La Poudre aux Yeux

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"Le Poudre Anti-Spirit."
Presented by
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Act I

(M. Malingerar’s drawing-room. Piano. L. Desk. R. Round table. C.)

Scene I.

Madame Malingerar. Sophie. (with market basket on her arm)

Sophie. Then, madame, there will not be any need of fish.

Madame Malingerar. (Seated at right of table, working.) No! There has been so much wind the whole week that they would be beyond a reasonable price. But try and make a good bargain on your fillet.

S. And, as for vegetables? Spring peas are beginning to be seen.

Mme. M. You know very well that the first ones are tasteless. Makara-stuffed cabbage for us.

S. As I did last week?

Mme. M. When you come back from the market, bring your account book and we will settle accounts.
S. [Exit R.]

Scene II.

Madame Malingeas. Malingeas. Malingeas (entering at back of stage.)
It is M. Good morning, madam.

Madame Malingeas. What! You had gone? Where do you come from?

M. I have just seen my patients.

Madame Malingeas. Your patients! I advise you to speak of them. You attend only to accidents on the street—people who are run over or who fall from windows.

M. (sitting down) Well, the same for me this morning, at six o'clock. I have a patient.

Madame Malingeas. He is a stranger here?

M. No—a Frenchman.

Madame Malingeas. This is the first time for two years that anyone has thought of disturbing you.

M. (gaily) I am getting along.

Madame Malingeas. At fifty-five, it is time! Let me tell you, it is tact that you lack. You have such a nice—
also manner of practicing medicine.
M. What?
Mrs. M. Where, by chance, heaven sends you a patient you begin by removing his fears. You say to him: "This is nothing; it is only the matter of a few days."
M. Why frighten him?
Mrs. M. With that system you have always the appearance of having cured a little hurt, a chillblain. I know a great many of your fellow doctors; they are true physicians. When they approach an invalid, it is not for two days. They say immediately: "It will be tedious, very tedious!" And they call one of their colleagues in consultation.
M. Why?
Mrs. M. It is a favor which the latter hastens to repay the following week. That's the way a practice is built up.
M. (rising) As you wish, never!
Mrs. M. You, with your good nature, have lost one by one, all your patients.
There was one left—the last one—a fine man.
M. M. Morivier Dubourg, our neighbor?
Mme. M. He hadn't allowed me to speak without suspecting it. You treated him for a fortnight. My good — that was "getting on." But the fine morning you had the stupidity to say to him: "My dear monsieur Dubourg, I understand nothing at all about your disease."
M. Well! Where one doesn't understand.
Mme. M. Where one doesn't understand, she says: "It is nervousness!" Ah! Of course, a doctor!
M. What a quack you would make!
Mme. M. It is lucky that Providence has given us an income of twenty-two thousand francs, and that we do not have to depend upon your practice. What is it that this person came to ask you this morning?
(Sits down again).
M. (slightly embarrassed). It is — it is a
young man.
Mme. M. Of good family?
M. (taking some bank notes from desk
drawers). Yes, he is of good family. Now take these fourteen thousand francs.
Mme. M. What is that for?
M. He have had our parlor furniture received, and today she upholsterer is to collect his bill.

Mme. M. (taking bank notes) Ah! that's so! Mel, this fortunate? (Rises).

M. Ah, how curious you are! Not a coachman of the house who was kicked by a horse—there!

Mme. M. A coachman? You have my congratulations! Tomorrow they will come after you for the horse.

M. John as much as you wish, but I and very glad to have given my aid to this fine fellow. In chatting with him, I have learned something.

Mme. M. What, pray?

M. People are talking about our house.

Mme. M. About us? What can they say?

M. Not about us, but about that young man who comes every day to practice music with your daughter.

Mme. M. Monsieur Frederic, who acquaintance was made last summer at the sea baths of Passic?

M. They say that he is the intended husband of Emmerline. Last night at the
They were appointed the wedding day.

Mrs. M. Ah heavens!

M. You see what it's sometimes a good thing to take care of eccentric.

Mrs. M. What shall we do?

M. It is necessary to go to the root of the matter. Of course monsieur Frederic is very gentle, very distinguished—

Mrs. M. Oh, charming!

M. And it is very kind of him to come and play on our piano sometimes a week, but he must explain—it is time, high time!

Mrs. M. Why?

M. Emmeline is melancholy, she doesn't eat any more.

Mrs. M. Now about having the doctor come?

M. The doctor? Why, what's the matter with me?

Mrs. M. Oh, yes — that's so! (Aside) He is stronger than I am — I haven't any fault in him!

M. Yesterday, while monsieur Frederic was singing a duet with your daughter
Perceived glances - very loving.

Jane. What do you suppose that I had dreamed of him for Emmaue?

Frederic. I saw it too. This fellow pleases me very much and if he is of a good family.

Jane. He doesn't declare himself.

M. Be patient. It's time for him now.
You will see him appear with his little music roll. (Revealing Frederic) There he is!

Scene III

The Same. Frederic, later Emmanuel.

Frederic (Enters from rear, Music-roll under arm. Bowing) Madame — Monsieur Malingeard.

M. Monsieur Frederic.

Fred. How are you this morning?

Madame Malingeard. Very well.

M. Fine.


M. (Whispering to his wife) Well, let me get a good chance.

Fred. I do not see mademoiselle Emmaue.
line. Can she be ill?
Mr. No, but —
Fred. (Opening his music roll.) I bring her a new romance—a charming title—"The First Sigh."
Mrs. (Coughing) Ahem!
Mr. (To his wife.) All right. (Aloud) Monsieur Frederic, you are a fine young man, and you will not be displeased that we, my wife and I, ask for five minutes of conversation with you.
Fred. Nice me! (At a sign from Madame they sit down.)
Mr. Monsieur Frederic, you have too much sense not to understand assiduous visits to a house—
Amelie. (Entering from right.) Good morning, papa!
Mr. (Aside) Ah! My daughter! (Sighing.
Mrs. Mr. You were saying, monsieur, that this romance was all the rage.
Mr. Who is the music by?
Fred. By a Swede.
Amelie. What is the name of it?
Fred. "The First Sigh."
Mr. (Quickly) Of a mother —
Mme. N. For her child.
Mme. Ah! How long this title is!
Mme. Emmeline, I have left my cotton upon the shelves in my room. So ask it for me.
Mme. Yes, mamma. (Cpt. Fred. sits down again.)
M. (To Fred.) I was saying to you that your assiduous visits to a house in which there is a girl, might appear to certain persons——. This morning, one of my patients, a——.
Mme. N. A banker.
Fred. But, sir, it seems to me that my conduct has always been——
M. Perfect. I knew it. But, you know, the world is very quick to interpret——
Mme. (returning.) Mamma, here's your cotton!
M. (Changing tone.) It is a very pretty subject for a romance——this mother near the cradle of her daughter, sighing.
Mme. N. It is delightful.
M. One might almost make a clock ornament of it in bronze.
Mme. Emmeline, I have broken my needle; go get me another.
Mme. Yes, mamma. (aside.) This is twice
that she has sent me away. Oh, there's something up. (epi)

M. I was just saying to you that people are apt to interpret the most innocent proceedings, the most natural proceedings. But it is the wisdom of a father to cut short these vague rumors, by an explanation clear and frank.

Wife. (Aside, to her husband) Very good! M. What are we expecting from you? An honest response.

Fred (raising). Let me thank you first of all, monsieur & alingrati, for having placed the question upon a ground which fear alone prevented me from approaching. Experience no embarrassment now in acknowledging to you that I love mademoiselle Anne-Marie and that the sweetest of my dreams would be to marry her.

M. I suspected it.

M. (teasing like his wife) Look, that is clear! Might I now ask you for some information?

Fred. Concerning my family, my profession?

Wife. Most certainly. I am a lawyer.

M. Ah, bah! Scuse my astonishment.
but during the two months that I have known you you have always been at my piano.

Fred. Oh, I am a lawyer!

Mr. Practicing?

Fred. No, but I am beginning to have a few clients.

Mr. I know about that sort of thing! I do not think the worse of you for it.

Fred. As to the rest, my position is independent. My father, an old merchant, has retired from business with a creditable fortune. I am an only son.

Mme. Mr. (Aside) Ah!

Fred. In fine. I have not thought that I ought to hide from my parents the feelings that I have for madame Ermeline, and I hope that before long my father and mother will make a bargain with you which will dispense with all interpretations.

Mme. Mr. (Aside to her husband) He expresses himself charmingly.

Mr. (To his wife) A lawyer! (To Fred.) Monsieur Frederic, Madame Malivier!
and I will appreciate as it deserves, the
bargain which you announce to me.
Fred. Ah, nonsense.
M. But from now until there ever ask you
as a favor, be willing to stop apresent.
Fred. What?
M. For society's sake, assume Fred.
Eric, for society's sake.
M. You will return in a few days—officially. Here, take your music. (He hands him
his music roll which he has taken
from the piano.)
Fred. All right, since you request it.
But what am I going to do?
M. Go to the Law court a little, that
will distract your mind.
Fred. Ah, no! Not the law court. I am go-
ing to take a turn around the museum.
M. (aside) If he becomes leader of the bar!
Fred. (turning) Madame, musicians. (To Ma-
nuget a while going out) Please tell madame
sarronelle Emilelie that I love her, that
I adore her, and as long as a breath of life.
M. (accompanying him) Yes—later. Not
as loud.

(Exeunt at back.)
Scene 10

Madame Malpinges, Ermelina, later, Malpinges, and Alexandrine.

Madame Malpinges. That is a fine young man!

Ermelina (entering). Oh yes! He is a fine young man, and I am sure of being happy with him.

Mme. M. (astonished.) What? What are you saying? How do you know?

Erm. (Confused.) I heard a little without wishing to, while looking for your needle which had fallen near the door.

Mme. M. (imitating her.) "Oh, looking for your needle." It is very bad to listen at the doors.

Erm. Oh, don't scold me and I will tell you a secret.

Mme. M. A secret?

Erm. Yesterday, while you were going to open the window, monsieur Frederic confided to me that his mother was to come here this morning.

Mme. M. Today?

Erm. Under the pretext of talking about the rooms on the third floor, she wishes to see
we before making the proposal.

Mme. M. Luckily the paper is done.

Mme. And his father Monsieur Ratinot is to come on his part to consult you.

Mme. M. Do he all?

Mme. Eh, me! Another pretext for making his acquaintance. Do not repeat it to anyone. It is a secret.

Mme. M. Don't worry about that.

M. (entering). A charming fellow! Handsome!

Mme. M. (aside to her husband.) Maliceux!

M. What?

Mme. M. (whispering.) Do not repeat it—it is a secret. Madame Ratinot is to come this morning under pretext of talking about the room for rent.

M. What?

Mme. M. And her husband is to come to consult you.

M. Then this is our investigation.

Mme. M. They wish to know us before going further. It is very natural.

Alexandre (entering). Madame, there is a lady who wishes to speak to the landlord about the room on the third floor.

Mme. M. And M. Dinelle. It is she!
me.) (quickly.) Wait! (to Alf.) Quick! My bonnet with the flowers—my evening bonnet. Alf. Immediately. (She disappears.)

me.) (to Emmeline.) Take off this apron. Dear me! How badly your hair is done up! I am going to do your curls now.

(astonished. aside.) What has gotten into her? Alf. (returning.) Here is the bonnet.

me.) Put it on, mess it down.) You see that I am occupied. (Alf. places bonnet upon her mistress's head while the latter fixes her daughter's hair, who is on her knee. To Alf.) Back farther! Make—without. Papa, a fine!

me.) Well, hurry up!

m. (Bringing it.) Here it is. (Aside.) What's the matter with them?

me.) There! Have her enter. (to Alf. and to her husband.) Above everything, don't say "she and then" to me before this lady.

m. Why?

me.) It is common—it is bourgeois! (To her daughter.) As for you, seat yourself at the piano, head back and play some runs.

em.) (at piano.) Some runs?
Mme. M. To sit in an armchair, a piece of embroidery in her hand.

Scene V

The same, Madame Rabinié, Géraldine.

Mme. M. (to Emeline) Enough, my child, here is a caller. (She rises.)

Madame Rabinié. I beg a thousand pardons, I came at a very unsuitable time. But to Dr. Malinjear that I have the honor of speaking.

Mm. Yes, madame.

Mme. R. I have come to look over the apartment on the third floor.

Mme. M. Be kind enough, then, to sit down.

Mme. M. (sitting down, like Mme. Malinjear.) Very well, madame. I fear that I am untimely. I am interrupting your daughter.

Mme. R. Oh, madame!

Mme. M. (Commem.) As madame wishes your daughter.

Mme. M. Yes, madame.

Mme. R. (Aloud) Frederic is right; she is very nice. (Alone) I see that Madame is a connoisseur.
Mrs. R. Ah! Duprez is her professor?
Mrs. M. Do we expect him now?
Mrs. (to his wife.) What is that you are singing?
Mrs. M. (quickly.) A selection from "the Jew."
(Dr. Mme. R.) My husband asks his daughter what she is singing. This a selection from the Jew. (She makes signs to M. who sits down at her right.)
Mrs. R. (Aside) The house is on an expensive scale. It is much better than ours.
Mrs. M. As for me, in the first place, it is my principle to secure the foremost masters. So when Brianchon began painting——
Mme. R. (To Malingear.) Ah! Modernizable paints also?
M. (Embarrassed.) Yes, it seems so. Ask my wife.
Mme. M. (Pointing out a picture hung upon the wall.) What do you think of this little landscape?
Mrs. R. (Rising) An oil painting!
Mrs. M. (Rising) She amuses herself by painting, or rather dabbing, that.
M. Oh, upon my honor, that's too steep!
Mrs. (Aside) What idea has M. now?
More, M. (Examining the picture.) It is true to life, it has a freshness. One would say that it was by a master.

M. (Aside.) I think so, indeed; it is a symphony, and cost me two thousand francs!

Mme. B. (Aside) Very fine, my fine education!

(Aoud) And this room is it unoccupied?

(They sit down again.)

Mme. M. It will be so for the quarter day. Monsieur Malingeac is to have it decorated for her husband.) That is your intention is it not, my dear?

M. My darling you know... (correcting himself.) You know my well that I have an appointment to-day with the architect.

Mme. M. I call your attention to the little piano, it is not presentable.

M. Madame, you shall choose the hangings yourself.

(Ex. (Astonished. Aside.) Madame! Are papa and mamma angry?

Mme. B. And what else the price be?

M. Four thousand francs.

Aly. (entering, very much astonished.) Sir, someone is asking for you; it is a patient.

M. Mme. M. Ex. (Aside.) The father! (They rise)
A patient! What is there extraordinary about that?

Alyp. Heaven! It's the first time—

Mrs. W. That this gentleman has been here? That's all right. Let him take his turn. One cannot let him go before persons who are waiting (writting on a piece of paper at the desk). Give him this number—number sixteen. (Exit Alyp.)

M. (aside) My wife has never!

Mrs. W. (aside) Number sixteen! What a practice!

Mrs. W. My husband has not a minute to himself. In the morning he has his duties at the hospital. He comes back at noon. He almost always eats breakfast standing. The consultations commence and that keeps him busy until three o'clock.

M. But, my dear—

Mrs. W. Tell you that you will kill yourself. Afterward come the calls to the four corners of Paris. Finally, he returns in the evening, tired, worn out. Do you think he rests there? Not at all. He works at his great work which will be read at the public assembly at the Academy of Medi...
cine. They are expecting it.

M. (Protesting.) But, my dear—

Mme. M. Let them wait! Besides, you are not subject to the orders of these gentle

men. (Confidentially to Madame Ratmicò.) It is a treatise upon the diseases of the throat.

M. Quite correct. The ought to have married another.

Mme. R. What a life! (To M.) And you never take any recreation?

M. Oh, my wife exaggerates.

Mme. M. (Interrupting.) Twice a week in the
winter we offer a cups of tea to our neigh-

M. (Aside.) Ho! Ho! A few evening parties now!

Mme. M. Tuesday and Saturday we have
music. Mm receive the principle artists of

Paris. My husband attends them—gratis,
you understand.

Mme. R. What! I'm nothing?

Mme. M. Oh, the artists—Why these
gentleman pretend that it is a pleasure;
I should say a duty, to visit my salon.
Really, they are very fine! Very fine!

M. (Aside.) Nonsense!
Mme. R.: What a charming room.
Mme. M.: I really hope, madame, if you become our lodgers, that you will do us the honor of attending our little ariels.
M. (Aside.) She invites her!
Mme. M.: Indeed, madame, you are a thousand times too good. (Aside.) It is very aristocratic society.
Mme. M.: You are going, madame?
Mme. R.: Yes, but bearing away the hope of returning very soon. I shall be happy, believe it, to maintain more regular, more intimate relations with a family so distinguished, so worthy of respect.
Mme. M. (Bowing.) Madame. (Calling.) Baptiste! Baptiste!
M. (Aside.) Baptiste? Where does she get Baptiste?
Mme. M. (To her husband). Have you sent the petit de chambre on an errand?
M. (annoyed.) I? No! (Aside) Mme. never had a man servant.
Mme. M.: These servants never are on hand when one needs them. (Calling.) Alexandrine! Alexandrine! (to Mme. R.) I beg a thousand pardons, madame. (Alexandrine appears.) Ac
company the lady to the door.
Mrs. B. (Aside) What a stylish way of
living! But would they want my
Frederic? (Aloud) Madame, Monsieur-Madame,
(Ceremonious Exit)

Scene II
Malvina, Mme. Malvina, then Alexandre.

Emeline
Malvina. At last she has gone. (Comes
back to front of stage.)
Emeline. Mamma, explain to me.
Mme. M. Now you can put on your apron
again and clear away your dessert. Do
my child.
Em. Yes mamma, (aside) But I have now
made one oil painting. (Exits)
M. Why come! Between you and me! I
have no dessert to put away, and I hope
you are going to explain to me—
Mme. M. What, now?
M. Why—why, your beautiful portrait. Why
did you go and tell this lady that Dupre
is your daughter's professor? I do not even
know him.
Mme. M. It was necessary, perhaps to de-
ounce her as the pupil of Monsieur Glum
ear of the illustrious monstrous Florida.

M. It is not necessary to name her profess-
ion. It is the same way with this picture
which you attribute to Cammelia.

Mrs. M. Well?

M. But it is a Lambriet!

Mrs. M. It is not signed.

M. Ah! That is a reason. And when
at the end of two months of married life
they will pay to your daughter who has
never touched a paint brush: "Paint for
us this pretty little landscape which
we see over there with the cows," what
will she answer to that?

Mrs. M. That is very simple. As a gen-
eral rule, as soon as young girls are
married they neglect the fine arts. Cam-
melia will say that the colors irritate
her and that she will give up painting.

That's all.

M. That's all; ah, yes! As for me, how
about my great works upon the diseases
of the throat?

Mrs. M. They will say that it is in jess.
And the first printing house which shall
burn
M. And this immense practice which you have ascribed to me.
Mme. M. Error, error. The first time this woman shall call upon me I shall place things in their true situation. "Madame, I am sent to your doctor Malingeav, rejected by the Faculty. He attends only to convalescent, free of charge. Madame Malingeav—she knows how to read, write, figure! Madame Malingeav who makes her own dresses and carefully patches her husband's clothes."

M. It is useless to enter into these details and even useless still to pile up these lies! Let me tell you: It is pride! It is vanity! You wish to throw dust in her eyes.
Mme. M. It is true; I acknowledge it.
M. Ah!
Mme. M. But in that I am only following the example of my contemporaries. Each one passes his life in throwing particles of dust into the eyes of his neighbors. Why do people "dress up." Why do they have diamonds, carriages, liveries? For the eyes of others?
M. O, come now!
Mme. M. But as for you, you, without suspecting it, obey the general impulse.
M. O.?
Mme. M. Do you remember that little fine gold chain which fastened your watch?
M. Yes. Well?
Mme. M. It was so little that you were ashamed of it. You hid it under your vest.
M. In order not to lose it.
Mme. M. Oh, no! In order not to show it. We have replaced it with another—a larger one. Here it is. You caused it; you display it; now are proud of it.
M. What foolishness!
Mme. M. But you take good care not to tell that it is imitation.
M. (Quickly) Oh! Keep still!
Mme. M. That is dust in the eyes! I catch you in it just as the others! Once your daughter is the little chain of gold—very simple, very true, very precious. So, sooner pays any attention to her. There are so few jewelers in the world! Let me remind her with a little twine and immediately everyone will admire her. (Pricking to the chain) Just as your great electro-plated chain.
M. (Aside) There is a foundation of truth in what she says.
Alexandrine (Entering) Monseur!
M. What?
Alex. There is this gentleman, this number nineteen, who is growing impatient.
M. Ah, that is true! I had forgotten him, from now, hear him enter.
Mme. M. No, not yet. He has the number nineteen. (To Alexandrine) Tell him that the doctor is occupied with number 17.
M. Ah! You believe that I am occupied with the fourteenth. (To Alexandrine) Tell him that I am occupied with number fourteen.
(Exit Alexandrine.)
Mme. M. Give me your purse.
M. My purse? Why? (He gives it to her)
Mme. M. (distributing some pieces of gold)
This comes in this way, three on the desk and two upon the pieces!
M. (astonished.) What are you doing there?
Mme. M. Isn't it thus with all doctors of reputation?
M. It is true; it is their custom.
Mme. M. Now sit down at your desk. Assume an air of importance, of busque-
ness; few words - you are hurried. Hear you.
Call number sixteen. (Returning.) Ah! Don't
forget that he has nothing the matter with
him. Don't go and deceive yourself
M. (Seated at his desk.) May I be calm now!
(But Mme. Malingeau at right.)
Scene VII

M. Ratnoris, later, a domestic in footman's
living.

M. (Alone.) My wife is very shrewd! (Crying
out.) Let number sixteen enter!

Alexandre. (Opening door at L. and calling)
Number Sixteen!

Ratnoris. (Entering,Aside.) There is a wait for
you! Three quarters an hour in a waiting-room.
M. (Without looking at him.) Be seated.
R. Monseigneur, I thank you. (Sits down. Aside.)
He is writing a prescription. This is fine
furniture here.

M. (Still writing and without looking at him.)
Be seated!

R. I thank you, I am seated. (Aside) I am
as well as the Port Royal! What are I go-
ing to tell him?

M. (Putting down pen and turning towards
Ratnoris.) Come, what's the matter with you?
R. Movement for about a week — (Amenev reporters several times on door at L.)
M. (crying out.) All right? Wait! (Aside) That's my wife knocking to make them believe that there are a lot of people there.
R. (Aside.) The seventeenth who is growing impatient.
M. I hear you.
R. Movement, a week ago — when I say a week, I mean nine days — I went to St. Germain by rail and came back the same way. Upon entering the house, my wife says to me, "How red you are! Are you sick?" I answer: "I am not exactly sick, but I feel a little queer," and I took a foot bath. That is how it came upon me.
M. (Aside.) He has the appearance of a fine fellow. (Aloud, rising.) And what do you feel?
R. (Embarrassed.) Nevers! Many slight pains. now on one side, now on the other.
M. No painful headache?
R. No.
M. The stomach?
R. I'm excellent condition.
M. Your abdomen?
R. Am very good condition.
Mr. Let's see about your pulse. He takes his hand.
R. (Aside.) What a beautiful chain he has! I have never seen such a large one.
M. (Aside, with satisfaction.) He is looking at my chain!
R. (Aside.) One can see right away that he is not a little puppy of a doctor running after practice.
M. (Applying his ear to Ratmir's back.) Death, hard! Very hard!
R. (rising.) I am curious to know what disease he is going to find me afflicted with.
M. That is sufficient; I understand your case very clearly.
R. Ah! (Aside.) He is going to cover me with leeches.
M. My dear sir, you have absolutely nothing the matter with you.
R. What? (Aside.) He is very clever. Ah! indeed, very clever.
M. (Placing himself at desk and writing.) I am going to prescribe a diet for you.
Footman. (In full livery, entering from rear.) Messieurs!
M. What is it? (Aside.) Where did he come from?
R. (Aside.) He was a liveried footman!
Postman. (Presenting a letter in a silver salver.) It is a letter that has been brought from the duchess de Montefiascone.
M. (Taking letter, much astonished.) For me? (Aside) I don't know her! (Recess.)
R. (Aside) He attends the duchess!
M. (Aside, looking at letter.) Hold! The handwriting of my wife! (To Ratignois) Present me?
R. Certainly.
M. (Aside, Reading) "Read this letter aloud."
(Spoken) Ah, it is necessary to read it! (Reading, very loud.) "Dear doctor, I owe my life to you."
R. (Aside) Indeed, I would have confidence in this good man.
M. (Reading.) "Never shall I be able to repay you. Allow me as a slight evidence of my undying gratitude, to send you these four thousand francs."
R. (Aside.) Four thousand francs at a single stroke!
M. (Putting bank notes into his pocket. Aside.) This is the money I gave her to pay the upholsterer.
R. (Aside.) And he puts it calmly in his pocket!
I'm sure that his clothes are stuffed full of it. What a fine match for Frederic!
M. Ah! There is a post script! (Reading)
"Wicked doctor, you do not wish then, to be in the Academy? And yet you have only to say one word!"
R. (With admiration) Oh, say it! Say it!
M. I am not ambitious! (Some one knocks again at the door) Wait, just see me moment.
R. (Aside) It is full of people out there!
(Aloud) I am going.
M. (Taking up papers from desk) Here is your prescription. (Reading) Closet, cutlets, beefsteaks.
R. Hold! It is a restaurant bill!
M. (Hands him prescription and bow)
Monsieur.
R. (Aside. Taking out his purse.) I should like to give him ten francs, that is very slight in comparison with the duchess. What a fine match for Frederic! Bah! I am going to hand over my twenty francs (He puts them carefully on the tray on the round table) I don't believe he saw me! (He takes up his twenty francs and makes them rattle against the tray)
Malqueur bows. (Aside.) He saw me!
(Comes to front of stage.)

**Scene VIII.**

The Dame, a Gentleman.

Gentleman. (Entering suddenly from L.) At least I am here! Here I am!
Mr. Who are you? What do you want?
Mr. It is my turn; I have much to say.
Mr. (Aside.) Ah! A patient, a true patient!
Mr. (Aside) People struggle for an audience with blood.

Mr. To Malqueur.) I have been suffering for a long time with a disease.
Mr. Pardon me, I follow you.
Mr. Doctor, I leave you.
Mr. You please me?
Mr. Certainly! Do not trouble yourself.
(Aside. Going out.) What a fine match for Frederic! It is too good. They will never be willing to allow themselves with common people like us. (Blows.) Doctor, I have the honor.
(Opens door at rear, disclosing the liveried footman who accompanies him out. Bowing to footman.) Thanks, do not trouble yourself.

(Door closes again.)
Scene II

The Gentleman, Marquis

M. Now we are alone! You were saying
that you had suffered for a long time
with a disease —

But. Oh, it's better now. (Handing him a
sheet.) Here's my little bill for parlor furniture.

M. What! Parlor furniture?

But. I am your upholsterer.

M. What?

But. It is madame who begged me to
take number seventeen. That's a very pleasant
thing that you're doing.

M. I assure you it was unknown to me.

But. There is nothing bad in it. Every trade
has its little tricks. Know that.

M. I beg you to believe me, sir. (Aside.) My
wife is placing me in a compromising
position.

But. Here is the account amounting to
four thousand francs.

M. Let me examine it. Oh! An armchair,
a hundred and fifty francs!

But. That is at the forest price.

M. And the chairs, eighty francs. That is
a horrid cost.
Deut. What! You are going to haggle about the price after the service I have just rendered you!
M. What service?
Deut. Why the number seventeen. I am your little seventeen!
M. (Provoked.) Come on, it's all right! Receipt your bill. (Takes up pen from desk and gives it to him.)
Deut. At once! (Signs upon the table)
M. (Handing him the bank notes.) Here is your money.
Deut. (Counting his money.) Thanks, Say, doctor, if at another time you have need of some one, I recommend my brother to you. He is out of work. M. What for?
Deut. He has a cost and will be very moderate.
M. That is enough of it! You are paid. I am not retaining you any longer.
Deut. (Aside. Going out.) All the same, he's an old rogue.

(Exit at rear)
Scene X

Maligne, Mme. Maligne. Emmanuel.
M. (Alone.) Truly, madame Maligne, make me play a ridiculous rôle.
Mme. M. (Entering.) Well, have you paid the upholsterer?
M. Yes—number seventeen.
Mme. M. That was a good idea I had.
M. I compliment you upon it! You made me pass for a quack in this man's eyes.
Mme. M. Our upholsterer!
M. And it's the same with that tall lanky fellow in livery.
Mme. M. Why? didn't you recognize him?
M. No.

Mme. M. He is the footman of the first floor.
M. (forgetting himself.) He is superb. (Laughing tone.) But you are going to make me the laughing-stock of the whole house! It will goggle about it, that's certain.

Mme. M. There had to be someone to carry the duchesses' letter.
M. There now, I'm not saying anything about the duchesses' letter! that is fine, that is well done, especially the end, the first script.
Mme. M. "Wicked doctor—"
M. "You do not wish them to be—"
Mme. M. "Are the Academy—" What kind of a face did Monsieur Ratibor make?
M. He was left dumbfounded. You do not know—he looked at my chair!
Mme. M. Ah, I tell you that both of them have gone away dazzled, charmed.
M. Think so?
Mme. M. And tomorrow—no later than tomorrow, we
M. (Perceiving his daughter) Oh! Emmeline! Emmeline, mamma, there isn’t any more powdered sugar.
Mme. M. Here is the key of the larder.
M. (To Emmeline, starting to leave) Well aren’t you going to kiss me? (Kissing her.) Dear little one, your father has just given himself a great deal of trouble for you.
M. What now?
M. I can’t tell it; I mustn’t repeat it. It is a secret.
Emmeline. Be calm. (Aside.) It is a question of my marriage. (Aloud.) I don’t ask you to come now, there is a loose button on your coat.
M. Will you sew it back on?
Our! Sadly! I have just enough black silk. (Malinegay takes off his coat and hands it to Emmeline who dons it as on butter)

M. (Aside.) Isn't she pretty! If I were madame Ratier's, (Pointing to Emmeline who is sewing) it is like that that I should love her!

_Scene XI_

The same. Sophie, then Alexandrine.

Sophie (Entering with basket under arm) Here I am from market!

Mme. M.: You have taken your time for it.

Sophie: Does madame wish to count it up?


Sophie: There it is madame. (Gives her mistress the book and places on the floor the basket from which one sees a cabbage-picking)

Mme. M.: (Sitting at desk, counting.) "Milk, two pence; a rabbit fifty pence." (Spoken) That's terribly dear!

Sophie: Madame there is a disease among rabbits.

M. (Paper in hand.) A disease?

Sophie: Yes, sir.

M.: I didn't know anything about it.
Mme. M. (Continuing) "A pair of braces for monsieur, five sous." Now, braces? Sophie. The buckles which had been broken.
M. (Aside) What would the duchess de Montespan say if she were present at this family scene?
Mme. M. (Continuing) "The fifteenth - a cabbage, eighteen sous." (Crying out) Eighteen sous!
Sophie. It is curled, madame.
Alexandrine. Madame here is a caller!
The whole Family. (rising) A caller!
Alex. Monsieur and madame Lattinais.
Mme. M. They?
M. Already.
One. (Aside) What good luck!
Mme. M. (To Alexandrine) How them enter.
Epit. Alexandrine. To Sophie, handing her book to her.) Quick, get out. (Epit. Sophie)
M. My coat! He puts it on quickly.
Mme. M. (To Emmanuelle) Seat yourself at the piano, head back, and play some music. Oh, heavens! The basket! (She takes it and runs around the stage in order to hide it and ends by showing it under the table, letting the table cover down.) Emmanuelle plays
some runs. Monseur and Madame appear at the door.

Scene XII.

Malingeau, Mademoiselle Malingeau, Emeline
Monseur and Madame Ratier.

(Mme R. is in full dress; Ratier's maroon coat, a white tie and white gloves.)

Mme R. Madame!

R. Doctor!

Mme M. (To Mme R.) What a happy surprise; have you at last decided to take the appartement?

R. No, not have not come exactly for that. (Aside.) Heaven! How shaky I am!

M. (To R.) Can your indisposition have increased?

R. Thanks, I am all right.

Mme R. M. have come for something else.

M. and Mme M. (Feigning astonishment)

For something else?

Em. (Aside.) 'The father has on a white tie; it is for the proposal.' (They sit down. Emeline remains standing by the piano.

R. (Much moved) M. have a communication to make, one of those communications —

(to his wife) You speak!
Mme. R. Intimate and confidential.
Emeline. Madame, my drawing teacher is there waiting for me.
Mme. M. Go, my child.
M. (Aside) Isn't she smart!
Em. (Rising) Madame, monsieur,
M. and Mme. R. Mademoiselle! (Exit Em.)
M. Are we are alone?
Mme. R. (Aside to her husband) Speak! Courage!
R. (Aside to wife) It's no use, they wouldn't be willing.
Mme. M. We are ready to hear you.
R. (Much mock) Monsieur and madame, I am a father; I have an only son, Frederic.
M. We know him.
Mme. M. A charming young man, who is always pleased sometimes to honor our saloons with a call.
R. (Aside to his wife.) "Our saloons!" You see, they have several saloons. They will never be willing.
Mme. B. (To her husband.) Come now!
R. This young man, who is a lawyer, has not been able to see your daughter — your honorable daughter — without
thinking of an alliance, which would honor
their union honoring us if he were able to
enter our honorable family which every
body honors.
Mme. M. (Feigning astonishment) What!
M. (Feigning astonishment) Is it possible?
R. (Aside to his wife) There! See? Let's go!
M. Monsieur, I acknowledge that a request
like that—made unexpectedly—surprises
me a little.
R. (Aside to his wife) Let's go!
M. A marriage is a delicate thing and
we ask your permission to consult each
other, to reflect.
Mme. R. Why certainly; that is quite natural!
Mme. M. In a few days we will let you know
our reply. (They rise)
R. (Aside) They do not refuse! (Aloud) Ah,
madame! Ah, doctor! Ah, my wife!
Mme. M. (Aside to her husband) Well, I am
just in the ropes?
M. (Aside to his wife) Dearest, that's fine,
I am convinced. (Aloud) Tell the maid
to tell the servant to tell the coachman
to hitch up Brilliante and Mirza; I am go-
ing to dine with the duchess.
Monsieur and madame Ratnios. (With admiration,) With the archers!
M. (Aside.) There it goes. right in their eyes!

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Act II. Scene I

(Parlor in home of Ratnios. Mantle piece, L. table, L. window and round table R.)

Ratnios, Madame Ratnios, Frederic.
Ratnios. (Standing.) Do you want me to give you any jinjin? It is a marriage that won't come off.

Fred. (Seated at table, writing.) Come now! What are you saying?

R. (To Frederic.) Don't trouble yourself. Go on making out my receipts. It is a work which requires coolness.

Fred. R. (Seated at right, scowling,) I am very much afraid that your father is right.

R. It is two weeks ago today since we made the proposal and we haven't received an answer.

Fred. What does that prove?

R. It proves that these people are too high up for us.
There is a scale of house-keeping!

Fred. Why I haven't noticed —

R. I know that. A lord! You have only seen the little girl, but I have seen the liveried servant! A man seven or eight feet tall!

Fred. Ah! Really now?

R. Seven or eight feet. Nothing escapes the sharp eye of a father!

Mme. R. And the young lady takes lessons of Duprez!

R. She has the means for it. When one has a father who receives 4000 francs at a blow — I counted them — and who puts them into his pocket as casually as if it were his spectacles case!

Fred. But that is no reason —

R. But do you know who this man is whose daughter you court?

Fred. He is a doctor.

R. Yes, a doctor who would have only one word to say in order to become a member of the academy of sciences. If he were willing to say one word — Presto! he would be in it! And his chair did you notice it?

Fred. No.
R. He has noticed nothing! And you wish a person like that to ally herself with the son of an old confectioner?

Mrs. R. (Rising.) What madness have you to say that you have been an confectioner?

R. I do not blush about it. I speak of it to no one, but I do not blush about it.

Mrs. R. My poor child! I believe that we must no more dream of this marriage.

Fred. But they have not refused, ma'am. You interpret the silence—

R. "The silence of the great is a lesson for the small." (Changing tone.) Do not forget the number of doors and windows!

Fred. When I went there to call the next day after the proposal, monsieur Malingeau was very amiable. He gave me advice concerning my future. He advised me to make land and damages my legal specialty.

R. Good branch—a very good branch!

Mrs. R. And madame Malingeau said to me: "It is astonishing! Your mother never goes to the Italian theatre? I haven't seen her yet."

R. This very day I went and rented a box for the season, and it is high-priced in
that theatre.

Mme. M. That is a temporary sacrifice.

(Sits down again.)

R. I understood it. When one has the ambition to enter a family like that, it is necessary to do things suitably. So when you called my attention to the fact that we could not go to the Italian theatre as yet, I hastened to take a carriage by the month, which is also very expensive!

Mme. R. Since it is the custom.

R. (Sitting down) I am not saying anything; it is necessary to do things properly. Of course, if I had been permitted to choose the theatre, I would not have chosen that one!

Mme. R. Why?

R. They always play the same piece. We have gone there four times. "Rigoletto," four times! Besides it is in Italian—she understands nothing of it.

Mme. R. You do not!

R. Nor you either. You cry in vain! Bravo! Bravo! in order to attract attention; I defy you to tell me the piece.

Mme. R. I applaud the music.

R. Let me be calm now. You let yourselves...
drops in the second act.

Mme. R. (quickly) I close my eyes but I do not sleep, it is absorbed meditation.

Ratnir. Once now, it is moving!

Fred. But father, we have the pleasure of seeing Monsieur and Madame Mal

ingske with their daughter.

R. Yes! We bow to them from our box.

They bow to us from theirs, and there it is! That is able to endure an infinity of Rigo-

lettos like that! Really now, there is one thing against which I formally protest.

Mme. R. What now?

R. (Rising) In order to make the Malin-

genske believe that we have acquaintances, you force me to distribute salutations to

a crowd of people whom I have never seen!

Mme. R. (Rising) What's the difference since they return them?

R. Not all! Not all! The other day I hap

sioned upon a minister plenipotentiary,

Dominated to him like that with my hand.

Mme. R. Well?

R. Well, he stared at me with a certain
stiffness. It is very disagreeable.

Fred. (Rising and handing some papers.)
Papa here are your receipts.
R. (Putting them in his pocket.) Thank you my child.
Mme. R. (To Frederic who takes his hat.)
Are you going out?
Fred. Yes, to do an errand.
R. Say! Take the carriage! It is rented by the month. We must use it.
Fred. Are you not going to use it?
R. I? Never! There are two great rogues of horses who paw up the ground all day.
They tear up the pavement of the court.
Fred. Good-bye! (Audo.) Yesterday Comme-
line was in the park. Perhaps she will be there today. (Expt.)
Mme. R. I am going to write to my dress-
maker.
R. What for?
Mme. R. Why to give her orders for some-
dresses. (Expt. L.)
Scene II.

Ratirnio, later Robert
R. (alone) Yes, some dresses for the Haberk theatre! and waits regrettfully! That is
still very expensive! I'll will make out our
little accounts at the end of the month!

Robert (Enter, from rear; he wears ear-
rings) How do you do, Ratirnio!
R. Well! It is uncle Robert! (Shake
hands with each other)

Rob. Everything all right?
R. Yes. Frederic has just gone out.
Rob. Where is my niece?

R. She is here. I am going to tell her.
Rob. No, don't disturb her. I was just pass-
ing in this neighborhood and I have only
a minute. I must be at Percy at three
o'clock. I am expecting a load of charcoal.
R. Always in business! You will never pettie?
Rob. As late as possible. You see, Ratirnio,
whilst once has come to Paris with twelve
pounds in one's pocket and when one has
commenced on the wharf, for I commen-
ced on the wharf-

R. I know! I know! (Aside) It is funny
that since I now in a certain social set,
I find uncle Robert so common.
Rob. Well, I am not any prouder on that account.
R. Sounds! (muttering) His earnings are absurd!
Rob. Because I say to myself: The man is worth what he is worth.
R. Say doesn't that bother you?
Rob. What?
Rob. No, I have worn them ever since I was born. You don't find them pretty?
R. I didn't say that; but in case they should trouble you could take them off?
Rob. (mauvously) Thank you, they do not trouble me.
R. He clings to them!
Rob. I was saying them that man is worth what he is worth. You were a confectioner.
R. Shh!
Rob. I am a dealer in wood.
R. Shh!
Rob. Why?
R. It isn't necessary to say that I have been a confectioner, and to cry out that you
have been a wood merchant?
Rob. I am not ashamed of my profession; find me a better one?
R. Splendid! It is a splendid one!
Rob. Well, then?
R. But every one isn’t able to follow this—this free profession.
Rob. No, certainly not.
R. Well where you cry out: “I am a wood merchant!”, it is as if you said to others: “Fools! You are not, but as for me, I am!” It is bragging.
Rob. Ah! If that is so, I’ll keep still. Taking out watch.) Half past two! Goodbye, you’ll see me again soon.
R. (Astonished.) Ah!
Rob. To day is your wife’s birthday and anniversary—the twenty-second of April.
R. By my faith, that’s true! I’d forgotten.
Rob. On the way back I’ll pass the flower market, and I’ll buy an orange tree.
R. Oh yes! Your little annual present!
Rob. It is something that there are yet mine of.
R.: You will dine with us? We will have no one else.
Rob.: All right! But no ceremony!
R.: You may rest assured that it is not for you that we will put on style! So, at 9 p.m. o'clock?
Rob.: By the way, don't you want to marry off that boy, Frederic?
R.: There is perhaps something under way...
Rob.: Ah! Something pretty good?
R.: Yes indeed, a hopeless match.
Rob.: A wood dealer?
R.: No quite! Unfortunately, this affair isn't moving—it's dragging.
Rob.: It must be warmed up! Do you want to go and see the family?
R.: (Pretending.) Oh, no! Thank you. Aside.) If he should meet the duchess!
Rob.: You know what I have told you: I have no children. I am rich; on the day of the wedding, I will make a gift—a fine gift.
R.: Noble uncle Robert!
Rob.: Good-bye, for a time. Above all, don't mention my surprise, the orange-tree.
R.: Never fear! (Exit Robert.)
Scene III.

Ratius. 

Ratius, then Josephine, Mme. Ratius.

R. (Alone.) What an excellent man! He loves Frederic, and is capable of giving him a fine present—a dozen silver plates. Poor boy! His marriage will not come off. We have aimed too high. It is a pity!

Josephine. (Enter.) There are a lady and a gentleman at the door who ask for Monsieur.

R. Have they told you their names?

Jos. Monsieur and Madame Malingeay.

R. They? Oh, goodness, gracious! Where is my wife? (To Josephine.) Wait, don’t let anyone in. (Calling.) Constance! Constance!

Mme. R. (Entering quickly) Heaven, what’s the matter?

R. They are here!

Mme. R. Who?

R. The father and mother. What shall we do?

Mme. R. We must receive them, for they have come to make an answer.

R. They! You think so?

Mme. R. Indeed! (To Josephine) Let there
enter. Oh heavens, the furniture covers!
R. Oh yes, the covers? Let's take them off.
(To Josephine) Wait! Don't let them in but
help us. (All begin to take off covers.)
What an event! What a day!
Mme. R. Come, have self-possession,
courage; and above all do not speak
to me familiarly.
R. Why?
Mme. R. In order to do as they do. (To
Josephine, who has thrown the covers into
a closet near by.) Let them enter. (Exit Jos.)
R. (To his wife.) Sit down at the pianos
and play some runs. (Seeing a chair in
the rear, decorated with its cover.) Ah!
we have forgotten one. (He runs to it—
They enter.)

Scene IV.

The Same. Mme. M. and Madame Mal-
mgea.

Madame Ratinois. (To Mme. M.) Ah! dear
madame, how happy I am to see you!
M. I'm here to reproach ourselves. It's over
you as visit.
Mme. M. But the doctor is so busy.
Mme. R. Please sit down. (They sit down.)
M. Shall we not have the pleasure of seeing monsieur Ratini? (Ratini who has remained in the rear trying to loosen the ever finishes by throwing it into a wood box.)

R. Here I am! I am coming. (Maliqvor rises.) I was in my work room. (Bowing)

Doctor! Dear madame shall I dare to ask you news of your precious health?

Mme M. All right except headaches.

Mme R. Just so with me. I am ruined by headaches.

R. I, too, am ruined by headaches. (Sits down as Maliqvor does.)

Mme M. We will see you at Les Italiers tomorrow?

Mme R. Oh, certainly, certainly!

R. What is it that they play?

M. Rigoletto.

R. Ah! So much the better! So much the better!

Mme M. It has music of which one never tires.

R. That is very true.

Mme R. Especially the finale.

All. Ah, charming! Charming!

Mme M. And the Adante?
R.: Ah! That is glorious! Glorious!
M.: This father-in-law is a fanatic. Like my wife, don't know a thing about music.
(Moment of silence)
Mme. M.: (To her husband.) My dear, we are wasting the time of madame and monsieur Ratinis!
R.: Not at all!
M.: Ah! You were in business?
R.: Yes.
Mme. M.: What sort of business?
R.: (Embarrassed.) Why, I was—
Mme. R.: (Quickly) A sugar refiner. My husband was a sugar refiner.
M.: Ah! That is manufacturing on a large scale.
R.: (Aside) Confectioner—refiner—it is always in the sugar.
Mme. M.: Sugar refiners are always miscalculators. (Silence again.) Doctor you for- get that we owe you an answer.
M.: (Rising) That's so! (Posing) Madame and you, monsieur, had the kindness a fortnight ago, to address to me a pro-
R. Ah! That is glorious! Glorious!
M. This father-in-law is a fanatic. I, like my wife, don't know a thing about music.
(Moment of Silence)
Mme. M. (To her husband.) My dear, we are wasting the time of madame and monsieur.
(Raising)
Mme. R. Not at all!
R. I have nothing to do. I have retired from business.
M. Ah! You were in business?
R. Yes.
Mme. M. What sort of business?
R. (Embarrassed.) Why, I was—
Mme. R. (Quickly.) A sugar refiner. My husband was a sugar refiner.
M. Ah! That is manufacturing on a large scale.
R. (Aside.) Confectioners—refiners—it is always in the sugar.
Mme. M. Sugar refiners are always millonaires. (Silence again) Doctor, you forget that we owe you an answer.
M. (Rising.) That's so! (Rising.) Madame and you, monsieur, had the kindness a fortnight ago, to address to us a propos
oration which flatters us as much as it honors us.

M. and Mme. R. (Rising) Doctor, madame. M.
The inquiries which we have had to make, as much concerning your son as concerning the family to which he has the honor to belong—these inquiries did not and could not have any inquisitorial character, be assured. These inquiries I say, have led us to think that there is reason to take into serious consideration the flattering virtues which you have been willing to make to us. (Sits down)

R. (Rising, very much moved) Doctor, I believe that I am the faithful inter-preter of the sentiments of Madame Rat- tias, and, if my own and of those of my son Frederic, the lawyer, in paying to you with errata which you will understand—for it is that of a father—and you are a mother, madame—in paying to you: Doctor receive this day the blessings and the affectionate grati-tude of a family who—whose—I will say more; of a family who—(Effusively)

In short will you dine with us?
M. (Surprised) Here?
M. What! Today?
M. Me? Oh! That would be fine!
M. Another day, later on.
R. Such an hour would be pleasanter.
M. Me? We will be a family party.
R. Well, Doctor?
M. Madame?
M. Sure we will not refuse you. But
me one condition.
R. What is it?
M. That you will have no ceremony.
R. That is understood.
M. Our ordinary meal... nothing
but our ordinary meal. (She rings.) Aunt
me? (Aside to Josephine who enters.) To
immediately get the manager of
monsieur Stévat at the Palais-Royal.
Josephine (Astonished) What?
M. Quick! quick! (Exit Josephine.)
M. (To Madame Ratine.) It is well
understood that will not dress?
M. Me? We will remain as we are.
M. Now I will ask you for a few mom-
te's conversation, my dear Ratine's.
R. I am entirely at yours disposal. (Aside)
He called me Ratine! What if we shall be able to become familiar with each other some day!

M. We have to talk about our little affairs.
A. (Cloudy) I hope that we shall have no difficulty. Will you pass into my room?
M. After you Ratine!
A. Certainly not! We have time. enter. And Ratine! I dare not call him Malaguena yet. (Exit E)

Scene V

Madame Ratine, Madame Malaguena.
Mme. A. Oh, how happy! The devil is going to be!
Mme. M. Between us, I believe that he is not disliked by my daughter.
Mme. A. Dear child! I promise to love her as a mother.
Mme. M. Do you want to talk a little about their housekeeping?
Mme. A. Oh, yes indeed.
Mme. M. Tomorrow we will look for apartments.
Mme. A. An entrance?
Mme. M. An entrance is pretty low. As a child.
Mrs. R. A second floor is pretty high.
Mrs. M. Then a first? It is a matter of about five or six thousand francs. (They sit down.)
Mrs. R. Let's put it at six thousand.
Mrs. M. (Taking a card from a little port folio) Wait, I am going to write upon this card. (Writing) Rent: 6,000 francs.
Mrs. R. The toilette, that is important.
Mrs. M. It is very difficult for a woman who seeks a certain social set, to get off with less than four or five thousand francs. That's what I spend.
Mrs. R. I also. Let's make it six thousand francs.
Mrs. M. Toilette: 6,000 francs. (writing) And food! She is not stingy.
Mrs. R. (Aside) I spent only nine hundred francs last year, and Patrizia seduced me.
Mrs. M. A carriage. Do you think they can indulge in a carriage?
Mrs. R. Sure. (Aside) That will depend upon the doing.
Mrs. M. It is quite disagreeable for a young woman to tramp about in
the need; especially with the dresses
they make now a-days.

Mme R. Oh, it is impossible. There
are a great many cabs.

Mme M. Cabs! Oh don't speak to me
about those filthy boxes.

Mme R. (Quickly) I am not speaking
of them.

Mme M. They are dark and close.

Mme R. And dirty! They wouldn't get
me into one for anything in the world.
(Aside) I always go on foot!

Mme M. I think that a little coupe—

Mme R. With two little horses—

Mme M. And a little coachman?

Mme R. Let's put down five thousand francs.

Mme M. (Writing) Coupe: 6,000 francs. (Aside)

These expenses walk upon gold. (Aside) The
household expenses, table, etc.

Mme R. Let's put down five thousand francs.

Mme M. That's enough. (Adding) Six, twelve,
eighteen, twenty-four. Total, twenty-four
thousand francs. That seems all right to
me. (Leaves cards on table.)

Mme R. That's not too much. (Aside) They
ought to give her a pretty big dowry. (Aside)
Scene VI

The Same. Malingeau, Ratius.
M. (Going from L. followed by Ratius.) It is settled, Ratius, you have my word.
R. And you mine, Malingeau! (Aside) I have taken the risk!
M. (To woman,) We are completely agreed.
R. Completely, Malingeau.
Mme. M. (Aside to husband,) How much?
M. (Aside to wife,) A hundred thousand.
Mme. M. (Aside, astounded,) Not more?
Mme. R. (Aside to Ratius,) How much!
R. (Aside,) A hundred thousand.
Mme. R. (Aside,) Only that?
Mme. M. (Aside to husband,) Let's go out; I want to talk to you.
M. No bug of you the permission to with draw. Some patients to see!
R. The doctors?
Mme. R. We shall expect you, at six. (To Mme. M.) And especially no elaborate dressing!
Mme. M. Oh, that's understood! (Bowings) Madame.
R. Adieu, Malingeau.
(Exeunt at rear.)
Scene III

Ratigniès. More. Ratigniès, then Josephine.

R. Ah! There is now good piece of business concluded.

More. R. A hundred thousand francs! That is not serious?

R. (Astonished) Why not?

More. R. It's a mean trick! A hundred thousand francs!

R. But I could give no more.

More. R. What difference? Our son has a profession. He is a lawyer.

R. But he never pleads!

More. R. He never pleads because he has no cases!

R. That's right. (After reflecting) But he has no cases. That's as if he were not a lawyer.

More. R. That will come, the future is before him. I do not understand why you have accepted this figure.

R. A young household which has an income of ten thousand francs, is quite genteel.

More. R. It is want!

R. Ah! Upon my honor.

More. R. (Giving him card left on table)
Here, just look here.
R. That's that.
Mme. R. The budget of the children which madame Malinegar jotted down upon this card while you were in there.
R. (Reading) Rent: 6,000 francs, toilette, couple — twenty-four thousand francs. What does that prove? Can we reduce this account.
Mme. R. Oh, if madame Malinegar were a simple young girl, reared in the rules of order and economy, if she were a little bit more, in short, every thing would go for the best, but a girl who takes lessons from Duprez, who paints pictures in oil and would not even know how to sew on a button for her husband —
R. It is true that in the matter of sewing.
Mme. R. She plays music. She has all her life been cradled in silk and lace. She must have an apartment on the first floor, a carriage, a coachman! I do not complain of that, but then they bring a dowry, a real dowry —
R. Come, don't get excited! Frederic loves the little girl and if one speaks to him of breaking off this marriage—
Mme. R.: It is not a question of breaking it! The Malvignacs are rich, very rich! People who have a liveried footman!
R: Yes, I saw him; seven or eight feet tall.
Mme. R.: Well let them give more. You must speak to the father. He is going to come?
R: Yes. As it is necessary for me to speak.
Mme. R.: What! You have the appearance of not understanding.
R: Yes, yes! But it is difficult today to a gentle man: 'The hundred thousand francs that I give are sufficient, but yours are not.' It is very hard.
Mme. R.: Bah! It is absurdly vain; it is necessary to invite him to take him by his vanity. Offer to give something more yourself - that will put him in the way.
R: We are not able to go very far with even four thousand francs a year.
Mme. R.: People propose a present - a trifle.

Josephine (Entering) Madame, here is the head - cabinet of monsieur Chevet whom you asked for.
Mme. R.: Let him enter! (Exit Josephine)
R: Constance, I have no need to request you to do the thing I ask properly.
Mme R: Don't worry.

Scene VIII

The Same. Caterer, later. Péderné.

Caterer. (Entering and bowing to his hostess, he has on a coat.) Madame.

Mme R: Monseigneur, we want a dinner.
R: (Seated.) A big dinner?

Caterer. How many people?

Mme R: We are ... people.
R: But you will prepare as if for ... dinners. We are going to receive an illustrious person, Mr. Malingeard, whom you have doubtless heard.

Caterer. No, monseigneur.

R: Oh! Of course, he treats only the autocratic people.

Caterer. Here is what I should propose to madame: two soups, boeuf and postage à la reine.

R: Are there mushrooms in it?

Caterer. No, monseigneur, there is no soup with mushrooms in it.

R: That's a pity!

Mme R. Nept.
Enter. The second course.
Fred. (Entering.) Here I am!
R. and Mme. R. Frederic!
R. Rising.) You do not know? They have come.
Fred. Who?
R. The Malejans.
Fred. Ah, joyau!
Mme. R. You are liked by the young girl.
R. By the father and the mother, everything is arranged.
Fred. Is it possible?
Mme. R. (Opening her arms) My child!
(They embrace)
R. (Opening his arms) And I?
Fred. Father! (They embrace)
Caterer. (Not knowing what to do with himself. Aside) I’m in the way! (Goes to back of stage and looks at picture)
R. I have invited them to dinner this evening.
Fred. What a good idea!
Mme. R. And we are beginning to order the menu.
R. Here is the caterer. Well, where is he now? Hey! Musicians.
Caterer. (Coming down.) Pardon!
R. (To Ted.) We were at the second course. You are going to help us.
Caterer. Rassin' cep in Chambord sauce, garnished with mushrooms.
R. Very good!
Caterer. With shrimp curled like earnings.
R. (Suddenly.) Ark, sapusty!
Fred. My Minc R. What's the matter?
R. I counted uncle Robert! The earnings made me think of it.
Minc. R. What? Is it possible?
Fred. Why?
Minc. R. I can't have him sit at the same table with the Malinears.
Caterer. I am in the way. (Yrs back to the picture)
Fred. But his my uncle, such a fine man.
R. Yes, but he is not in our class. In the first place, his manner of eating—he puts his knife in his mouth.
Minc. R. And he serves himself from the dish with the fork.
R. And he pours wine into his bouchon! That may be good for the stomach, but it is horrible to the naked eye!
Fred. That is no reason—
R. Come, my friend, let's reason! As we are at a time when we are making the sacrifice of a magnificent dinner, going to spoil the looks of it? From what sort of a face do you expect Uncle Robert to make before a Rhenish carp in Chausson sauce? It would look as if it were on a plate of cabbages! Do you want to serve on a plate of cabbages?

Now R. We will invite time for tomorrow.

R. To eat the leanings. That's all right. Let's go. After the carp? (Looking for caterer) Well, where is he now? (Calling) Hey! Monsieur. He always goes away! Caterer. (Coming down) Pardon!

R. After the carp!

Caterer. Entree: filet of beef, baked with new peas.

R. With mushrooms?

Caterer. If you wish it.

R. Grains!

Caterer. Roast: Chinese golden pheasant with truffles!

R. Good! (To Fred.) Can you imagine Uncle Robert in the presence of a Chinese golden pheasant? That man would
be out of place.

Caterer. For entremets I should like to offer you some mushrooms à la Lucul
disguise, but you have already had a good many mushrooms.

R. That doesn’t matter! That doesn’t matter!

Mrs. R. Serve the mushrooms à la Lucul
uss. Oh! I dined recently at a house where they changed the knife and fork at
each plate.

Caterer. That is done everywhere, now.

Mrs. R. But I have only twenty-four covers.

R. Well you will not change mine.

Fred. Nor mine.

Mrs. R. Nor mine.

Caterer. They will wash them as we pro-
ceed.

R. What’s as. (Aside.) Isn’t he intelligent? (Aloud.) Let’s see the dessert, now.

Caterer. For the center I should suggest
a structure of pastry

R. Something very tall.

Caterer. It is a tower of pumpkin ball
of pineapples surmounted by a Cinnamon
made out of spun sugar.
Mr. R.: Oh, that must be enchanting!  
R.: At what price do you sell that?  
Caterer: Sixty-four francs.
R.: Oh! Allow me! Paint me in the
countenance in any character of old—
Mrs. R.: (Quickly) That is all right.
Mr. will reflect. I'm will reflect.
Caterer: When madame shall want it,
it is all ready. What brand of cham-
pagne do you prefer? The "Möet" or the
"Vigny"?
R.: What widow?
Fred.: The widow Clénet, that is best.
R.: At twelve francs do you sell it?
Caterer: At twelve francs. The Möet is butpip.
R.: Well, we will see; we will reflect.
Mrs. R.: Now the dinner ready for 2 o'clock.
Caterer: Madame may rest assured. (Sighs)
R.: (Calling him back.) Oh, caterer!
Caterer: Sir?
R.: There is one dish which I like very
much, but I do not know its name. They
serve it quite at the end. It is made of
hot water and mint which one drinks.
Caterer: Those are fingerbobs.
Fred.: That is not to be drunk.
R. (astonished) Grooms! I have drunk—
Caterer. (Going out. Aside) Well there are some—how people! (He disappears)
R. Come, I believe that we shall have
a pretty little dinner. They will talk of it!
Mrs. R. We have forgotten the most im-
portant thing.
R. What?
Mrs. R. The Malignac's have a trusted
footman, and it is absolutely necessary
for us to show a livery.
R. That is true.
Mrs. R. For what good?
R. We must do things up properly.
Mrs. R. The lodger of the first floor—a creole—has left for the country and
has left his servants. If I were able
(Cloud) Come, father. I have need of
you—some duties to assign you.
Fred. I follow you mother. (Exeunt)

Scene 11

Patrono, later, Robert.
R. A livery! Oh, how ugly Josephine!
Rob. (Entering) Here I am!
R. Uncle Robert!
Rob. I am early, but I bring an appetite.
R: (Aside) It is a lucky chance! It would be necessary to find some means of withdrawing the invitation gently.
R: In passing, I went into Longfellow's and bought a pie. I handed it to Josephine.
R: Oh, good uncle Robert, who has thought of buying—
R: Oh, and a slice of ham.
R: Oh, heavens! It just occurs to me.
R: What?
R: Am I one? Frankly, I then invited you to dinner?
R: Certainly.
R: Then I was sure of it.
R: Well?
R: Well, it is impossible, we are going to dine out.
R: Oh, that's too bad!
R: At the Blanchards'. To means of refusing, they have, received others.
R: I understand.
R: Then you are not mad?
R: Come now, you and I? And my pie?
R: We'll eat that tomorrow. I'll count upon you.
R: Agreed! Goodbye! Have a good time!
R. Till tomorrow!

R. (Returning) An idea! I have something to tell the Blanchards. It may be that I shall go this evening to take coffee with you.

R. (Aside) The devil!

R. Until this evening. (Exit at rear)

Scene 2

Rattigan, later Frederic, later a servant.

R. There I am indeed! He will not find us at the Blanchards and that is going to make a mess.

Frederic (Entering, laden down with books and a stereoscope.) Here are our acquaintances.

R. What did you buy?

Frederic. This is a photographic album. Mammie told me to place it on the table in full view. They will think that these are our acquaintances.

R. Oh, that's a good idea! (Turning over the leaves of the album.) Lord Belvedere, Count Borotchakoff! Hoace Vernet, Leopard!

Frederic. (Handing him a little box.) That is for you.

R. What is it? A chain?
Fred. To fasten to your watch.
R. I think that it’s bigger than Malingeear’s. (He fastens his watch on it.)
It is magnificent! That will produce a fine effect.
Fred. It is irremissible. It is not necessary to say so.
R. (Indignant.) False! (After reflecting after all, where the false has the appearance of true it is no longer false!)
A tall servant in livery enters from rear with two lighted lamps. (To Fred.) Who is that? Do you know her?
Fred. No.
R. (To servant, who places the lamps on the mantel.) My friend where do you come from?
Servant. I am the servant of the first floor.
R. Ah! Very good! (To Fred.) He is a borrowed soul! He is free! (Laughing at the servant who is going out.) But not so tall as Malingeear’s. (The rolling of a carriage is heard.)
Fred. (Running to window) A carriage! It is they!
R. And my wife not here! (Calling) Constance! Constance!

Scene XI

The Same, Malingeaux, Madame Malingeaux in full dress. Dress shot with gold thread. Conmielie, later Mme. Patineau. The door in the rear opens and a little negro announces

Negro. Monsieur, madame and mademoiselle Malingeaux.

R. (Aside.) A negro now! How women understand stage setting! (Going to meet the Malingeaux.) Monsieur, madame, mademoiselle!

Fred. (Browning) Mademoiselle Conmielie!
Mme. M. (Aside to her husband.) They have a negro! Did you notice?
M. Yes, these refined—that sort of people never deny themselves anything!
R. (To Mme. M.) Oh, dear Madame! That is not right.
Mme. M. What now?
R. It was decided not to make a toilette, and you have on a dazzling one. My wife's dinner is going to fail!
Mme. M. Oh, all that's very simple!
R. My wife will not make one and I was sure she will insist on you. Here she is!
(Receiving the toilette of his wife, comfits of varied and conspicuous colors. Aside) Ah,
goodness gracious! A rainbow!
Mrs. R. Dear, good madame, how lovely you are!
Mrs. M. We were eager to be with you.
(Aside) Three rows of flowers! That is treason! (Aloud.) An admirable toilette.
Mrs. R. It does not approach yours.
(Aside) A dress of gold! That's bad faith.
Fred. Madame, do you wish us to go into the parlor?
Mrs. R. Certainly. (Exit with Comelieu)
Mrs. M. (Aside to her husband) Keep musing Ratiens and speak to him about the dowry.
M. (Aside) Yes.
Mrs. R. (Aside to Ratiens) Stay with the father-in-law and speak to him about the dowry.
R. (Aside) Don't worry.
Mrs. R. (Pointing to parlor door) Madame!
(Enter R.)
Scene XII

Ratier, Malvigean.

R. Here we are alone. (Aside) It isn’t easy to start this business.

M. How the devil shall I broach the matter?

R. (Approaching Malvigean) My dear Malvigean, it is very kind of you to accept our invitation to our little dinner.

M. You invited me for it so kindly.

R. It is because I admire you!

M. And I you!

R. (Grasping his hand) Dear Malvigean.

M. (Grasping his hand) True Ratier!

R. (Aside) All that sentiment—that draws me apart! (Aloud) A little while ago we talked a little superficially about the dinner. (They sit down at a table at L.)


R. Oh, that is a figure that I put down at random—in the air—but that doesn’t bind you.

M. I was saying—also—a great sum—

R. And you are illustrious doctors—yes—...
ceurs four thousand francs at once!
M. Oh, I?
Q. I found them. Wait! I am disposed
to make a sacrifice; I will give plate.
M. (Astonished) Ah!
Q. And you?
M. I? I offer journements for the tuxedo mantel.
Q. Ah! (Claude) He has to put dots over his "s"! (Aloud) Maligneur! It is necessary
to tell you one thing—all prices have risen.
M. That's true. And one who was at the
case formerly with an income of ten thousand
and francs, finds himself very much
embarrassed today.
Q. There, we do not wish our children to be
embarrassed.
M. Certainly, we do not.
Q. Would you see your daughter—your dear
dughter—obliged to stop and consider about
buying a dress or a shawl?
M. And your son, your only son, reduced
to live by his wits?
Q. Oh! Let's not speak of my son. Apoin
always gets himself out of trouble, but she, the
poor child, who is your joy, your love—
for you love your daughter very much?
If you love Frederic.

Yes, let's not talk about Frederic; let's talk about ourselves. It is necessary to make for her this child—our existence of silk and gold.

M. (Impressed) Oh, thank you for this!

Q. From which, I infer, that there is some for increasing the dowry.

M. That is exactly my sentiment.

Q. Well, fix it yourself. I accept in advance.

M. (Aside) Ah! Very well! Talk to me about merchants. (aloud) I think that in giving a hundred and fifty thousand francs.

Q. Oh, Maman, that's not enough!

M. Then let's make it two hundred thousand.

Q. (Rising) That's all right! I give the plate, and you the two hundred thousand.

M. (Rising) What! It is you who give them!

Q. I? Indeed!

M. Why I, and not you?

Q. Because, in your position—a man should have a carriage, a box at Les Italiens and a literate footman.

M. But you also have a carriage, a box at Les Italiens, and a nigro, which is more expensive.
R. I? J: It's not the same thing.
M. Why? Unless you assume a luxury-
for your position?
R. Not at all! My position is a luxury!
M. Well, it is just, that one give as much as
the other. Each one two hundred thou-
and francs. (Aside) That can income of
twenty two thousand. It will less one turus.
R. (Aside) Jouds! I have seventeen
thousand francs a year; it will less pue
only seven thousand! What is impossible.
M. You do not hesitate for a miserable ques-
tion of money.
R. I am not hesitating. A hundred thou-
sand and francs more or less—what difference do
you suppose that could make to me? I
offer three hundred thousand francs! That is
how I hesitate!
M. (Astonished) What? Three hundred?
R. (Aside) I'm going to raise it until he
backs down, and then I'm going to break
it off. (Cloud:) Your back down?
M. Not at all. I'm reflecting. (Aside) Three hun-
dred thousand — that is impossible! There is
only one way, that is, to increase the down
until he says no. Then the whole thing will be broken off. (Cloud.) I propose four hundred thousand!

X. That's not enough. Five hundred thousand!

Y. That's not enough. Six hundred thousand!

Z. That's not enough!

Scene III

The same, Uncle Robert.

X. Appearing with an orange tree; that six hundred thousand francs!

Y. (Aside) Uncle Robert! I was going to come out with a million! I would have come out with it. (Cloud) Monsieur Malague, the future father-in-law.

Z. Or were we talking about the donor.

X. (Keeping down his orange tree.) What! And you give it at hundred thousand francs.

Y. (Dying) Ah, monsieur permit one to congratulate you!

Z. Out monsieur. Patience gives as much.

X. What! You?

Y. (Embarrassed.) Naturally.

X. (To R.) Congratulations! I didn't know that you were as rich as that!

Y. As rich! As rich! Certainly. Came at an
case. But when one finds himself before
people—millionaires—who have demands.
M. Oh! Pardon, monsieur! I have de-
manded nothing. It is you on the con-
tary who—
Q. I? I proposed plate, and therefore you
started off.
M. What? I started off? I said that I
would give the ornaments for the juror-
mental and you coldly answered, "Ah!"
Q. I answered, "Ah"—it was my right;
but not coldly.
M. Oh, pardon, monsieur!
Q. Pardon, yourself!
Q. Then you are agreed?
M. We are agreed: I see it welling. But
I did not answer coldly!
M. I beg your pardon!
Q. No, monsieur!
M. Yes, monsieur!
Q. Wait! Do you want me to tell you what
I think?
M. You will give me pleasure.
Q. Well, you are seeking one excuse to
break off this marriage.
M. Now? Any excuse?
R: Are you sure! I held to the word. But
I, who am an honest man—
M. No more than I.
R: That is possible! But as I do not
wish any excuse, I tell you quite clearly—
Both. Together. Let's break it off!
Rob. One, gentlemen no anger!
R. I'm not angry. (Aside, with satis-
faction.) There it is! He broken off!
M. (Aside, with satisfaction.) That is an
affair, which is all over!
Rob. The devil! You do business very
quickly! A breaking off! I applied your
now did not low mademoiselle Malangev,
did he?
R. He didn't love her! He didn't love her!
He was foolish over her! But what has
that got to do with it?
Rob. And mademoiselle Dianehi was
sublimely in love with Frederic?
M. Mildly. That is to say, she seemed to
have a certain inclination for him? I
do not hide it, but—
Rob. But, "what has that got to do with it?"
M. I didn't pay that. Permit me—
Rob. (Angrily.) No! I don't permit you! You
men are vain, proud!
Mr. Monsieur!
R. Uncle!
Rob. Ah! I have restrained myself for a quarter of an hour. I must let loose.
You have been trying for a fortnight to dazzle each other, to lie to each other, to deceive each other!
R. What?
Rob. Yes, to deceive each other, in proving devices you are not able to give
Is that true? Strutting about in an existence, in a luxury which is not you.
R. But—
Rob. To "suits!" I have talked with the servants! When I want to know anything I talk with the servants—that's my system!
But how then were able to tell you?
Rob. In the first place I met a negro in the kitchen. A negro in the kitchen! That is not decent! And then Monsieur has taken a carriage by the mouth—box at "Les Italiens"—Ratsnur at "Les Italiens."
R. Why it seems to me that that is a theatre.
Rob. Which times you.
R. Ah!
I was only as father fit to be thrown out of the window. (Pointing to M.) and presuming wisely. But it is not my fault—it is my wife. She shall pay me for it! (Shouting tenderly) And favour to you that if ever you ever see me stumbling in the path, which—which. (Suddenly)

In short, will you dine with us.

Scene XIX.

All: Madame Mélusine, Madame Katrin's Gréardis, later, Samülie, Latier.

Women. R: Call gentlemen, you leave us alone.

R: Ah! there's my wife! Come here, madame.

(R. To his wife, severely) Come here, madame!

Women. R: Why?

Women. M. What is the matter?

R. (To his wife) A mother, guilty, and puffing with vanity! But that's the style today!

M. People play the peacock!

R. The world up like balloons!

M. And they do not fear to sacrifice the future—the happiness of their children!

R. For they love each other, but they answer: What has that to do with it? And she holds the mother! Good evening!
Have I now what's the matter with you?

Have R. Explain to me.

R. (Irritantly.) Take your knitting! She

knits all of my women stockings tomorrow.

Passes before his wife.

R. (Irritantly.) Why, my wife was too!

Have R. What! You, madame?

R. Why yes! Off with the masks! Rattuine

an old confectioner not refrains!

M. and Have M. What?

Have R. Put my friend—

R. don't bother me! At the sign of the

silver festal she was cashed. He gave a

hundred thousand francs to his son as a dow

My turn! Mélangé, a doctor, without

patients!

Have R. What?

R. Put the Duchess.

R. Have treated only a confectioner this

year, and that free of charge! He gives a

hundred thousand francs as dowry to his

daughter!

M. My turn! Robert, wood merchant

who came to Paris with timber sons in

his pocket, gives a dowry of a hundred

thousand francs to his nephew!
Red. Uncle!
Emuelue! Good uncle!
R. He has that!

Peter (Cutting) Dinner is served!
Rob. Come to the table
R. One minute!
All. What now?
R. I have served a foolish dinner; now
waste of it. Dry dishes of mushrooms!
All. (Reproachfully.) Oh, Robots!
M. A father, father of our family!
R. One could perhaps have monsieur Beset
take them back?
All. Oh, No!
Rob. I object to it!

R. Come, let's eat them that will be
our punishment! To the table! Arms
to the ladies! (They offer their arms
to the ladies and pass into the dining
room.)