a little information about an arrest.

MADAME. Another!

DUKE. Ha, ha, ha! If we should be in search of the same party—

LANNOY. I am looking after a young girl.

DUKE. Then it's not the same person.

MADAME, *(aside)* Heaven be praised, there's none but men in my house. *Exit into house, L.*

LANNOY. *(showing paper)* I have orders to re-conduct her to the Ursulines at Nancy.

MAR. The convent where I was brought up. And her name?

LANNOY. Helen de Montbrun!

MAR. I don't know her. *{goes up stage}*

DUKE, *(shows paper)* And my orders are to arrest a young man, expected to arrive here on the frontier, and send him back to Paris—to the Bastille, perhaps.

MAR. *(who has cast her eye over paper)* Ha!

DUKE. What's the matter ?

MAR. Nothing, nothing, only I thought—I—that is, we should be too late.

DUKE. Very true, my dear—we'll go at once.

LANNOY. And as my lovely fugitive is not here, I beg permission to accompany you.

Enter MADAME THIBAUT from house, L.

Ah, Madame Thibaut! be sure to give me information should any female arrive at your inn from Lorraine.

DUKE. And of all travellers from Paris.

LANNOY. Under the penalty of a heavy fine—

DUKE. And of having your house closed.

MADAME, *(alarmed)* Rely on my attention, gentlemen.

MAR. *(aside)* Poor young man !

(LANNOY offers his hand—DUKE comes between them)

DUKE. Allow me, my dear friend—

COUNT, *(aside)* Still jealous! *(as they are going up c.)*

Enter COLONEL D'AUBREUIL, C. from L.—all bow.

DUKE, *(looking hard at COLONEL)* I think I have the pleasure of speaking to—

D'ABB. (R.) Colonel D'Aubrueil, at your service.

DUKE. I beg pardon, I'm mistaken.

Bows again, and exeunt DUKE, MARGUERITE, and COUNT

LANNOY, C. to R.

D'AUB. *(coming down)* Who did the old fool take me for, I wonder ?

MADAME. I must close my house.

D'AUB. Madame!

MADAME. YOU want an apartment, sir ? I can assure you—

D'AUB. Hear me, madame. This morning a lady—a very young lady, arrived here!

MADAME. Sir, I—

D'AUB. I know she was very pretty, very tired, and required instantly to be shown to her apartment.

MADAME. Nay, but—

D'AUB. I know. She begged no one might be allowed to see her.

MADAME. But, sir—

D'AUB. I know. But one friend—a relation, a brother, whom she expects. I am that brother. Lead me to her.

MADAME. There's neither old or young lady in my house.

D'AUB. Then why the devil didn't you say so before ?

MADAME. HOW could I? You wouldn't let me get in a word.

D'AUB. (*aside*) What in heaven's name can have become of her?

CAPTAIN SANSPEUR. (*without, L.*) Take my horse round to the courtyard.

MADAME. Some one else arrived.

CAPTAIN SANSPEUR *enters, c. from L*

CAPT. Ah, hostess!

MADAME. (*curtseying*) Do you wish an apartment, sir?

CAPT. Yes—here! (*gives her his hat, which she places on table*)

D'AUB. (*R. turning round*) Ah, Captain Sanspeur!

CAPT. Am I so fortunate ? Colonel D'Aubreuil! (*shakes hands*) How glad I am to see you. Are you staying in this horrid hole ?

MADAME, (L.) Hey! what did he say?

CAPT. (*looking at him*) Why, what's the matter with you ? You look - But you shall tell me all about it over our wine. Here, my good woman, see my portmanteau taken into some sort of a room, will you ? and let me have pen, ink, and paper, and dinner for two.

MADAME. Directly, sir.

D'AUB. Excuse me—I have no appetite.

MADAME. Dinner for one, then ?

CAPT. No—for two, I tell you. I'll eat for you, if a man can eat in such a precious hole.

MADAME. Sir!

CAPT. There, run along, my good woman.

MADAME, (*aside*) Run along, indeed! Here's manners!

Exit L.

D'AUB. (*aside*) Where can she be? Shall I wait here?

CAPT. Well, colonel!

D'AUB. (*not having heard*) Or seek her elsewhere? (CAPTAIN *slaps him on shoulder*) I beg your pardon, captain.

CAPT. Why, what the devil's the matter with you? I see, you're in love.

D'AUB. Do you think so?

CAPT. To be sure. You ought to be, at your age. As for me, I'm always in a state of past, present, and future.

D'AUB. And pray which state are you in now?

CAPT. NOW, I'll give you a noble example of frankness. I've been in love these two months.

D'AUB. TWO months? The date of your departure from Nancy.

CAPT. Yes. When I left the court of King Stanislaus without taking leave of anyone. That virtuous prince having requested me, as a particular favour, to quit his dominions in three hours.

D'AUB. And the reason?

CAPT. Why, you see, necessity compelled me to take a convent by storm.

D'AUB. A convent?

CAPT. Yes, the Convent of the Ursulines, (P'AUBREUIL *expresses alarm*) where I had accompanied the king to witness the ceremony of a nun taking the veil. In the midst of the singers, I remarked a young girl—oh, such a— Talk of Raphael's virgins! such a face—such a form—such a smile!

D'ACB. And you fell in love with her?

CAPT. That moment and for ever. I knew not who she was, but I remarked in my daily visits to the convent, she always wore, either round her neck or in her hair, a rose-coloured ribbon, which had a most charming effect. From this I learnt her name, and risked a letter.

D'AUB. YOU wrote to her?

CAPT. A declaration that scorched the very paper. But I never got an answer.

D'AUB. YOU should have written again.

CAPT. SO I did, twenty times over; and at last the good king Stanislaus took me aside, and informed me the lady abbess had intercepted all the letters I had addressed to Marguerite. A pretty name, isn't it?

D'AUB. Well, and the king said—

CAPT. That in consideration of my youth, he was inclined to

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treat the affair as a boyish folly, on condition I pursued it no further.

D'AUB. And you promised?

CAPT. No I didn't. I only bowed—which meant either yes or no; and in an hour afterwards I was hid in one of the niches of the chapel, and learnt that her cell looked over the garden. I was not sure which was her window, but trusted to the dictates of my heart to point it out to me, and in the evening I scaled the wall, clambered up to the window—

D'AUB. And found yourself—

CAPT. In the apartment of the Lady Abbess.

D'AUB. Good heavens!

CAPT. She screamed like a mad woman. Twenty old nuns joined in the chorus, so I made for the convent gates, and luckily escaped, and three hours afterwards I was on the frontier, blowing kisses to my lady love, which were borne to her by the wind.

D'AUB. And at Versailles you soon forgot her!

CAPT. NO. I must be more constant in my nature than I had thought, for I'm more in love than ever. Besides, there are difficulties. But a few days ago I learnt that on my first attempt to re-enter Lorraine, I ran the risk of being accommodated in the Bastille—that first set me thinking on the matter, and another circumstance decided me. I received a sudden order to rejoin my regiment, near Fontenoy, where Marshal Saxe had appointed to meet us. I left Versailles. My comrades were all boasting of the loveliness of their mistresses, who had decorated them with a knot of their ribbons on this day of their departure. I alone had none. They jeered and laughed at me. Stung to the quick, I vaunted the charms of her I love, and swore she should herself attach to my hat the lovely rose-coloured ribbon, which was ever fluttering before my eyes. They dared me—me, more deeply in love than ever. So, in defiance of their double police, I have engaged my honour for the conquest of Marguerite's colours!

D'AUB. I wish you a double victory.

CAPT. Thank you, my friend. But you—who are you in love with?

D'AUB. With the loveliest—most charming creature—

CAPT. Next to mine. Does she know you?

D'AUB. Certainly.

CAPT. That's one advantage you have over me. And you hope in time, I suppose—

D'AUB. In time? Egad, I've carried her off.

CAPT. The devil you have!

D'AUB. Yes, that's another advantage I have over you.

CAPT. Very true. But tell us all about it—it may serve as a guide to me. Well, you carried her off—where from ?

D'AUB. From the Convent of the Ursulines', at Nancy.

CAPT. Hey! not—not my Marguerite ?

D'AUB. No, no. My mistress had but scarcely entered its wall. I had long loved Helen de Montbrun. Yesterday the convent's gates closed on her; and last night night, while I was dancing at a ball, a rope ladder, prepared by my faithful valet, thrown over the wall you scaled to so little purpose, restored her to liberty. A post chaise was ready to bring her to Verdun, where this morning I was to join her at the " Black Horse."

CAPT. Bravo, my dear fellow—that's the way to carry on the war. And your Helen—has she arrived ?

D'AUB. No—i have been all over the town, but can hear nothing of her.

CAPT. The devil!

D'AUB. But she must be here. I'll retrace my steps from inn to inn, and now you are here, I have no fear of missing her.

CAPT. That's right. If she arrives here in your absence, I'll receive her for you. Ma'amzelle Helen de Montbrun ?

Enter MADAME THIBAUT, from house, L.

MADAME. Sir, your dinner is served in your apartment, and your portmanteau has been carried there. Oh, I had forgotten to say the little dressing-room at the side is used for the next apartment, as well as the one you occupy. There is a traveller in it at present.

D'AUB. A lady ?

MADAME. NO, sir—a young gentleman. He's quite alone.

CAPT. Ah, in that ease, we'll ask him to dine with us.

D'AUB. Well, well, I'll resume my search. Keep a room ready for me, and if a lady should arrive—

MADAME, (*alarmed*) A young lady ?

CAPT. (*laughing*) Well, what is there alarming in that ?

MADAME. Oh, nothing, sir.

D'AUB. YOU will inform this gentleman, who will attend on her until my return. Captain, I rely on your friendship.

CAPT. (*shakes hands*) Make yourself easy, my dear fellow.

Exit, D'AUBREUIL, c. to L.—CAPTAIN enters inn, L.

MADAME. Yes! but I shan't be easy until I have informed the commandant. I can't afford to compromise my inn.

Enter MARGUERITE, c. from R. the hood of her mantle over her head.

MAR. I hope no one has followed me.

MADAME. Besides, these young men seem a couple of scapegraces, and—

MAR. Madame, I—

MADAME, (*alarmed*) Oh, lord! here she is!

MAR. (*removing hood*) You don't recollect me.

MADAME. The duchess, I declare!

MAR. Hush ! I have come here to do a good action, which you can share with me—it will cost little, and—

MADAME. Oh, if it costs nothing, I—

MAR. YOU said there was a young gentleman here from Lorraine.

MADAME. SO he told me!

MAR. TO deceive you, no doubt. Is he aware he is in danger of being arrested'?

MADAME. Oh, dear! well, he does seem very uneasy—always at the window—

MAR. 'Tis he, then!

MADAME. But my lady—

MAR. Poor young man! I don't know him, but his liberty is threatened. From what you told my husband, his suspicion is aroused, and I have escaped from him, to beg you, my good Madame Thibaut, to warn this traveller.

MADAME. But his lordship's orders, my lady. Besides, if he is guilty.

MAR. Of some trifling folly only. A young man of birth and family—he is handsome—

MADAME. Very, and very young.

MAR. That is nothing to me. But you will tell him ? '

MADAME, (*looking at inn*) He is here, my lady—perhaps you had better tell him yourself.

Enter HELEN DEMONTBRUN, in male attire, from inn, L.—does not see MARGUERITE.

HELEN. Ah, landlady! I have been looking for you.

MADAME. What's the matter, sir?

HELEN. Pray who is the young man you have put into the next apartment to mine, and who entered my dressing-room without ceremony ?

MADAME. Only a traveller, sir. I thought between men—

HELEN. Oh dear, no—not at all! I won't have it! Let me have another room, or I shall quit your house.

MADAME. Very well, sir, you shall. But here's a lady-wishes to speak to you ! (to MARGUERITE) I'm not supposed to know anything, my lady ! *Exit into house, L.*

HELEN, (*aside*) A lady! what can she want with me ? an.' P'Aubreuil not come yet!

MAR. (*aside*) This, then, is the impudent officer who wrote to me in the convent. He is much younger than my husband !

HELEN, (*aside*) How she looks at me!

MAR. (*aside*) I must take courage—he must not perceive my agitation!

HELEN, (*aside*) I'm in continual fear something will betray me! I'll be off!

MAR. (*going to HELEN, and drawing hood over her face*) Sir!

HELEN, (*aside*) Oh, heavens! (*to her*) Madame, I've not the honour of knowing you!

MAR. And you, sir, are a stranger to me, but I—I—

HELEN, (*aside*) She seems to tremble as much as I do !

MAR. I would render you a service, sir—they are seeking to arrest you.

HELEN. Me ? oh, then they know—

MAR. Everything. The order has arrived to prevent your passing the frontier—

HELEN. I shall die!

MAR. And to have you reconducted, under a strong guard, to Paris.

HELEN, (*surprised*) To Paris ?

MAR. Doubtless you have come—

HELEN. I came from Nancy.

MAR. HOW?

HELEN. What have I said?

MAR. Are you not Captain Sanspeur ?

HELEN. Sanspeur! no, that I ain't—don't know him.

MAR. Then I am mistaken ! I beg your pardon, but trust, as a gentleman, you will not mention this interview, (*curtsies to HELEN, who is about to curtsy—recollects herself—bows*) 'Tis not he! so much the better! *Exit c. to R.*

HELEN. I'll not stay here. If D'Aubreuil doesn't come, I'll go and meet him. 'Tis dreadful to live in fear of everybody—even this lady—and yet her manner was kind and gentle.

Enter CAPTAIN from inn, L.

CAPT. What a precious dinner—and such wine!

HELEN, (*not seeing him*) I'm afraid every moment I shall be recognised!

CAPT. Hallo, my little neighbour!

HELEN, (*aside*) The very word "sir" gives me the shivers.

CAPT. (*coming up, slaps her on shoulder*) Sir!

HELEN, (*alarmed*) Oh dear ! (*looks at him*) Lor', sir! you shouldn't make one jump so!

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CAPT. Why, you're not going to faint, are you ? (*aside*)
What a funny little man it is!

HELEN. NO, sir, but I—

CAPT. When I came into your room just now, why you
screamed out like a mincing lady.

HELEN. Sir—I—that is, a man coming suddenly into one's
room—

CAPT. Why, I came to a man, didn't I ? I was going to ask
you to dinner.

HELEN. Sir, I don't dine!

CAPT. Hey! don't dine ? Well, we'll sup together, then.

HELEN. Sir, I never sup.

CAPT. Don't sup! why, how the devil do you live, then ?
But, my dear fellow—(*taking her hands*)

HELEN, (*withdrawing her hands*) Sir, I am not accustomed
to such freedoms.

CAPT. (*aside, going up stage*) Well, of all the queer little
fellows—

HELEN, (*aside*) He's not good for much, I'm sure.

Enter MADAME THIBAUT, from inn, L.

MADAME. Oh, sir, this is very wrong—this is shocking!

HELEN. Hey?

CAPT. What's the matter?

MADAME. YOU have deceived me!

CAPT. Me?

HELEN. Me?

MADAME. Yes, you—that is, I don't exactly know which,
but one of you is a woman.

HELEN, (*alarmed*) It isn't me!

CAPT. (*laughing*) It isn't me!

MADAME. It's one of you. One's a lady—and here, the
commandant threatens to close my house if I don't inform him
instantly.

HELEN, (*aside*) I'm dead!

CAPT. (*looking at HELEN—aside*) La, can it be ?

MADAME. I'll run and—

HELEN. Madame!

CAPT. (*stopping her*) No, no—don't run—it'll wind you!
Besides, who told you one of us was—that is, wasn't a man ?

HELEN. Yes—who told you ?

MADAME, (*looking at one, then at the other*) How do you
mean, who told me ? Why, the dresses—the—

HELEN. Heavens, woman! You've not had the assurance
to open my—that is—

CAPT. (*aside*) It's she—the colonel's Helen.

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MADAME. What do you mean by assurance ? In conveying the luggage up to the dressing room, one of the boxes flew open—

CAPT. And there you saw—

MADAME. I saw many things not generally worn by gentlemen.

HELEN. I don't know who they belong to.

CAPT. But I do.

HELEN. To you—

MADAME. Well, the commandant will soon find out which of you is to be taken back to the convent, (*goes up*)

HELEN, (*following*) The convent ? Oh, heavens!

MADAME. Then it's you?

HELEN, (*trying to laugh*) Me ? Ha, ha, ha!

CAPT. (*bringing MADAME down*) Stay a moment.

MADAME. What then it's you ?

CAPT. Me? Ha, ha, ha!

MADAME. Ay, laugh away—but I shan't laugh when my house is closed. I'm very sorry, but interest before everything.

Exit, c. to R.

HELEN, (*calling after her*) Oh, dear me!

CAPT. She's gone, the she dragon!

HELEN. What will become of me ?

CAPT. SO, sir, you carry gowns and petticoats in your trunk ?

HELEN, (*embarrassed*) Sir, I—I—I say it isn't me.

CAPT. (*laughing*) Capital! It would be rather strange if it was me—although, to be sure, I've not that military air, that tone of assurance you possess.

HELEN, (*aside*) He's laughing at me. Sir, I say—

CAPT. And I say, Ma'amselle Helen de Montbrun!

HELEN, (*alarmed*) Oh, for mercy's sake—

CAPT. Confess!

HELEN. Oh, be silent!

CAPT. Not till you confess.

HELEN. But how did you know—who told you ?

CAPT. Colonel D'Aubreuil himself. I promised to protect you in his absence—he is now gone to seek you. (*aside*) She's devilish pretty!

HELEN. Then he didn't receive my letter ?

CAPT. The point is to save you until he returns—and he can't be long—I'll keep my word, and as you are here—

HELEN. YOU will defend me ?

CAPT. I'll die in your service.

HELEN. Oh, sir! but you are not deceiving me—you know the colonel ?

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CAPT. I'm one of his intimate friends, Captain Sanspeur.

HELEN. Captain Sanspeur ? Oh', heavens!

CAPT. Hey?

HELEN. YOU are lost!

CAPT. Hey ? what did you say ? No jesting.

HELEN. I am not jesting. Just now, a lady who took me for you, told me—

CAPT. A lady? Was she pretty ?

HELEN. She kept her face concealed.

CAPT. And was looking for me. Well ?

HELEN. She told me in confidence that Captain Sanspeur would be arrested, and taken to Paris.

CAPT. The devil! Take me back to Paris ?

HELEN. I wish I was in your place—it's much more desirable than being taken back to the Ursulines at Nancy.

CAPT. The Ursulines, at Nancy ? I wish I were you.

HELEN. At Paris the colonel could join me.

CAPT. At the Ursulines I should be near her I love. Ha, I have it! We'll manage this business first. I'll borrow one of your dresses—we'll then await our enemies—they can't be very formidable. They'll question—I am Ma'amselle Helen de Montbrun—and then drive on, coachman, to the Ursulines, at Nancy.

HELEN. And I—

CAPT. You're Captain Sanspeur, just come from Paris—a young fellow with a little assurance, and plenty of wit.

HELEN. But do you think you'll be mistaken for a young lady with that air ?

CAPT. Why not ? I'll do as you did just now—look on the ground, take small steps—(*walks across stage, imitating her*) and speak so, out of the corners of my mouth.

HELEN. Ha, ha, ha! Bravo, Captain!

CAPT. (*turning quickly, and imitating her*) Sir, I'm not accustomed to such freedoms!

HELEN. Very well, indeed!

CAPT. And you—you must be firm. Don't betray yourself, and show the timidity of a boarding-school miss.

HELEN, (*walks across stage rather boldly, in imitation of him*) There, what do you think of that ?

CAPT. Not worth a curse ! (*HELEN looks astonished*) I beg pardon, but more assurance—more of the " I don't care a d—n " about it—your head higher. That's it—one hand in your pocket.

HELEN, (*does as he says*) What, so ?

CAPT. (*walking about*) That's something like it. More

swagger! undo a few of your waistcoat buttons, (*unbuttoning her waistcoat*)

HELEN, (*drawing back*) Sir!

CAPT. (*laughing*) Don't be alarmed. Now try again—take longer steps—that's it—your hat under your arm, and if any impudent puppy presumes to quiz you too closely, pull his nose at once.

HELEN. Oh, I shall be frightened—I know I shall!

CAPT. Not a bit. Now forward—just observe me a little. There! (*walking up stage—HELEN does the same, imitating him—aside*) She's devilish pretty!

HELEN. Do you think I shall do?

CAPT. Not quite. You must carry a muff box. (*takes a pinch*)

HELEN. I haven't one.

CAPT. Take mine. Now then, once more.

(*struts up stage—she does the same—they meet at top—HELEN has quizzing glass stuck in her eye—he takes her arm, and they swagger to front*)

HELEN, (*offers snuff*) Do you do anything in this way?

CAPT. Ha, ha! capital! Now swear a little. We all swear like troopers in Paris.

LANNOY. (*without*, R. u. E.) Hallo, there!

HELEN, (*running*, R.) Oh, heavens!

LANNOY. (*without*) Let no one pass this way.

HELEN. Oh, dear!

CAPT. Think of the convent.

HELEN. I do. Hem! (*walks about*)

CAPT. (*looking round*, R.) A stupid-looking person is placing sentinels around the house. Quick—remember your part, and I'll to the dressing room, and be sure to fasten the door. (*assuming her voice*) There's no admittance here. Ha, ha, ha! Good by, captain! *Enters inn, L.*

HELEN. NOW, then, courage! I must be a man. Oh, dear, it's very awkward!

Enter LANNOY, C. from L.

LANNOY. Ah, a young man! From what Thibaut says, this must be my prisoner.

HELEN, (*aside*) Now, then, let me remember, (*puts hat under her arm, right hand in pocket—walks about, humming a tune*)

LANNOY. (*aside*) Yes, that slender waist, that small foot! I've studied women too well to be mistaken.

HELEN, (*aside*) How he looks at me!

Sc. 1. MARGUERITE'S COLOURS. 17

LANNOY. I beg pardon, but I am the commandant of Verdun, and I—I am looking for a young girl.

HELEN. More shame for you, at your age.

LANNOY. YOU misunderstand me. A young girl, who—

HELEN. Well, sir, what the devil's that to me ?

LANNOY. And when I saw you, I thought—

HELEN. Well, sir, what did you think ? *{offers snuff}* Do anything in this way ?

LANNOY. Snuff ! Do you take snuff ?

HELEN; We snuff considerably in Paris, *(takes pinch)*

LANNOY. But—*(takes a pinch—she shuts box on his finger)* Oh!

HELEN. Well, you were saying you thought—

LANNOY. That the young girl was—*(sneezes—HELEN looks at him with contempt)* I beg pardon—was—ha, ha, ha!

HELEN. Was— Ha, ha, ha !

LANNOY. YOU. Ha, ha, ha!

HELEN. Me ? Ha, ha, ha!

BOTH. Ha, ha, ha!

HELEN, *(suddenly turning to him—very fiercely)* Sir, do you mean to insinuate I look like a girl ?

LANNOY. *(retreating from her)* No, no—I—not exactly.

HELEN, *(walking towards him—he retreats)* Sir, if any one should have the impertinence to accuse me of anything feminine, damme, I'll pull his nose !

LANNOY. I—sir—I—*(aside)* What a fiery little villain

Enter MADAME THIBAUT, and the DUKE C. from R.

MADAME. Oh, my lord governor, I beg you—

DUKE. Don't be-alarmed—they won't be hurt.

LANNOY. Oh, governor!

DUKE. Well, my friend, what of the young gentleman?

LANNOY. *(aside—pointing to HELEN)* There he is—a precious little devil—quarrelsome as a monkey. I haven't seen the other, *(to MADAME)* Where is she ?

MADAME. Up stairs, in her apartment. You will be gentle ?

LANNOY. Of course, to a woman. Lead me to her. *(to HELEN)* Sir-

HELEN. Captain, if you please.

DUKE. Sanspeur?

HELEN. The same.

LANNOY. Captain Sanspeur, I have the honour to-

HELEN. Sir, I have the honour to—*(bows)*

LANNOY *exits into inn.*

MADAME, *(to HELEN)* I'm verry sorry, but I can't help it.

HELEN. GO along, woman !

18 MARGUERITE'S COLOURS. Act 1.

MADAME. There, that's the man, I knew it—I always said so.

Exit c. to L.

DUKE, (C.) Captain, I'm grieved to—that is, delighted to meet you.

HELEN, (R.) Sir!

DUKE. I'm the Governor of Verdun, and this order compels me to arrest you on the frontier.

HELEN. The devil it does ! *{offers snuff}* Do anything in this way ?

DUKE. Thank you. *(takes a pinch)* And to have you reconducted to Paris.

HELEN, *(aside)* I hope so. To Paris ? Well, I'm ready.

DUKE. To the Bastille.

HELEN. Hey? *(aside)* Oh, lor, no—I ain't ready.

DUKE. Sir, you shall be treated with every consideration.

HELEN. But suppose, after all, I am not the man ?

DUKE. In that case you can produce your papers.

HELEN. My papers ? *{aside}* To the Bastille ? I'm lost!

LANNOY. *(inside the inn)* Don't be alarmed, lady—don't be alarmed.

DUKE, *(going up)* Oh, here comes the lovely fugitive.

Enter CAPTAIN SANSPEUR, very hurriedly, L., dressed as a lady of the time of Louis the Fifteenth, powder, &c.

CAPT. *(to LANNOY, who remains at the inn door)* Sir, sir! you have treated me very rudely.

HELEN. Hey ? *(sees him)* 'Tis he !

LANNOY. Allow me—I was not rude—I am incapable of rudeness to a lady.

CAPT. *(coming forward, L. c.)* I appeal to these gentlemen—*(curtsies, and points to DUKE, C.)* to this respectable-looking old gentleman in particular.

DUKE. *(aside)* Old gentleman, indeed !

HELEN, *(aside)* How well the fellow looks !

LANNOY. *(aside)* She's a splendid woman ! *(to CAPTAIN)* I beg pardon, but I have a duty to perform.

CAPT. Duty, indeed! Now only hear—*(to DUKE)* you in particular, honest old man—*(DUKE looks disgusted)* I was in my dressing room, at my toilette—just at the very moment when a woman loves to be *tete-a-tete* with her looking glass—when this person—*(points to LANNOY)* rushed rudely in, I screamed out, and had just time to place my fan—*(puts fan over neck)*

DUKE. Oh, count, I—

HELEN. Shameful conduct, sir.

LANNOY. NO, no—I tell you I waited.

Sc. 1. MARGUERITE'S COLOURS. 19

CAPT. (*pretends to cry*) And then when I attempted to leave the room, he took my hand and forced me to follow him.

DUKE. Oh, count!

HELEN. Horrible ! shameful! (*crosses to CAPTAIN*)

LANNOY. NO, no—I spoke gently—kindly. I had a duty to fulfil. I could have no doubt, for I found this letter on the mantel-piece, addressed to Ma'amselle Helen de Montbrun.

CAPT. Sir, I tell you—

DUKE. That's right. Here are papers—(*to HELEN*) and yours, sir.

HELEN, (L. C.) Mine ? mine ? Sir, they are—

CAPT. (*to her, behind his fan*) In your apartment.

HELEN. In my apartment ?

CAPT. (*behind her*) On your table.

HELEN. On your table—that is, on my table ?

LANNOY. On your table.

CAPT. (*very affectedly*) But what do you want with me ? What can any one want with a poor weak woman ?

HELEN, (*forgetting herself*) Yes, what do you want with a poor weak woman? (*CAPTAIN presses her hand—recollects herself*) Zounds, I say, what do you mean ?

LANNOY, (*to CAPTAIN*) Compose yourself, young lady, we are no Turks.

DUKE. NO, no, lady, we are no Turks!

LANNOY. We will give you time to rest yourself, before you are taken back to the Convent of the Ursulines.

HELEN, (*forgetting herself*) To the convent! shameful!

DUKE, (*to HELEN*) Do you know the young lady?

HELEN. NO, no! never saw her before.

CAPT. Oh, heavens! oh, dear! Most shameful! To the convent? (*forgetting, and changing his tone*) Come along—I'm ready !

LANNOY. (*detaining him*) No, no, lady—to-morrow.

CAPT. I tell you I'll go directly.

Enter MARGUERITE, C. from R.

MAR. (*to DUKE*) HOW, sir, do you leave me thus ?

DUKE, (*going to her*) Ah, my wife !

LANNOY. The duchess! (*as they all go up, HELEN goes to CAPTAIN*)

HELEN, (*aside*) I won't go! They want to take me to the Bastille.

CAPT. (*aside*) Do you like the Ursulines better ?

HELEN, (*walks away*) Oh, dear me! What shall I do?

DUKE, (*to MARGUERITE*) My dear, I am at this moment

proceeding with an arrest. This—(*pointing to HELEN*) is Captain Sanspeur.

MAR. (*aside*) Ha, then he deceived me.

LANNOY. (*presenting CAPTAIN*) This is Ma'amselle Helen de Montbrun.

CAPT. Madame, I—(*recognizes her*) Heavens! 'Tis she! 'tis Marguerite!

LANNOY. Dear me! what's the matter ?

CAPT. (*pretending to faint*) Nothing, nothing—'tis only fatigue—*anxiety*. I don't feel quite well.

MAR. (R. C.) Calm yourself, ma'amselle.

LANNOY. HOW do you find yourself now ?

DUKE. I hope you are better, lady.

CAPT. Better? Yes, much better, I thank you. (*aside*) His wife!

MAR. (*aside, looking at HELEN*) The captain !

DUKE. But you can't go to-night in this state of weakness.

CAPT. (*quickly*) No, no—I can't go now. (*aside*) 'Tis no use !

HELEN. NO, nor I won't go—(*aside*) to the Bastille.

LANNOY. Then let it be to-morrow, (*to CAPTAIN*) In the meantime, my house must be your prison.

CAPT. Your house? And you live alone, perhaps, (*goes to MARGUERITE*) Madam, I throw myself on your protection.

MAR. Pray be calm.

DUKE. Come, come, the young lady is quite right. You shall be a prisoner in my house.

CAPT. Yes, that will be best.

DUKE. AS for the captain, it would not be so convenient to have him there.

LANNOY, (*aside*) Jealous old fool!

DUKE. And he can't object to pass the night with the count.

(*goes up with MARGUERITE*.)

HELEN, (*quickly to CAPTAIN*) I say, no! I won't pass the night with anybody!

CAPT. (*aside*) Silence, or we are lost!

DUKE. Come, we will go at once.

HELEN, (*aside*) Oh, dear, dear! what shall I do ?

Enter MADAME THIBAUT, C. from L.

MADAME, (*to DUKE*) Your lordship's carriage.

CAPT. (*going with them*) What a lucky dog I am!

HELEN, (*going with LANNOY*) What an unlucky little woman I am! (*going up stage*)

Carriage backs on from L.—the door is opened by SERVANTS

—DUKE, CAPTAIN, and MARGUERITE enter it—it draws off, L.

END OF ACT FIRST.

A C T SECOND.

SCENE.—*An Octagon Drawing Room, in the Duke's Chateau, at Verdun. Doors at back, leading to ante-room—doors in angles—one, L. leading to Marguerite's apartment—one, R. leading to the Duke's—a window, R.—chairs, &c.—a table, R.*

MARGUERITE *discovered.*

MAR. HOW very strange it is! but that young girl's look is continually before me. When my husband, who would not leave her for a moment, offered to conduct her to her apartment, she pressed my hand, and looked at me so expressively, I could not help blushing. I'm sure she wants to speak to me, perhaps about the captain, who appeared as though he didn't know me, and yet has written me such passionate letters when I was at the convent, *(rises)*

Enter DUKE, C. a letter in his hand.

DUKE. Capital! ha, ha! Well, my dear, alone? Why, where is our fair guest?

MAR. I haven't seen her this morning.

DUKE. She sleeps soundly—dreaming, no doubt, of her lover.

MAR. What do you mean?

DUKE. Hush! A secret, my dear, which I have discovered. I'm so clear sighted, you know. Captain Sanspeur, the count's guest—

MAR. Well?

DUKE. He's over head and ears in love.

MAR. Indeed!

DUKE. Yes, that's why he wanted to pass the frontier. He had a little favourite in a convent, and was going to finish the adventure by eloping with her. Ha, ha, ha!

MAR. Where did you hear—

DUKE, *(shows letter)* This half-finished letter was given me with his papers.

MAR. *(looking at it)* 'Tis the same!

DUKE. Hey?

MAR. I mean, it's—it's a letter, *(aside)* The same writing as those addressed to me.

DUKE, *(reading)* " My dear duke—" *(to her)* It's to a duke, you see. *(reads)* "I am in Verdun at last. The nearer I approach the forbidden ground—the convent where my be-

loved is now, perhaps, reading some of my letters in secret—having escaped the watchfulness of the Lady Abbess." You understand? Ha, ha, ha!

MAR. Pray go on.

DUKE, (*reading*) " The more I feel my love increases—I swear to snatch her from her tyrants." Rather strong, that tyrant, isn't it ?

MAK. (*agitated*) Oh, pray go on!

DUKE. There's no more, (*shows letter to MARGUERITE—she takes it*) He stopped, no doubt, finding his beloved was at Verdun.

MAR. (*alarmed*) At Verdun?

DUKE, (*smiling*) You don't understand!

MAR. What?

DUKE. Why, this is the lovely girl, now our guest, who escaped from the convent, and arrived here to meet him.

MAR. IS it her he loves?

DUKE. Why, who else should it be ?

MAR. Ma'amselle de Montbrun ? But it's nothing to me.

(*returns letter to DUKE, who puts it in his pocket.*)

Enter BABET, L. door.

BABET. My lady, I—

DUKE. What's the matter ?

BABET. I came for my lady's orders—she was going out this morning.

MAR. True, Babet, but I've changed my mind.

DUKE. But Ma'amselle de Montbrun—have you been to her room?

BABET. NO, no, sir!

DUKE. And why not ? What are you waiting for ?

BABET. Until she rings, or calls, sir, as her door is locked.

DUKE. True, true. She is a prisoner, and I placed the key of her apartment in a place of safety. I'll fetch it, and then you can go to her. *Exit R.*

BABET. GO to her ? oh dear!

MAR. Why, Babet, what's the matter ?

BABET. Nothing, my lady—only I don't like to go alone. She's got such a strange way of looking at one, and kissing one.

MAR. Did she kiss you?

BABET. Oh, so heartily—me and Rosina too; and then when she wished us good night, she squeezed my hand so hard.

MAR. And so she did mine.

Sc. 1. MARGUERITE'S COLOURS. 23

BABET. Yes—and she told me you were a lovely creature, and that she'd give half her life to pass the other half with you.

MAR. Did she say that ?

BABET. And when I went to unlace her—oh, dear! how tight she does lace—she put down upon the toilette—

MAR. What?

BABET. A pistol!

MAR. A pistol ? how extraordinary! Well, what followed?

BABET. I don't know—I was so afraid, I ran away, and shut the door after me.

MAR. Though it's not so very strange—alone, in danger.

Enter CAPTAIN SANSPEUR, C, still in female attire.

CAPT. (*not observing BABET*) 'Tis she, and alone—I—
{approaches her.

Enter DUKE, R. D.

DUKE. Here's the key.

CAPT. (C) Her husband! the devil!

BABET. (L., *seeing CAPTAIN*) Ha!

MAR. (L. C.) Heavens!

DUKE. What, my pretty prisoner !

CAPT. (*curtsies*) Yes, your lordship, (*to MARGUERITE*) Ah, my lady!

DUKE. But here's the key of your room. Why, how—

CAPT. (*looking at MARGUERITE*) How did I get out? Oh, very easily. I burst the lock off. (*MARGUERITE and BABET express surprise*)

DUKE. Nonsense!

CAPT. Oh, yes, I did—it wasn't very strong. You don't seem very strong here in Verdun. And then what would one not do to be nearer—

DUKE. To whom ?

CAPT. (*slyly to him, looking at MARGUERITE*) To you.

BABET. (*aside*) Oh, madame, look at her eyes.

DUKE, (*aside to him*) To me?

CAPT. (*aside to him*) Yes, you are so very kind.

DUKE, (*slyly, aside to him*) Do you think so?

CAPT. And then last night, as you saw me to my room, you said such things to me, that—

MAR. The Duke did?

DUKE. Oh, no, no!

CAPT. Yes, you did—you made me blush, and you sighed, as you pressed my hand, so! (*sighs, and presses MARGUERITE'S hand*)

MAR. (*to DUKE*) Really, sir, I—

DUKE. Oh, nonsense—don't believe it. (*aside to him*) Hold your tongue!

CAPT. (*still louder*) Hey ? hold my tongue, indeed! What, is your lady jealous ?

MAR. Me? I—

DUKE. It's all a joke. But, seriously, I'm vexed you had no one to assist you at your toilette!

CAPT. Oh, I can manage very well without a valet.

MAR. A what ?

DUKE. What, did you say ?

CAPT. Hey ? what's the matter ?

DUKE. YOU said you managed very well without a valet.

CAPT. I said—

BABET. Yes, you said valet!

CAPT. Oh, I know. In the convent we always called 'anything old and ugly a valet—only ask her ladyship, (*to BABET, patting her cheek with fan*) I don't mean it to you—you're a pretty little girl.

BABET. (*aside, going*) For all that I don't believe a young lady who bursts locks, and carries pistols, is a young lady like other young ladies. *Exit slowly R.D*

MAR. (*aside*) I'm puzzled what to think !

CAPT. Oh, dear ! how you both look at me.

DUKE. Ha, ha ! we have been reading a letter, by which we have discovered your secret; Captain Sanspeur—

CAPT. Well, what of him ?

DUKE. YOU love him !

MAR. And he loves you!

CAPT. Me ? oh, true! (*aside*) How agitated she seems ! Egad, I believe she's jealous of me!

DUKE. But tell us now your motive for coming to Verdun !

CAPT. I came in search of happiness !

MAR. What did they make you unhappy at Nancy ?

DUKE. They wished to marry you!

CAPT. Yes, to one I could not love.

MAR. But we should love everybody!

DUKE. NO, no, not everybody!

CAPT. Oh, yes, that's what they teach us in the convent—to love all men as brothers—but a husband isn't a brother.

DUKE. Very true!

CAPT. He must be loved as a husband!

DUKE. Very true!

CAPT. Yes, and he must not be jealous!

MARG. Very true!

CAPT. And he must be young!

MAR. Very true!

DUKE. Hem! Come, yon forget it's time for breakfast.

CAPT. I am not very well this morning, and shall not join the breakfast; but if your lady will be so good as to make me a cup of tea here—(DUKE *goes up. Aside to MARGUERITE*) I must speak to you alone!

MAR. (*aside*) To me ?

CAPT. Hush!

DUKE. Come, my dear, order it at once.

MAR. I'll do so. (*aside, and looking at CAPTAIN*) Speak to me? I said so! *Exit R.*

CAPT. (*aside*) She understands!

DUKE, (*coming down*) Oh, you mischief-maker! why did you try to make a quarrel between me and my wife ?

CAPT. Your wife! you know you would betray her, if I would listen to you ?

DUKE. YOU are so bewitching!

CAPT. Silence, you traitor!

DUKE. Well, I own I can't be in the presence of a pretty woman without—

CAPT. (*tapping him with fan*) Go away, do, you naughty man !

DUKE. The captain will depart to-day. You won't regret him—a mere boy—I ain't a boy. Ha, ha, ha!

CAPT. NO, you ain't! ha, ha, ha! (*aside*) The old fool!

DUKE, (*aside*) She likes the looks of me—I'm sure of it!

Enter COUNT LANNOY and HELEN, dressed as a man, c. D.

LANNOY. This way—this way, my dear sir. How do you do, my lord? I've brought you my prisoner! (*goes to CAPTAIN*) Lovely lady, allow me—(*goes to kiss his hands*)

CAPT. (*withdrawing hand, and looking at HELEN*) Sir, I am not accustomed to such freedoms!

LANNOY. (*aside*) What a prude!

HELEN, (*R. to CAPTAIN*) May I inquire how Ma'amselle de Montbrun slept last night ?

CAPT. Not well—and you, Captain!

LANNOY. He? he didn't sleep at all—and more, wouldn't let me sleep!

CAPT. (*laughing*) Nonsense!

LANNOY. I had a bed prepared for him in a room next to mine, but I couldn't get any rest. First he wanted supper—

HELEN. Well, I was hungry !

CAPT. (*laughing*) Capital!

LANNOY. We had supper, and then he wanted to make me drunk!

CAPT. Ha, ha! better still!

LANNOY. He kept filling my glass, and offering me snuff!

HELEN, *{laughing}* Yes, and the count spent the whole night in sneezing!

ALL, *{laughing}* Ha, ha, ha!

LANNOY. How could I sleep ? He kept walking about the room, moving the furniture about, drawing the curtains, and opening the windows. Egad, I think he's a sleep walker.

DUKE, *{aside to HELEN}* Perhaps he was wishing himself nearer somebody, *{looking at CAPTAIN}*

CAPT. (to DUKE) Sir, I—

DUKE, *{aside}* No, no, I won't say a word.

Enter MARGUERITE and BABET, R. D.

MAR. Here, ma'amaselle! *{sees HELEN, who bows to her}*
Ha, 'tis he! (BABET *places tea things on table*)

BABET. My lord, breakfast is ready.

DUKE. Very well, Count. Captain, will you join us ?

HELEN. Me? why, I—

CAPT. *{aside to her}* Yes, go—be off!

MAR. *{aside, looking at HELEN}* he does not seem to know me!

DUKE. Come, gentlemen. (LANNOY *offers his arm to CAPTAIN*) No, Ma'amselle de Montbrun is not well—she wishes to take her breakfast here!

MAR. I will attend her.

HELEN. Ha!

DUKE, *{aside to her}* Oh, you don't approve of that, you young dog ! You would rather wait on her ? no, no, sir !

{laughs, and goes up to LANNOY.}

HELEN, *{aside}* I can't understand this!

CAPT. *{goes to her, aside}* Why don't you go?

HELEN, *{aside}* I see! *{aside to him}* Fie, sir ! you are very wrong in using my name and dress to obtain an interview with the duchess.

CAPT. *{laughing}* Upon my honour, I—

DUKE, *{coming down}* Now, gentlemen!

CAPT. *{curtsies}* Gentlemen! *{looks at HELEN—laughs}*

Exeunt ALL but CAPTAIN and MARGUERITE, C.

They are gone at last!

MAR. *{aside}* What can she have to say to me?

CAPT. Madam!

MAR. Pray be seated, if you are not well.

CAPT. I'm better now we are alone !

MAR. DO you take sugar, ma'amselle ?

CAPT. I must speak to you!

MAR. AS you said—but can I hear you ?

CAPT. Why, what have you to fear from one of your own sex?

MAR. True!

CAPT. I would speak of—

MAR. Captain Sanspeur ?

CAPT. Then you know—

MAR. Yes, that is, no—but I fear—

CAPT. He is in love—deeply in love!

MAR. With you ?

CAPT. With me ? (*laughs*) No, no—but with a young girl he saw a twelvemonth since, at the convent of the Ursulines at Nancy. You were there, I believe ?

MAR. (*goes from him*) Yes, but I—

CAPT. (*detaining her*) Don't tremble so. Perhaps you heard he wrote to her he loved, and that his letters were intercepted.

MAR. (*forgetting herself*) Not all.

CAPT. Then you read them !

MAR. No—I—

CAPT. Come, you may confide in me, a woman. You read one, two, or three ?

MAR. I don't remember.

CAPT. Oh, yes, you do. And you were pleased with them—with the love he expressed so ardently.

MAR. Oh, his love was all falsehood!

CAPT. Oh, do not believe it, when, to punish him for having endeavoured to see you, he was compelled to quit Nancy He returned to Versailles—melancholy, despairing, ill. Every one believed he would die away from the spot which contained his heart—you, perhaps, unknown to all, thought of him, and in your heart recalled him.

MAR. Me? but—

CAPT. When summoned to join his regiment, he saw all his comrades decorated with the colours of those they loved—he swore he would obtain those of Marguerite. Your name is Marguerite, (*she takes a bow of ribbons from her bosom—kisses them, and replaces them, without observing CAPTAIN, who passes R. and endeavours to take them, when she prevents him*) Ha ! he determined to return to Lorraine. He risked his liberty, perhaps his life.

MAR. I was no longer there.

CAPT. Judge of his surprise, his joy, when he found her he had never ceased to love, at Verdun !

MAR. He had quite forgotten me.

CAPT. He lived for you alone.

MAR. And yet, but now, he was here, and didn't deign to look at me.

CAPT. Suppose the count's prisoner was not Captain Sans-peur ?

MAR. What say you ?

CAPT. If, to deceive your husband, who is undeserving such a treasure, and to blind the count, who is but a fool, he had lent his name to Ma'amselle de Montbrun, who was waiting for her lover—

MAR. Heavens!

CAPT. And to be near you, he had assumed the dress of a woman—

MAR. Ha! (*is near fainting*)

CAPT. (*supporting her*) Look up, dearest Marguerite. Yes, yes—'tis I! (*falls at her feet*)

MAR. YOU ? (*with emotion*) Oh, sir, for mercy—

CAPT. Oh, let me tell you—

Enter BABET, R.

BABET. Madame, I —

MAR. Babet!

CAPT. (*to BABET*) GO, go !

MAR. No—stay!

BABET. Yes, I—

DUKE, (*without*) Yes, very well—very well!

MAR. My husband!

BABET. The duke!

CAPT. The devil! (*jumps up, runs and sits by table*) Give me some tea here, (*puts teapot in her hand*)

MAR. (*takes it, unconsciously*) Some tea ? Yes. (*pours out tea—BABET stands perfectly overwhelmed*)

DUKE enters, c. speaking to some one outside—

DUKE. This way—this way! (*comes down beside CAPTAIN.*)

CAPT. (*pretends not to see him*) A little more tea, if you please.

MAR. (*pouring out tea, trembling*) Yes, sir—madam—ma'amselle!

DUKE. I've come to tell you—

CAPT. (*starts up*) Oh, dear! how you frightened me! When one's not expecting—

MAR. Yes, when one doesn't expect—

BABET. Yes, when one doesn't expect—(*takes teapot from MARGUERITE, and puts it on board*)

Sc. 1. MARGUERITE'S COLOURS. 29

DUKE, (*to CAPTAIN*) I beg your pardon—

CAPT. Oh, dear ! I'm so nervous! (*to BABET*) Some sugar, child!

DUKE. There is some one waiting to speak to you. Colonel D'Aubreuil—(*goes up*)

CAPT. (*rises—aside*) The devil! He'll be sure to recognise me!

MAR. (*approaching him*) I'm lost!

BABET. Oh, how my legs shake!

Enter COLONEL D'AUBREUIL, C.

D'AUB. (L.) Oh, sir, where is she?

DUKE, (C.) Here she is.

MAR. (*aside*) Heavens!

D'AUB. Helen!

CAPT. (L. C.) Dear colonel!

D'AUB. (*recognizing him*) Hey? why, what—

DUKE. Why, what's the matter ?

CAPT. (*affectedly*) Oh, nothing! The anxiety—the emotion—

DUKE. She will faint.

CAPT. (*leaning on D'AUBREUIL*) Support me, D'Aubreuil !

DUKE, (*to BABET*) Run for the salts.

D'AUB. (*aside to CAPTAIN*) Explain this.

CAPT. (*aside to him*) Hold your tongue !

BABET. I'll run!

DUKE. YOU had better cut her stay lace.

CAPT. (*getting away*) No, thank you, I'm better.

BABET exits c. with tea things, &c.

Enter HELEN, still as a man, c.

HELEN, (C.) Colonel D'Aubreuil! he has arrived.

D'AUB. (*suddenly turning to her*) Hele—(*CAPTAIN stops him.*)

CAPT. This is Captain Sanspeur.

D'AUB. Captain—

DUKE. Sanspeur.

HELEN. Ah, Captain Sanspeur. Who the devil did you take me for? (*meaningly to D'AUBREUIL*)

DUKE, (*aside, looking at D'AUBREUIL, and then at CAPTAIN*) This is the husband she dislikes, (*to D'AUBREUIL,*) The parties were arrested last night, but immediately separated The young lady has remained in my own house with my wife. Is it not so, Marguerite?

D'AUB. (*aside to CAPTAIN*) Hey ? Marguerite!

CAPT. (*aside*) That's it.

DUKE. And the captain—(*points to HELEN*) passed the night with the count.

D'AUB. Hey—what did you say? The count?

DUKE. Yes, a very kind gentleman, who paid him every attention.

HELEN, (*aside*) Which I could very well have dispensed with!

D'AUB. But now I have once again found Ma'amselle de Montbrun, my betrothed—

DUKE, (*to HELEN, aside*) And you, sir, the betrothed of another? Oh, fie! (*aside to MARGUERITE*) Why don't you laugh, my dear?

D'AUB. YOU will no longer detain your prisoners.

DUKE. I must give up the young lady to the count, who will re-conduct her to the convent. (*HELEN approaches D'AUBREUIL, who, unseen by others, presses her hand*)

Enter LANNOY, C.

LANNOY. (C.) So much the better—I like to be the bearer of good news. Yes, good news, at least, for Colonel D'Aubreuil.

D'AUB. Good news for me, sir?

LANNOY. An order from King Stanislaus, (*shows paper*) The king forbids Ma'amselle de Montbrun to re-appear in Lorraine.

HELEN. } Heavens!
D'AUB. }

CAPT. (*gaily*) Then she is free?

LANNOY. On the contrary, he awaits her presentation at his court, as the wife of Colonel D'Aubreuil.

HELEN, (*aside*) Oh, joy!

D'AUB. (*joyfully*) He commands our marriage.

LANNOY. This very day. He forgives your imprudence, on condition the marriage is celebrated immediately.

CAPT. (R. C. *aside*) Immediately? The devil!

LANNOY. The young lady appears to be the only party indifferent to the arrangement. (*DUKE smiles, and joins LANNOT.*)

CAPT. Marry the colonel? Why, I—

D'AUB. Truly, I—(*they look at each other, smother a laugh, and turn away*)

DUKE. (*aside to MARGUERITE*) Poor colonel! He's some idea, eh? (*points to HELEN*)

LANNOY My orders are to witness the ceremony, and not to free the lady until it is done, (*to CAPTAIN*) And I claim the pleasure of presenting the marriage bouquet.

DUKE. And you, my dear Marguerite, shall place it in her bosom.

Sc. 1. MARGUERITE'S COLOURS. 31

MAR. I ? No, I would rather not take part in the ceremony. I cannot approve of the proceeding, and beg I may be troubled no more, by any of the parties.

(looks at CAPTAIN, and exit in great agitation L.)

CAPT. Madame, I—

DUKE, *(at wing)* But, my dear—*(to CAPTAIN)* Oh, but my wife is so scrupulously particular.

LANNOY. Well, I'll go and see everything ready in the chapel. *Exit with DUKE, c. who bows to CAPTAIN.*

CAPT. *(walking about)* She flies me—but I will see her again.

D'AUB. Well, it seems they insist on my marriage with the captain! *(all three laugh)*

CAPT. Ha, ha! I've made a conquest of the old husband, too!

HELEN. Well, I shall take off these things—they are dreadfully uncomfortable!

CAPT. Only think of my waist.

D'AUB. Well, we must decide at once.

CAPT. One moment. A word may awaken the husband's suspicious.

D'AUB. Oh, nonsense! all about this boasted ribbon.

CAPT. I'll have it yet, or the devil's in it!

Enter BABET, c.

BABET. I beg pardon—I was sent to say all's ready for the bride's toilette.

HELEN. Oh dear!

BABET. *(looking at CAPTAIN)* What a funny bride! *(to HELEN)* And a soldier has just arrived from Paris—he has brought papers for you, and a colonel's uniform.

CAPT. *(aside)* Ha!

BABET. *(aside)* He'll be a funny little colonel, *(to CAPTAIN)* And here, ma'amselle, is a note he desired me to give you.

CAPT. Who, the soldier ?

BABET. *(aside to him)* No, the duke—he is waiting your answer.

CAPT. *(opening note)* Very well, child, *(to D'AUBREUIL)* Here, the old fool offers to carry me off! *(to BABET)* Where' your mistress ?

BABET. In her apartment. She has shut herself in, and will see no one. *(turns to HELEN)*

CAPT. *(aside)* But I'll see her, though I scale the window for it. *Exit c. running.*

BABET. *(turns quickly)* Well, I don't understand this at all!

Exit c.

32 MARGUERITE'S COLOURS. Act 2

HELEN. My dear D'Aubreuil, it is time an end was made of this masquerading. I am positively weary; and beside, all will soon be discovered!

D'AUB. But then, Sanspeur may be compromised. Consider, if the duke knew—

HELEN. What he must eventually discover. Besides, I'm tired of playing the man—sick of snuff-taking, and these abominable habiliments.

D'AUB. Already ? I am glad to hear it, for then you will have no wish to resume them after marriage, and yet, (*looking at her*) they become you wonderfully.

HELEN. Take care you don't flatter me into a love for them.

D'AUB. AS I live, here comes the duke, and with a face full of news and importance.

Enter DUKE, C.

DUKE. Oh, captain, I was looking for you. An officer has just arrived, and brought an order for you to repair to head quarters instantly.

HELEN. TO head quarters!

DUKE. Yes, where the king's household troops have joined Marshal Saxe. (*aside*) I shall be glad to get rid of him.

D'AUB. And he is to repair to head quarters !

DUKE. Decidedly so. (*aside*) And I hope you will go with him!

HELEN. And I must go to-morrow!

DUKE. YOU must go to-day—this moment. Your new uniform has arrived.

HELEN. Indeed!

DUKE. Yes, it's beautiful—elegant! I gave orders it should be brought to you.

HELEN. I have not seen it!

DUKE. And then there's your horse—

HELEN. My horse!

DUKE. Ah, such a superb animal! bright chestnut, with a white star on his forehead. A perfect beauty! I fancy I see you on him. Come, you must mount immediately.

HELEN, (*aside to COLONEL*) I can't, I tell you ! I was never on horseback in my life! (*to DUKE*) What did you say I must do?

DUKE. Mount—mount immediately !

HELEN. Mount?

DUKE. Egad, when I was your age, I should have been all on fire. A new uniform—a splendid charger—promotion in the present, and glory in the perspective.

Sc. 1. MARGUERITE'S COLOURS. 33

D'AUB. You are right, my lord. Captain, I beg to congratulate you.

DUKE. Ay, and to-morrow you will be at the head of your regiment.

HELEN. Shall I!

DUKE. Ay?

D'AUB. Come, I am anxious to see you depart !

HELPH. (*aside*) Oh, don't leave me!

DUKE. Come, sir, I attend you! I'm all anxiety to see you mount!

HELEN, (*aside to D'AUBREUIL*) I won't mount, I tell you!

D'AUB. Hush, for Heaven's sake! (*aside*) Poor Sanspeur ! he's lost his chance!

DUKE, (*to D'AUBREUIL*) Pray go with your friend ! (*aside*) 'Gad, I shall be glad to get rid of them both. *Exeunt, c.*

Enter MARGUERITE, L. in great agitation—she crosses stage, and sits by table.

MAR. This is too much! Whatever feeling I might have had for one who professed so much, is now obliterated for ever. My husband's suspicions will be aroused, and though innocent in deed or thought, that will be enough to embitter our already ill-assorted union.

Enter CAPTAIN SANSPEUR, I. in colonels uniform, without hat or sword.

Again!

CAPT. (*kneels*) Forgive me, Marguerite !

MAR. Leave me, sir—leave me. To enter thus at my chamber window—

CAPT. Forgive the stratagem which I used to be near you once again. I have your secret, Marguerite. You love me!

MAR. Sir!

CAPT. YOU owned it here, and if I am wrong, that avowal must plead my excuse.

MAR. Oh, I was mad—I did not know—

CAPT. And now you know me, will you refuse me a talisman that will protect me in battle, and lead me back victorious ? That ribbon—but as a remembrance—

MAR. Never!

CAPT. Never ? then farewell. My life without your love is useless. I shall need no talisman in death.

MAR. Die! you ?

CAPT. Farewell! (*going*)

MAR. Captain, I—

CAPT. DO you call me back ?

MAR. No, I don't think I did I

CAPT. Oh, yes, you did !

MAR. I—I? If it were known you were here—near me—that you had dared to— You are right—my husband is jealous.

CAPT. If you will allow me but to hope that I may see you again—

MAR. Oh, I am not free! I cannot tell—I— No, no—never!

CAPT. Marguerite!

Enter BABET, running, c.

BABET. Oh, madame— (*sees CAPTAIN*) Oh, you are lost, sir—the duke knows all.

MAR. Heavens!

CAPT. HOW?

BABET. I heard it all from my window. They were forcing the little gentleman on horseback, when the colonel cried out that he was Ma'amselle de Montbrun. " Impossible," said the marquis—"she's in my house." " No," says the colonel. " that's the captain !" and then the duke got in such a passion, and was coming here directly, but the colonel prevented him.

MAR. But he will come. (*BABET looks out*)

CAPT. He will kill me. I care not, since you refuse—

MAR. (*taking ribbon from neck*) Oh, no, no! here, take it but—

CAPT. (*kissing her hand, and taking it*) Mine—mine !

MAR. Since it is to save your life.

BABET. (*at back*) He's coming!

CAPT. Farewell! (*goes to back*)

BABET. Not that way—he'll see you!

CAPT. This, then ! (*going, L*)

MAR. No, no, that's my room.

BABET. Oh, he's here!

CAPT. Which way ? (*looks at window*) I have it! (*opens window R.*)

BABET. Mercy on us!

MAR. YOU will kill yourself!

CAPT. (*on window ledge*) That is now impossible! (*Jumps out*)

MAR. Oh! (*falls in chair, L.*) He is dead! (*BABET shuts window*)

DUKE, (*without*) Where is he—where is he?

DUKE enters, c.

BABET. (*goes to MARGUERITE*) Oh, lor', master! (*aside*) She has fainted—so much the better! (*DUKE looks R. and L. in great agitation*)

DUKE. Here, and alone !

BABET. (*endeavouring to recall MARGUERITE*) My lady—my lady! oh, sir, pray come!

DUKE, (*in a rage*) What's the matter ? where is he?

BABET. She's coming to. (*MARGUERITE revives*)

DUKE. But the young—

BABET. This comes of your letting people into your house you know nothing of. While I was here with my lady—

DUKE, (*quickly*) Then you didn't leave her ?

BABET. NO, no, sir, not a minute. The young lady, Ma'amselle de Montbrun came in, and threw herself at her feet—

DUKE. At her feet?

BABET. Yea, sir, and confessed she was a man in disguise, and begged my lady to let her escape.

DUKE. Are you sure that was all ?

BABET. I leave you to guess my lady's terror, sir. She fainted, and I screamed, and then she—that is—he went away, and left us all of a tremble, as you see.

DUKE, (*a little satisfied*) Yes, yes, I see. (*takes her aside*) Then my wife didn't know ?

BABET. NO more than you did, when you wrote notes to this supposed young lady.

DUKE. Hush! hold your tongue, you hussey !

MAR. (*recovered*) Sir, this is dreadful to expose me to—

DUKE. My dear, I solemnly declare—(*aside*) To think I was fool enough to write!

Enter LANNOY and D'AUBREUIL, C.

LANNOT. Come, colonel, everything is ready. My lord, I have come for your prisoner, the bride.

DUKE. My prisoner, the bride ? ha, ha, ha !

MAR. (*aside*) He laughs. All is safe!

LANNOY. Hey ! what's the matter ?

DUKE. The matter! I understand now why your prisoner opened the windows, and moved the furniture about. Why, he was a woman. Ha, ha, ha!

LANNOY. A woman force me to drink and snuff? Oh, nonsense!

D'AUB. (*laughing*) Ask her—here she comes!

Enter HELEN, dressed for the bridal, c, led on by CAPTAIN, (in full colonel's uniform.

MAR. (*aside*) He here still!

•LANNOY. (*going with them*) Then the bride—(*recognises her*) Oh, and the other Ma'amselle was—(*recognises him*) Oh! (*CAPTAIN bows—he returns it*) Ma'amselle—that is—

CAPT. Ma'amselle Helen de Montbrun consents to wed Colonel D'Aubreuil. Count, here is the bride. My lord Duke, I renounce my intention of crossing" the frontier.

(LANNOY leads HELEN to D'AUBREUIL.)

DUKE, (to LANNOY) Hey! do you understand ?

LANNOY. Yes, yes. When the lady was at my house—

DUKE. Ha, ha ! and you didn't guess?

LANNOY. The captain was at yours, (looks at MARGUERITE, and goes up, stifling his laughter)

CAPT. (to MARGUERITE) Madam, may I hope you will forgive the manner in which I obtained admission to this chateau?

DUKE. Sir, 'tis I who should ask you why.

CAPT. Oh, by-the-bye, I've a letter of yours to return.

(is taking it out, drops Marguerite's colours)

DUKE, (aside) Don't mention it. I beg pardon, you've dropped something, (picks up ribbon)

MAR. (aside) Oh, heavens !

CAPT. (snatching it away) Give it me! It is a talisman I will never part from but with life, (looks at D'AUBREUIL, who is with HELEN)

DUKE, (looks at HELEN) I understand! (aside) How blind some people are. (goes R.)

LANNOY. (L.) Come, colonel, take the hand of your bride. Captain, you should be on your way to Fontenoy.

CAPT. (to HELEN) Adieu, madame—may fortune smile upon your bridal, (to DUKE, who comes down with MARGUERITE) My lord, I thank you for your hospitality—and madame, (to MARGUERITE) the favours I have received at your hands shall ever live in my heart. Farewell, my friend! (to D'AUBREUIL, bringing him a little forward) We have both achieved our purposes, and should never regret being detained at Verdun, since it has enabled us to cross the frontier with flying colours.

DUKE. MAR. CAP. HEL. D'AUB. LAN.

R.

CURTAIN.

L.