

The Magnificent Lovers

Moliere (Poquelin)

Table of Contents

<u>The Magnificent Lovers</u>	1
Moliere (Poquelin).....	2
<u>PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR</u>	4
<u>FIRST INTERLUDE</u>	5
<u>ACT I</u>	7
<u>SCENE I.—SOSTRATUS, CLITIDAS</u>	8
<u>SCENE II.—ARISTIONE, IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, SOSTRATUS ANAXARCHUS, CLEON, CLITIDAS</u>	10
<u>SCENE III.—IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, SOSTRATUS, CLITIDAS</u>	13
<u>SCENE IV.—IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, CLITIDAS</u>	14
<u>SCENE V.—TIMOCLES, CLITIDAS</u>	15
<u>SCENE VI.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE</u>	16
<u>ACT II</u>	17
<u>SCENE I.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE</u>	18
<u>SCENE II.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE, CLITIDAS</u>	19
<u>SCENE III.—ERIPHYLE, CLITIDAS</u>	20
<u>SCENE IV.—ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS</u>	22
<u>SCENE V.—ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS, CHOROEBUS</u>	23
<u>SCENE VI.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE, IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, SOSTRATUS, ANAXARCHUS, CLITIDAS</u>	24
<u>ACT III</u>	25
<u>ACT IV</u>	28
<u>SCENE I.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE</u>	29
<u>SCENE II.—VENUS (in the air, accompanied by four CUPIDS), ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE</u>	30
<u>SCENE III.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE</u>	31
<u>SCENE IV.—ANAXARCHUS, CLEON</u>	32
<u>SCENE V.—ERIPHYLE (alone)</u>	33
<u>SCENE VI.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE</u>	34
<u>SCENE VII.—ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS</u>	35
<u>SCENE VIII.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE</u>	36
<u>ACT V</u>	37
<u>SCENE I.—ERIPHYLE, CLITIDAS</u>	38
<u>SCENE II.—ARISTIONE, SOSTRATUS, ERIPHYLE, CLITIDAS</u>	39
<u>SCENE III.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS, CLEONICE, CLITIDAS</u>	40
<u>SCENE IV.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE, IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, SOSTRATUS, CLEONICE, CLITIDAS</u>	41

The Magnificent Lovers

Moliere (Poquelin)

This page copyright © 2002 Blackmask Online.

<http://www.blackmask.com>

• PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR.

• FIRST INTERLUDE.

• ACT I.

• SCENE I.—SOSTRATUS, CLITIDAS.

• SCENE II.—ARISTIONE, IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, SOSTRATUS ANAXARCHUS, CLEON, CLITIDAS.

• SCENE III.—IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, SOSTRATUS, CLITIDAS.

• SCENE IV.—IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, CLITIDAS.

• SCENE V.—TIMOCLES, CLITIDAS.

• SCENE VI.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE.

• ACT II.

• SCENE I.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE.

• SCENE II.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE, CLITIDAS.

• SCENE III.—ERIPHYLE, CLITIDAS.

• SCENE IV.—ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS.

• SCENE V.—ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS, CHOROEBUS.

• SCENE VI.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE, IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, SOSTRATUS, ANAXARCHUS, CLITIDAS.

• ACT III.

• ACT IV.

• SCENE I.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE.

• SCENE II.—VENUS (in the air, accompanied by four CUPIDS), ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE.

• SCENE III.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE.

• SCENE IV.—ANAXARCHUS, CLEON.

• SCENE V.—ERIPHYLE (alone).

• SCENE VI.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE.

• SCENE VII.—ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS.

• SCENE VIII.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE.

• ACT V.

• SCENE I.—ERIPHYLE, CLITIDAS.

• SCENE II.—ARISTIONE, SOSTRATUS, ERIPHYLE, CLITIDAS.

• SCENE III.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS, CLEONICE, CLITIDAS.

• SCENE IV.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE, IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, SOSTRATUS, CLEONICE, CLITIDAS.

The Magnificent Lovers

and the people at Distributed Proofreaders

THE MAGNIFICENT LOVERS (LES AMANTS MAGNIFIQUES)

BY

MOLIERE

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH PROSE.

WITH SHORT INTRODUCTIONS AND EXPLANATORY NOTES.

BY

CHARLES HERON WALL

The subject of this play was given by Louis XIV. It was acted before him at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, on February 4, 1670, but was never represented in Paris, and was only printed after Moliere's death. It is one of the weakest plays of Moliere, upon whom unfortunately now rested the whole responsibility of the court entertainments. His attack upon astrology is the most interesting part.

Moliere acted the part of Clitidas.

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR.

The King, who will have nothing but what is magnificent in all he undertakes, wished to give his court an entertainment which should comprise all that the stage can furnish. To facilitate the execution of so vast an idea, and to link together so many different things, his Majesty chose for the subject two rival princes, who, in the lovely vale of Tempe, where the Pythian Games were to be celebrated, vie with each other in feting a young princess and her mother with all imaginable gallantries. PERSONS REPRESENTED.

IPHICRATES & TIMOCLES, *princes in love with ERIPHYLE.*

SOSTRATUS, *a general, also in love with ERIPHYLE.*

ANAXARCHUS, *an astrologer.*

CLEON, *his son.*

CHOROEBUS, *in the suit of ARISTIONE.*

CLITIDAS, *a court jester, one of the attendants of ERIPHYLE.*

ARISTIONE, *a princess, mother to ERIPHYLE.*

ERIPHYLE, *a princess, daughter to ARISTIONE.*

CLEONICE, *confidante to ERIPHYLE.*

A sham VENUS, *acting in concert with ANAXARCHUS.*

THE MAGNIFICENT LOVERS.

FIRST INTERLUDE.

The scene opens with the pleasant sound of a great many instruments, and represents a vast sea, bordered on each side by four large rocks. On the summit of each is a river god, leaning on the insignia usual to those deities. At the foot of these rocks are twelve Tritons on each side, and in the middle of the sea four Cupids on dolphins; behind them the god AEOLUS floating on a small cloud above the waves. AEOLUS commands the winds to withdraw; and whilst four Cupids, twelve Tritons, and eight river gods answer him, the sea becomes calm, and an island rises from the waves. Eight fishermen come out of the sea with mother-of-pearl and branches of coral in their hands, and after a charming dance seat themselves each on a rock above one of the river gods. The music announces the advent of NEPTUNE, and while this god is dancing with his suite, the fishermen, Tritons, and river gods accompany his steps with various movements and the clattering of the pearl shells. The spectacle is a magnificent compliment paid by one of the princes to the princesses during their maritime excursion.

AEOLUS. Ye winds that cloud the fairest skies,
Retire within your darkest caves,
And leave the realm of waves
To Zephyr, Love, and sighs.

A TRITON. What lovely eyes these moist abodes have pierced?
Ye mighty Tritons, come; ye Nereids, hide.

ALL THE TRITONS. Then rise we all these deities fair to meet;
With softest strains and homage let us greet
Their beauty rare.

A CUPID. How dazzling are these ladies' charms!

ANOTHER CUPID. What heart but seeing them must yield?

ANOTHER CUPID. The fairest of th' Immortals—arms
So keen hath none to wield.

CHORUS. Then rise we all these deities fair to meet;
With softest strains and homage let us greet
Their beauty rare.

A TRITON. What would this noble train that meets our view?
'Tis Neptune! He and all his mighty crew!
He comes to honour, with his presence fair,
These lovely scenes, and charm the silent air.

CHORUS. Then strike again,
And raise your strain,
And let your homes around
With joyous songs resound!

NEPTUNE. I rank among the gods of greatest might;
'Tis Jove himself hath placed me on this height!
Alone, as king, I sway the azure wave;
In all this world there's none my power to brave.

**There are no lands on earth my might that know
But trembling dread that o'er their meads I flow;
No states, o'er which the boisterous waves I tread
In one short moment's space I cannot spread.**

**There's nought the raging billows' force can stay,
No triple dike, but e'en it easily
My waves can crush,
When rolls along their mass with wildest rush.**

The Magnificent Lovers

**And yet these billows fierce I force to yield,
Beneath the wisdom of the power I wield;
And everywhere I let the sailors bold
Where'er they list their trading courses hold.**

**Yet rocks sometimes are found within my states,
Where ships do perish, so doomed by fates;
Yet 'gainst my power none murmurs aye,
For Virtue knows no wreck where'er I sway.**

A SEA GOD. Within this realm are many treasures bright;
All mortals crowd its pleasant shores to view.
And would you climb of fame the dazzling height,
Then seek nought else, but Neptune's countenance sue.

SECOND SEA GOD. Then trust the god of this vast billowy realm,
And shielded from all storms, you'll guide the helm;
The waves would fain inconstant often be,
But ever constant Neptune you will see.

THIRD SEA GOD. Launch then with dauntless zeal, and plough the deep;
Thus shall you Neptune's kindly favour reap.

The Magnificent Lovers

ACT I.

SCENE I.—SOSTRATUS, CLITIDAS.

CLI. (*aside*). He is buried in thought.

SOS. (*believing himself alone*). No, Sostratus, I do not see where you can look for help, and your troubles are of a kind to leave you no hope.

CLI. (*aside*). He is talking to himself.

SOS. (*believing himself alone*). Alas!

CLI. These sighs must mean something, and my surmise will prove correct.

SOS. (*believing himself alone*). Upon what fancies can you build any hope? And what else can you expect but the protracted length of a miserable existence, and sorrow to end only with life itself.

CLI. (*aside*). His head is more perplexed than mine.

SOS. (*believing himself alone*). My heart! my heart! to what have you brought me?

CLI. Your servant, my Lord Sostratus!

SOS. Where are you going, Clitidas?

CLI. Rather tell me what you are doing here? And what secret melancholy, what gloomy sorrow, can keep you in these woods when all are gone in crowds to the magnificent festival which the Prince Iphicrates has just given upon the sea to the princesses. There they are treated to wonderful music and dancing, and even the rocks and the waves deck themselves with divinities to do homage to their beauty.

SOS. I can fancy all this magnificence, and as there are generally so many people to cause confusion at these festivals, I did not care to increase the number of unwelcome guests.

CLI. You know that your presence never spoils anything, and that you are never in the way wherever you go. Your face is welcome everywhere, and is not one of those ill-favoured countenances which are never well received by sovereigns. You are equally in favour with both princesses, and the mother and the daughter show plainly enough the regard they have for you; so that you need not fear to be accounted troublesome. In short, it was not this fear that kept you away.

SOS. I acknowledge that I have no inclination for such things.

CLI. Oh indeed! Yet, although we may not care to see things, we like to go where we find everybody else; and whatever you may say, people do not, during a festival, stop all alone among the trees to dream moodily as you do, unless they have something to disturb their minds.

SOS. Why? What do you think could disturb my mind?

CLI. Well, I can't say; but there is a strong scent of love about here, and I am sure it does not come from me, and it must come from you.

SOS. How absurd you are, Clitidas!

CLI. Not so absurd as you would make out. You are in love; I have a delicate nose, and I smelt it directly.

SOS. What can possibly make you think so?

CLI. What? I daresay you would be very much surprised if I were to tell you besides with whom you are in love.

SOS. I?

CLI. Yes; I wager that I will guess presently whom you love. I have some secrets, as well as our astrologer with whom the Princess Aristione is so infatuated; and if his science makes him read in the stars the fate of men, I have the science of reading in the eyes of people the names of those they love. Hold up your head a little, and open your eyes wide. *E*, by itself, *E*; *r*, *i*, *ri*, *Eri*; *p*, *h*, *y*, *phy*, *Eriphy*; *l*, *e*, *le*, *Eriphyle*. You are in love with the Princess Eriphyle.

SOS. Ah! Clitidas, I cannot conceal my trouble from you, and you crush me with this blow.

CLI. You see how clever I am!

SOS. Alas! if anything has revealed to you the secret of my heart, I beseech you to tell it to no one; and, above all things, to keep it secret from the fair princess whose name you have just mentioned.

CLI. But, to speak seriously, if for awhile I have read in your actions the love you wish to keep secret, do you think that the Princess Eriphyle has been blind enough not to see it? Believe me, ladies are always very quick to

The Magnificent Lovers

discover the love they inspire, and the language of the eyes and of sighs is understood by those to whom it is addressed sooner than by anybody else.

SOS. Leave her, Clitidas, leave her to read, if she can, in my sighs and looks the love with which her beauty has inspired me; but let us be careful not to let her find it out in any other way.

CLI. And what is it you dread? Is it possible that this same Sostratus, who feared neither Brennus nor all the Gauls, and whose arm has been so gloriously successful in ridding us of that swarm of barbarians which ravaged Greece; is it possible, I say, that a man so dauntless in war should be so fearful as to tremble at the very mention of his being in love?

SOS. Ah! Clitidas, I do not tremble without a cause; and all the Gauls in the world would seem to me less to be feared than those two beautiful eyes full of charms.

CLI. I am not of the same opinion, and I know, as far as I am concerned, that one single Gaul, sword in hand, would frighten me much more than fifty of the most beautiful eyes in the world put together. But, tell me, what do you intend to do?

SOS. To die without telling my love.

CLI. A fine prospect! Nonsense, you are joking; you know that a little boldness always succeeds with lovers; it is only the bashful and timid who are losers; and were I to fall in love with a goddess, I would tell her of my passion at once.

SOS. Alas! too many things condemn my love to an eternal silence.

CLI. But what?

SOS. The lowness of my birth, by which it pleased heaven to humble the ambition of my love; the princess's rank, which puts between her and my desires such an impassable barrier. The rivalry of two princes who can back the offer of their heart by the highest titles; two princes who offer the most magnificent entertainments by turn to her whose heart they strive to win, and between whom it is expected every moment that she will make a choice. Besides all this, Clitidas, there is the inviolable respect to which she subjugates the violence of my love.

CLI. Respect is not always as welcome as love; and if I am not greatly mistaken, the young princess knows of your affection, and is not insensible to it.

SOS. Ah! pray do not, out of pity, flatter the heart of a miserable lover.

CLI. I do not say it without good reasons. She is a long time postponing the choice of a husband, and I must try and discover a little more about all this. You know that I enjoy a kind of favour with her, that I have free access to her, and that, by dint of trying all kinds of ways, I have gained the privilege of saying a word now and then, and of speaking at random on any subject. Sometimes I do not succeed as I should like, but at others I succeed very well. Leave it to me, then; I am your friend, I love men of merit, and I will choose my time to speak to the princess of...

SOS. Oh! for heaven's sake, however much you may pity my misfortune, Clitidas, be careful not to tell her anything of my love. I had rather die than to be accused by her of the least temerity, and this deep respect in which her divine charms...

CLI. Hush! they are all Coming.

**SCENE II.—ARISTIONE, IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, SOSTRATUS
ANAXARCHUS, CLEON, CLITIDAS.**

ARI. (*to IPHICRATES*). Prince, I cannot say too much, there is no spectacle in the world which can vie in magnificence with this one you have just given us. This entertainment had wonderful attractions, which will make it surpass all that can ever be seen. We have witnessed something so noble, so grand and glorious that heaven itself could do no more; and I feel sure there is nothing in the world that could be compared to it.

TIM. This is a display that cannot be expected in all entertainments, and I greatly fear, Madam, for the simplicity of the little festival which I am preparing to give you in the wood of Diana.

ARI. I feel sure that we shall see nothing there but what is delightful; and we must acknowledge that the country ought to appear very beautiful to us, and that we have no time left for dullness in this charming place, which all poets have celebrated under the name of Tempe. For, not to mention the pleasures of hunting, which we can enjoy at any hour, and the solemnity of the Pythian Games which are about to be celebrated, you both take care to supply us with pleasures that would charm away the sorrows of the most melancholy. How is it, Sostratus, that we did not meet you in our walks?

SOS. A slight indisposition, Madam, prevented me from going there.

IPH. Sostratus is one of those men who think it unbecoming to be curious like others, and who esteem it better to affect not to go where everybody is anxious to be.

SOS. My Lord, affectation has little share in anything I do, and, without paying you a compliment, there were things to be seen in this festival which would have attracted me if some other motive had not hindered me.

ARI. And has Clitidas seen it all?

CLI. Yes, Madam, but from the shore.

ARI. And why from the shore?

CLI. Well, Madam, I feared one of those accidents which generally happen in such large crowds. Last night I dreamt of dead fish and broken eggs, and I have learnt from Anaxarchus that broken eggs and dead fish forebode ill luck.

ANA. I observe one thing, that Clitidas would have nothing to say if he did not speak of me.

CLI. It is because there are so many things that can be said of you that one can never say too much.

ANA. You might choose some other subject of conversation, particularly since I have asked you to do so.

CLI. How can I? Do you not say that destiny is stronger than everything? And if it is written in the stars that I shall speak of you, how can I resist my fate?

ANA. With all the respect due to you, Madam, allow me to say that there is one thing in your court which it is sad to find there. It is that everybody takes the liberty of talking, and that the most honourable man is exposed to the scoffing of the first buffoon he meets.

CLI. I thank you for the honour you do me.

ARI. (*to ANAXARCHUS*). Why be put out by what he says?

CLI. With all due respect to you, Madam, there is one thing which amazes me in astrology; it is that people who know the secrets of the gods, and who have such knowledge as to place themselves above all other men, should have need of paying court and of asking for anything.

ANA. This is a paltry joke, and you should earn your money by giving your mistress wittier and better ones.

CLI. Upon my word, I give what I have. You speak most comfortably about it; the trade of a buffoon is not like that of an astrologer. To tell lies well and to joke well are things altogether different, and it is far easier to deceive people than to make them laugh.

ARI. Ha! what is the meaning of that?

CLI. (*speaking to himself*). Peace, fool that you are! Do you not know that astrology is an affair of state, and that you must not play upon that string? I have often told you that you are getting a great deal too bold, and that you take certain liberties which will bring trouble upon you. You will see that some day you will be kicked out like a knave. Hold your peace if you be wise.

ARI. Where is my daughter?

The Magnificent Lovers

TIM. She is gone away, Madam. I offered her my arm, which she refused to accept.

ARI. Princes, since in your love for Eriphyle you have consented to submit to the laws I had imposed upon you, since it has been possible for me to obtain that you should be rivals without being enemies, and that, with a full submission to my daughter's feelings, you are waiting for her choice, speak to me openly and tell me what progress you each think you have made on her heart.

TIM. Madam, I do not mean to flatter myself; but I have done all that I possibly could to touch the heart of the Princess Eriphyle. I have neglected none of the tender means that a lover should adopt. I have offered her the humble homage of my great love, I have been assiduous near her, I have attended on her daily. I have had my love sung by the most touching voices, and expressed in verse by the most skilful pens. I have complained in passionate terms of my sufferings. My eyes, as well as my words, have told her of my despair and my love. I have laid my love at her feet; I have even had recourse to tears, but all in vain, and I have failed to see that in her soul she was in any way touched by my love.

ARI. And you, Prince?

IPH. For my part, Madam, knowing her indifference and the little value she sets upon the homage that is paid to her, I did not mean to waste either sighs or tears upon her. I know that she is entirely submissive to your wishes, and that it is from you alone that she will accept a husband; therefore it is to you alone that I can address my wishes for her hand, to you rather than to her that I offer my homage and my attentions. Would to heaven, Madam, that you could bring yourself to take her place, enjoy the conquests which you make for her, and receive for yourself the affections which you refer to her!

ARI. Prince, the compliment comes from a cunning lover. You have heard that the mothers must be flattered in order to obtain the daughters from them; but here however, this will be useless, for I have determined to, leave my daughter entirely free in her choice, and in no way to thwart her inclination.

IPH. However free you leave her in her choice, what I tell you is no flattery, Madam. I court the Princess Eriphyle only because she is your daughter, and I think her charming in that which she inherits from you; and it is you whom I adore in her.

ARI. That is very pretty.

IPH. Yes, Madam, all the earth beholds in you charms and attractions....

ARI. Ah! Prince, pray, let us leave those charms and attractions; you know that these are words I banish from the compliments that are paid to me. I can endure to be praised for my sincerity, to be called a good princess, for it is true that I have a kind word for everybody, love for my friends and esteem for merit and virtue; yes, I can enjoy all that; but as for your charms and attractions, I had rather have nothing to do with them, and whatever truth there may be in them, one should make a scruple of wishing to be praised when one is mother to a daughter like mine.

IPH. Ah! Madam. It is you only who will remind everyone that you are a mother; everybody's feelings are against it, and it depends entirely on yourself to pass for the sister of the Princess Eriphyle.

ARI. Believe me, Prince, I have no relish for all this idle nonsense, so welcome to too many women, I wish to be a mother, because I am one, and it would be in vain to wish to be otherwise. This title has nothing that wounds me, since I received it by my own consent. It is a weakness in our sex, from which, thank heaven! I am free, and I do not trouble myself about those grand discussions concerning ages about which there is so much folly. Let us resume what we were saying. Is it possible that until now you have been unable to discover my daughter's feelings?

IPH. They are a secret to me.

TIM. And to me an impenetrable mystery.

ARI. She may be prevented by modesty from explaining herself either to you or to me. Let us make use of another to try and discover what she feels. Sostratus, take this message upon yourself for me, and oblige these princes by skilfully trying to discover towards which of the two my daughter's feeling are inclined.

SOS. Madam, you have a great many people in your court who are better qualified than I for such a delicate mission, and I feel little fit to do what you ask of me.

ARI. Your merit, Sostratus, is not confined to the business of war only. You have brain, tact, and skill, and my daughter greatly esteems you.

SOS. Another better than I, Madam....

SCENE II.—ARISTIONE, IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, SOSTRATUS ANAXARCHUS, CLEON, CLITIDÆS.

The Magnificent Lovers

ARI. No, no, in vain you excuse yourself.

SOS. Since it is your wish, Madam, I must obey; but I assure you that there is not one person in the whole of your court who would be less qualified for such a commission than myself.

ARI. You are too modest, and you will always acquit yourself well in whatever is entrusted to you. Sound my daughter gently on her feelings, and remind her that she must be early at the wood of Diana.

SCENE III.—IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, SOSTRATUS, CLITIDAS.

IPH. (*to SOSTRATUS*). I assure you that I rejoice to see you held in such esteem by the princess.

TIM. (*to SOSTRATUS*). I assure you that I am delighted that the choice should have fallen on you.

IPH. You have it now in your power to serve your friends.

TIM. You will be able to do good service to those you esteem.

IPH. I do not commend my interests to you.

TIM. I do not ask you to speak for me.

SOS. My Lords, all this is useless. I should be wrong to exceed my orders, and you will excuse me if I speak for neither.

IPH. I leave it to you to do as you please.

TIM. Do exactly as you think best.

SCENE IV.—IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, CLITIDAS.

IPH. (*aside to CLITIDAS*). Well, Clitidas, remember that he is one of my friends. I hope he will still forward my interests with the princess against those of my rival.

CLI. (*aside to IPHICRATES*). You may trust me. There is a great difference between you and him. He is a fine prince, indeed, to dispute it with you.

IPH. (*aside to CLITIDAS*). I will not forget such a service.

SCENE V.—TIMOCLES, CLITIDAS.

TIM. My rival pays his court to Clitidas; but Clitidas knows that he has promised to help me in my love against him.

CLI. Certainly. How very absurd to think of carrying the day against you. A fine gentleman, indeed, to be compared with you!

TIM. There is nothing I could not do for Clitidas.

CLI. (*alone*). Plenty of fine words on all sides! But here is the princess; we will take our opportunity to speak to her.

SCENE VI.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE.

CLEON. It will be thought strange, Madam, that you should keep away from everybody.

ERI. Ah! to persons like us, always surrounded by so many indifferent people, how pleasant is solitude! How sweet to be left alone to commune with one's thoughts when one has had to bear with so much trifling conversation. Leave me alone to walk a few moments by myself.

CLEON. Would you not like for a moment to see what those wonderful people, who are desirous of serving you, can do? It seems by their steps and gestures they can express everything to the eye. They are called pantomimists. I feared to pronounce that word before you, and there are some in your court who would not forgive me for using it.

ERI. You seem to me to propose some strange entertainment; for you never fail to introduce indifferently all that presents itself to you, and you have a kind welcome for everything. Therefore to you alone do we see all necessitous Muses have recourse. You are the great patroness of all merit in distress, and all virtuous indigents knock at your door.

CLEON. If you do not care to see them, Madam, you have only to say so.

ERI. No, no; let us see them. Bring them here.

CLEON. But, Madam, their dancing may be bad.

ERI. Bad or not, let us see it. It would only be putting off the thing with you. It is just as well to have it over.

CLEON. To-day it will only be an ordinary dance, Madam. Another time....

ERI. No more about it, Cleonice. Let them dance.

SECOND INTERLUDE.

The confidante of the young PRINCESS calls forth three dancers under the name of pantomimists; that is, men who express all sorts of things by their movements. The PRINCESS sees them dance, and receives them into her service.

The Magnificent Lovers

ACT II.

The Magnificent Lovers

SCENE I.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE.

ERI. This is admirable! I do not think any dancing could ever be better; and I am glad to have them belonging to me.

CLEON. And I am very glad, Madam, for you to see that my taste is not so bad as you thought.

ERI. Do not be so triumphant. You won't be long before giving me my revenge. Leave me alone here.

The Magnificent Lovers

SCENE II.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE, CLITIDAS.

CLEON. (*going to meet CLITIDAS*). I warn you, Clitidas, that the princess wishes to be alone.

CLI. Leave that to me. I understand court etiquette.

SCENE III.—ERIPHYLE, CLITIDAS.

CLI. (*singing*). La, la, la, la. (*Affecting surprise on seeing ERIPHYLE.*) Ah!

ERI. (*to CLITIDAS, who affects to go away*). Clitidas!

CLI. I did not see, you, Madam.

ERI. Come near. Where have you been?

CLI. With the princess your mother, who was just going towards the temple of Apollo, accompanied by a great many people.

ERI. Do you not think this one of the most charming places in the world?

CLI. Certainly. The two princes, your lovers, were there.

ERI. The river Peneus has here the most charming windings.

CLI. Very charming. Sostratus was there also.

ERI. How is it that he was not with us to-day?

CLI. He has something on his mind which prevents him from taking any pleasure in all those beautiful entertainments. He wanted to tell me something; but you have so expressly forbidden me to intercede for any one to you that I would not hear him, and I told him flatly that I had no leisure.

ERI. You were wrong to say such a thing to him, and you ought to have heard him.

CLI. I told him at first that I was not at leisure to hear him; but afterwards I listened to what he had to say.

ERI. You did well.

CLI. In fact, he is a man after my own heart; a man with all the manners and qualities I should like to see in all men. He never assumes boisterous manners and provoking tones of voice, but is prudent and careful in everything. He never speaks but to the point, is never hasty in his decisions, is never annoying by his exaggerations. However fine may be the verses our poets repeat to him, I have never heard him say, "This is more beautiful than anything that Homer ever wrote." In short, he is a man to my taste; and if I were a princess, I would not see him unhappy.

ERI. He is evidently a man of great merit; but what had he to say to you?

CLI. He asked me if you were very pleased with the royal entertainments that are offered to you. He spoke of your person with the greatest transports of delight, extolled you to the sky, and gave you all the praises that could be given to the most accomplished princess in the world, and with all this uttering many sighs which told me more than he thought. At last, by dint of questioning him in all kinds of ways, and pressing him to tell me the cause of his melancholy, which is noticed by everyone at court, he was forced to acknowledge that he is in love.

ERI. How, in love? What boldness is this? I will never see him again.

CLI. What are you offended at, Madam?

ERI. To be audacious enough to love me, and, moreover, to dare to say it!

CLI. It is not with you he is in love, Madam.

ERI. Not with me?

CLI. No; he has too much respect for you, and he is too wise to do such a thing.

ERI. With whom, then, Clitidas?

CLI. With one of your maids-of-honour, the young Arsinoe.

ERI. Is she so very beautiful that he can think none but her worthy of his love?

CLI. He loves her to distraction, and entreats you to honour his love with your protection.

ERI. Me!

CLI. No, no, Madam; I see that this offends you. Your anger forced me to make use of this subterfuge; and, to tell you the truth, it is you he loves to distraction.

ERI. You are an insolent knave to come thus to sound my feelings. Out of my sight this moment! Do you pretend to read people's thoughts and penetrate into the secrets of a princess's heart? Away with you; let me never see your face again.... Clitidas!

CLI. Madam.

ERI. Come here. I forgive you this affair.

The Magnificent Lovers

CLI. You are too kind, Madam.

ERI. But on condition—mind what I say—that you will never mention it to anybody, at the peril of your life.

CLI. Enough.

ERI. Then Sostratus told you that he loved me?

CLI. No, Madam; I must now tell you the whole truth. I got from him by surprise a secret he intended to conceal from all the world, and which he said he would wish to die with him. He was in despair when I wrenched it with subtlety from him; and, far from asking me to tell you of it, he entreated me with the most earnest prayers never to reveal anything to you; and I have committed a piece of treachery against him by telling you what I have said.

ERI. I am glad of it. It is by his respect only that he can please me; and if he were bold enough to tell me of his love, he would forfeit for ever both my presence and my esteem.

CLI. Do not fear, Madam....

ERI. Here he is. Remember, if you are wise, what I have forbidden you.

CLI. Certainly, Madam; I have no wish to be an indiscreet courtier.

SCENE IV.—ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS.

SOS. I have an excuse, Madam, for daring to disturb your solitude. I have received from the princess your mother a mission which authorises the bold step I now take.

ERI. What mission is it, Sostratus?

SOS. To try, to learn from you, Madam, towards which of the two princes your heart inclines?

ERI. The princess my mother shows a judicious spirit in choosing you for such a message. This mission is very pleasant to you, no doubt, Sostratus, and you must have accepted it with great joy?

SOS. I have accepted it, Madam, because my duty obliges me to obey; and if the princess had kindly listened to my excuses, she would have appointed another for the task.

ERI. What reason could you have had, Sostratus, for refusing it?

SOS. The fear of not acquitting myself well.

ERI. Do you think that I have not enough esteem for you to open my heart to you, and say all you wish to know from me about the two princes?

SOS. As far as I am concerned, Madam, I have no desire to know anything; I only ask you what you think you can say in answer to the commands which bring me here.

ERI. Until now I have had no wish to explain myself, and the princess my mother has kindly allowed me to put off the choice which is to bind me. But I should be glad to show to everyone that I am willing to do something for your sake; and if you insist, I may give you this long expected verdict.

SOS. I will not importune you, Madam, and urge a princess who knows well what she has to do.

ERI. Yet it is what the princess my mother expects from you.

SOS. I told her that I was sure to acquit myself but badly of my message.

ERI. Well, tell me, Sostratus; you have far-seeing eyes, and I believe that there are few things that escape you. Have you not been able to discover what everybody is anxious to know? Have you no idea of the inclination of my heart? You see all the attentions that are bestowed on me, all the homage that is paid to me. Which of these two princes do you think I look upon with a most favourable eye?

SOS. The conjectures we make upon such matters generally arise from the greater or less interest we take.

ERI. Which would you prefer of the two, Sostratus? Tell me which one you would have me marry?

SOS. Ah! Madam! your inclination, not my wishes, must decide the matter.

ERI. But if I wished to consult you in this choice?

SOS. If you were to consult me, I should feel very much perplexed.

ERI. You could not tell me which of the two you think most worthy of preference?

SOS. If I were to be judge, I should find no one worthy of that honour. All the princes of the world would be too mean to aspire to you; the gods alone can pretend to you, and you would have from men but incense and sacrifice.

ERI. This is very kind, and I esteem you my friend. But I must have you tell me for which of the two you feel the greatest inclination, and which is the one you reckon your friend?

SCENE V.—ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS, CHOROEBUS.

CHO. Madam, the princess is coming to fetch you to go to the wood of Diana.

SOS. (*aside*). Alas! how seasonably you came in.

The Magnificent Lovers

**SCENE VI.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE, IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES,
SOSTRATUS, ANAXARCHUS, CLITIDAS.**

ARI. You are asked for, my daughter, and there are some who are much pained by your absence.

ERI. I Should think, Madam, that they only asked after me out of compliment, and that no one is as pained as you say.

ARI. There are so many entertainments made for your sake that all our time is taken up, and we have not a moment to lose if we wish to see them all. Let us enter the wood at once, and see what awaits us there. This is the most beautiful place in the world. Let us take our seats quickly.

THIRD INTERLUDE.

The stage represents a forest where the PRINCESS has been invited to go. A Nymph does the honours, singing; and to amuse the PRINCESS, a small musical comedy is played, the subject of which is as follows:—A shepherd complains to two other shepherds, his friends, of the coldness of her whom he loves; the two friends comfort him; at that moment the beloved shepherdess appears, and all three retire to observe her. After a plaintive love-song, she reclines on the turf, and gives way to sweet slumber. The lover makes his two friends approach to contemplate the beauty of his shepherdess, and invokes everything to contribute to her rest. The shepherdess, on waking up, sees her swain at her feet, complains of his persecution; but taking his constancy into consideration, she grants him his wish, and consents to be loved by him, in the presence of his two friends. The Satyrs arrive, upbraid her with her change, and, distressed by the disgrace into which they have fallen, look for comfort in wine.

CLIMENE, PHILINTE.

PHILINTE. There was a time I pleased you well, Content I lived, and loved the spell; I had not changed for god or throne The sway o'er you I held alone.

CLIMENE. So, when by gentle passion swayed, You held me dear above all maid, The regal crown I would have spurned If for me still your heart had burned.

PHILINTE. Another's faith hath cured the wound I nursed for you within my breast.

CLIMENE. Another's love for me hath found Revenge I sought, and kindly rest.

PHILINTE. Chloris the fair true passion sways, For me she pours her soul in sighs, And I would gladly close my days If so should bid her beauteous eyes.

CLIMENE. Myrtil, of youthful hearts the flower, He loves me true e'en more than light; And I, to prove love's mighty power, Content, would pass to endless night.

PHILINTE. But if our passion's gentle ray A lingering spark would kindle anew, And from my heart expel to-day Chloris the fair, thy love to sue?

CLIMENE. Though Myrtil loves me true, Though constant e'er to sigh, Still, I confess, with you I'd gladly live and die.

BOTH (together). 'Midst love then more than ever let us fleet The lingering hours, and own a bond so sweet.

BALLET, DIVERTISSEMENT, ETC.

ACT III.

ARISTIONE, IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES, ERIPHYLE, ANAXARCHUS, SOSTRATUS, CLITIDAS.

ARI. We must always repeat the same words. We have always to exclaim: This is admirable! Wonderful! It is beyond all that has ever been seen.

TIM. You bestow too much praise on these trifles, Madam.

ARI. Such trifles may agreeably engage the thoughts of the most serious people. Indeed, my daughter, you have cause to be thankful to these princes, and you can never repay all the trouble they take for you.

ERI. I am deeply grateful for it, Madam.

ARI. And yet you make them languish a long time for what they expect from you. I have promised not to constrain you; but their love claims from you a declaration that you should not put off any longer the reward of their attentions. I had asked Sostratus to sound your heart, but I do not know if he has begun to acquit himself of his commission.

ERI. Yes, Madam, he has. But it seems to me that I cannot put off too long the decision which is asked of me, and that I could not give it without incurring some blame. I feel equally thankful for the love, attentions, and homage of these two princes, and I think it a great injustice to show myself ungrateful either to the one or to the other by the refusal I must make of one in preference to his rival.

IPH. We should call this, Madam, a very pretty way of refusing us both.

ARI. This scruple, daughter, should not stop you; and those two princes have both long since agreed to submit to the preference you show.

ERI. Our inclinations easily deceive us, Madam, and disinterested hearts are more able to make a right choice.

ARI. You know that I have engaged my word to give no opinion upon this matter, and you cannot make a bad choice when you have to choose between these two princes.

ERI. In order not to do violence either to your promise or to my scruples, Madam, pray agree to what I shall propose.

ARI. And what is that, my daughter?

ERI. I should like Sostratus to decide for me. You chose him to try to discover the secret of my heart; suffer me to choose him to end the perplexity I am in.

ARI. I have such a high regard for Sostratus that, whether you mean to employ him to explain your feelings or to leave him entirely to decide for you, I consent heartily to this proposition.

IPH. Which means, Madam, that we must pay our court to Sostratus.

SOS. No, my Lord, you will have no court to pay to me; and with all the respect due to the princesses, I refuse the glory to which they would raise me.

ARI. How is that, Sostratus?

SOS. I have reasons, Madam, which do not allow me to accept the honour you would do me.

IPH. Are you afraid, Sostratus, of making yourself an enemy?

SOS. I should have but little fear for the enemies I might make in obeying the will of my sovereigns.

TIM. Why, then, do you refuse to accept the power which is entrusted to you, and to acquire to yourself the friendship of a prince who would owe all his happiness to you?

SOS. Because it is not in my power to grant to that prince what he would wish from me.

IPH. What reason can you have?

SOS. Why should you so insist upon this? Perhaps I may have, my Lord, some secret interest opposed to the pretensions of your love. Perhaps I may have a friend who burns with a respectful flame for the divine charms with which you are in love. Perhaps that friend makes me the daily confidant of his sufferings, that he complains to me of the rigour of his fate, and is looking upon the marriage of the princess as the dreadful sentence which is to send him to his grave. Supposing it were so, my Lord, would it be right that he should receive his death-wound from my hands?

IPH. You seem to me, Sostratus, very likely to be that friend whose interests you have so much at heart.

SOS. I beg of you, my Lord, not to render me odious to those persons who hear you. I know what I am, and

The Magnificent Lovers

unfortunate people like me are not ignorant of the limits which fortune assigned to their desires.

ARI. Let us drop this subject; we will find means for overcoming my daughter's irresolution.

ANA. Are there better means of arriving at a conclusion that would satisfy everybody than to consult the light which heaven can give us on that marriage? I have already begun, as I told you, to cast the mysterious figures which our art teaches us; and I hope soon to be able to show you what the future has in reserve regarding this longed for union. After that, who can still hesitate? Will not the glory or the prosperity which will be promised to one or the other be choice sufficient to decide it, and can he who is rejected be offended when heaven itself decides who is to be preferred?

IPH. For my part, I submit to it altogether, and I declare that this way seems the most reasonable.

TIM. I am entirely of the same opinion, and whatever heaven may decide, I yield to it without reluctance.

ERI. But, my Lord Anaxarchus, do you really read so clearly destiny that you can never be deceived? And pray, who will give us security for this prosperity, this glory which you say heaven promises us?

ARI. My daughter, you have a little incredulity which never leaves you.

ANA. The proofs, Madam, which everybody has seen, of the infallibility of my predictions are sufficient security for the promises I make. But, in short, when I have shown you what heaven has in reserve for you, you may act as you please, and choose one or the other destiny.

ERI. Heaven, you say, Anaxarchus, will show me the good or bad destiny that is in reserve for me?

ANA. Yes, Madam; the felicity with which you will be blessed if you marry the one, and the misery that will accompany you if you marry the other.

ERI. But since it is impossible for me to marry them both at once, it seems that we find written in the heavens not only what is to happen, but also what is not to happen.

CLI. (*aside*). Here is a puzzler for our astrologer!

ANA. I should have to give you, Madam, a long dissertation on the principles of astrology to make you understand this.

CLI. Well answered. I have no harm, Madam, to say of astrology; astrology is a fine thing. My Lord Anaxarchus is a great man.

IPH. The truth of astrology is an incontestable fact, and no one can dispute the certainty of its predictions.

CLI. Certainly not.

TIM. I am incredulous enough in many things, but as regards astrology, there is nothing more sure or constant than the certainty of the horoscopes it draws.

CLI. The things are as clear as daylight.

IPH. A hundred accidents happen every day which convince the greatest unbelievers.

CLI. Quite true.

TIM. Who could contradict the many famous incidents which are related to us in books?

CLI. Only people devoid of common sense can do so; how can anything in print be doubted?

ARI. Sostratus has not said a word yet. What is your opinion about it?

SOS. Madam, all minds are not gifted with the necessary qualities which the delicacy of those fine sciences called abstruse require. There are some so material that they cannot conceive what others understand most easily. There is nothing more agreeable, Madam, than all the great promises of these sublime sciences. To transform everything into gold; to cause people to live for ever; to cure with words; to make ourselves loved by whomsoever we please; to know all the secrets of futurity; to bring down from heaven, according to one's will, on metals, impressions of happiness; to command demons, to raise invisible armies and invulnerable soldiers—all this is delightful, no doubt; and there are people who experience no difficulty whatever in believing all this to be possible; it is the easiest thing for them to conceive. But for me, I acknowledge that my coarse, gross mind can hardly understand and refuses to believe it; that, in fact, it thinks it all too good ever to be true. All those beautiful arguments of sympathy, magnetic power, and occult virtue, are so subtle and delicate that they escape my material understanding; and, without speaking of anything else, it has never been in my power to conceive how there is to be found in the heavens even the smallest particulars of the fortune of the least of men. What relation, what connection, what reciprocity, can there be between us and globes so immeasurably distant from our earth? And how, besides, can this sublime science have come to man? What god revealed it? or what experience can have been formed from the observation of that immense number of stars which have never as yet been seen twice in the

The Magnificent Lovers

same order?

ANA. It would not be hard to make you conceive it.

SOS. You would be more clever than all the others.

CLI. (*to SOSTRATUS*). He will deliver you a long discussion about all this whenever you please.

IPH. If you do not understand such things, you can at least believe what is seen every day.

SOS. As my understanding is so gross that I never could understand anything, my eyes also are unfortunate enough never to have witnessed anything relating to it.

IPH. For my part, I have seen things altogether convincing.

TIM. So have I.

SOS. Since you have seen, you do well to believe; and your eyes must be differently made from mine.

IPH. But, in short, the princess believes in astrology; and I think we may well, after her example, believe in it also. Would you say that Madam has not intelligence and sense, Sostratus?

SOS. My Lord, your question is rather unfair. The mind of the princess is no rule for mine, and her understanding may raise her to light, which I, in my meaner sense, cannot reach.

ARI. No, Sostratus; I shall say nothing to you about many things to which I give no more credence than you do; but as for astrology, I have been told and been shown things so positive that I cannot doubt them.

SOS. Madam, I have nothing to answer to that.

ARI. We will say no more about this; leave us a moment. We will, my daughter and myself, go towards that fine grotto where I have promised to go. Ha! something gallant at every step.

FOURTH INTERLUDE.

The stage represents a grotto, where the PRINCESSES go to take a walk. As they enter it, eight statues, each bearing two torches, come down from their recesses, and execute a varied dance of different figures and several fine attitudes in which they place themselves at intervals.

BALLET.

The Magnificent Lovers

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE.

ARI. Nothing can be more gallant or better contrived. My daughter, I wished to come alone here with you, so that we may have a little quiet talk together; and I hope that you will in nothing hide the truth from me. Have you in your heart no secret inclination which you are unwilling to reveal to me?

ERI. I, Madam?

ARI. Speak openly, daughter; what I have done for you well deserves that you should be frank and open with me. To make you the sole object of all my thoughts, to prefer you above all things, to shut my ears, in the position I am in, to all the propositions that a hundred princesses might decently listen to in my place—all that ought to tell you that I am a kind mother, and that I am not likely to receive with severity the confidences your heart may have to make.

ERI. If I had so badly followed your example as to have allowed an inclination I had reason to conceal to enter my soul, I should have power enough over myself to impose silence on such a love, and to do nothing unworthy of your name.

ARI. No, no, daughter; I had rather you laid bare your feelings to me. I have not limited your choice to the two princes; you may extend it to whomsoever you please; merit stands so high in my estimation that I think it equal to any rank; and if you tell me frankly how things are, you will see me subscribe without repugnance to the choice you have made.

ERI. You are so kind and indulgent towards me that I can never be thankful enough for it; but I will not put your kindness to the test on such a subject, and all I ask of you is to allow me not to hurry a marriage about which I am not decided as yet.

ARI. Till now I have left everything to your decision; and the impatience of the princes your lovers.... But what means this noise? Ah! daughter, what spectacle is this? Some deity descends; it is the goddess Venus who seems about to speak to us.

**SCENE II.—VENUS (*in the air, accompanied by four CUPIDS*), ARISTIONE,
ERIPHYLE.**

VEN. (*to ARISTIONE*). Princess, in you shines a glorious example, which the immortals mean to recompense; and that you may have a son-in-law both great and happy, they will guide you in the choice you should make. They announce by my voice the great and glorious fame which will come to your house by this choice. Therefore, put an end to your perplexities, and give your daughter to him who shall save your life.

SCENE III.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE.

ARI. Daughter, the gods have imposed silence on all our arguments. After this, all we have to do is to wait for what they wish to give us; and we have distinctly heard what their will is. Let us go to the nearest temple to assure them of our obedience, and to render thanks to them for their goodness.

SCENE IV.—ANAXARCHUS, CLEON.

CLE. The princess is going away; do you not want to speak to her?

ANA. No; let us wait until her daughter has left her. I am afraid of her; she will never suffer herself to be led like her mother. In short, my son, as we have just been able to judge through this opening, our stratagem has succeeded. Our Venus has done wonders, and the admirable engineer, who has contrived this piece of machinery, has so well disposed everything, so cunningly cut the floor of his grotto, so well hid his wires and springs, so well adjusted his lights, and dressed his personages, that but few people could have escaped being deceived; and as the Princess Aristione is extremely superstitious, there is no, doubt that she fully believes in this piece of deception. I have been a long time preparing this machine, my son, and now I have almost reached the goal of my ambition.

CLE. But for which of the two princes have you invented this trick?

ANA. Both have courted my assistance, and I have promised to both the influence of my art. But the presents of Prince Iphicrates, and the promises which he has made, by far exceed all that the other could do. Therefore, it is Iphicrates who will profit by all I can invent, and as his ambition will owe everything to me, our future is sure. I will go and take my time to confirm the princess in her error, and, the better to prepossess her mind, skilfully show her the agreement of the words of Venus with the predictions of the celestial signs which I told her I have cast. Be it your part to go and get our six men to hide themselves carefully in their boat behind the rock, and make them wait quietly for the time when the princess comes alone in the evening for her usual walk. Then they must suddenly attack her like pirates, in order to give the opportunity to Prince Iphicrates to rush to her rescue, and lend her the help which is to put Eriphyle in his hands according to the words of Venus. I have forewarned the prince, and, acting on the belief in my prediction, he is to hold himself in readiness in that little wood that skirts the shore. But let us leave this grotto. I will tell you as we go along all that is necessary for you carefully to observe. Here is the Princess Eriphyle; let us avoid her.

SCENE V.—ERIPHYLE (*alone*).

Alas! how hard is my destiny! What have I done to the gods that they should interest themselves in what happens to me?

SCENE VI.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE.

CLEON. Here he is, Madam; he followed me the moment he heard your commands.

ERI. Let him come hither, Cleonice, and leave us alone for one moment.

SCENE VII.—ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS.

ERI. Sostratus, you love me.

SOS. I, Madam?

ERI. Yes, Sostratus, I know it, I approve of it, and allow you to tell me so. Your love appeared to me accompanied by all the merit which could render it valuable to me. Were it not for the rank in which heaven has placed me, I might tell you that your love would not have been an unhappy one, and I have often wished for a position in which I might fully show the secret feelings of my heart. It is not, Sostratus, that merit fails to have for me all the value which it should have, and because, in my inmost soul, I do not prefer the virtues which you possess to all the magnificent titles which adorn others. The princess my mother has also, it is true, left me free in my choice, and I have no doubt that I could have obtained her consent according to my wish. But, Sostratus, there are stations in life where it is not right to wish that what pleases us should come to pass. It is painful to be above all others, and the burning light of fame often makes us pay too severely for having yielded to our inclination. I never could, therefore, expose myself to it, and I thought I would simply put off the bonds I was solicited to enter. But, at last, the gods themselves will give me a husband, and all these long delays with which I have postponed my marriage, and which the kindness of the princess my mother made possible, are no longer permitted to me. I must resign myself to the will of heaven. You may rest assured, Sostratus, that it is with the greatest repugnance that I consent to this marriage, and that, were I mistress of myself, either I should have been yours or should have belonged to no one. This is, Sostratus, what I had to tell you; what I felt I owed to your merit, and the only consolation which my tenderness can show to your love.

SOS. Ah! Madam, it is too much for one so undeserving as I am! I was not prepared to die with such glory, and from this moment I shall cease to complain of my destiny. If it caused me to be born in a rank below what I could have desired, it has made me to be born happy enough to attract some pity from the heart of a great princess, and this glorious pity is worth sceptres and crowns; is worth the power of the greatest princes of the earth. Yes, Madam, from the moment I dared to love you—it is you, Madam, who allow me to use this bold word—from the moment I dared to love you, I condemned the pride of my aspirations, and determined upon the fate I ought to expect. Death will not surprise me, for I am prepared for it, but your kindness has thrown upon it an honour which my love never dared to hope; I shall now die the happiest and most fortunate of men. If I may yet hope for anything, I on my knees will ask two favours of you: to be willing to endure my presence till that happy marriage which is to put an end to my life takes place; and amidst the glory and long prosperities which heaven promises to your union, to remember sometimes Sostratus, who loved you. May I hope for those favours, O divine princess?

ERI. Go, Sostratus; leave me. You little care for my peace of mind if you ask me to remember you.

SOS. Ah, Madam, if your peace of mind....

ERI. Leave me, Sostratus; spare my weakness; do not expose me to do more than I have resolved upon.

SCENE VIII.—ERIPHYLE, CLEONICE.

CLE. Madam, I see you quite melancholy; will you allow your dancers, who express so well all the passions of the soul, to come and give you a sample of their skill?

ERI. Yes, Cleonice; let them do what they like, provided they leave me to my thoughts.

FIFTH INTERLUDE.

Four pantomimists, as a sample of their skill, adapt their movements and steps to the signs of uneasiness of the young PRINCESS ERIPHYLE.

BALLET.

The Magnificent Lovers

ACT V.

SCENE I.—ERIPHYLE, CLITIDAS.

CLI. Where shall I go? which way shall I turn? Where am I likely to find the Princess Eriphyle? It is no small pleasure to be the first to bring news. Ah! here she is! Madam, I come to tell you that heaven has just now given you the husband it reserved for you.

ERI. Alas! leave me, Clitidas, to my gloomy sorrow.

CLI. Madam, I beg your pardon, I thought I did well to come and tell you that heaven has given you Sostratus for a husband; but, since it is unpleasant to you, I will pocket my news, and go back just as I came.

ERI. Clitidas! I say, Clitidas!

CLI. I leave you, Madam, to your gloomy melancholy.

ERI. Stay, I tell you; come here. What is it you say?

CLI. Nothing, Madam. One is sometimes too hasty in coming to tell great people things they don't care about, and I pray you to excuse me.

ERI. How cruel you are!

CLI. Another time I will take care not to come and interrupt you.

ERI. Keep me no longer in suspense; say what it is you came to tell me.

CLI. An insignificant thing about Sostratus, Madam, which I will tell you another time when you are less engaged.

ERI. Keep me no longer in suspense, and tell me the news.

CLI. You wish to know it, Madam?

ERI. Yes, be quick. What is it about Sostratus?

CLI. A wonderful adventure which nobody expected.

ERI. Tell it me at once.

CLI. Will it not trouble you, Madam, in your gloomy melancholy?

ERI. Ah! Speak, I say.

CLI. I must tell you, then, Madam, that the princess your mother was going almost alone through the forest by those little paths which are so pleasant, when a frightful boar—those ugly boars are always doing mischief, and should be banished from civilised forests—when a hideous boar, I say, driven to bay, I believe, by some huntsmen, came right across the path where we were. I ought, perhaps, to adorn my account with an elaborate description of this said boar; but you must try and do without it, if you please, and be satisfied to know that it was a terribly ugly brute. It was going on its way, and it would have been as well not to disturb it; but the princess wished to show her skill, and with her dart, which, if I may say so, she launched somewhat unseasonably, inflicted a slight wound just above the ear. The ill-bred boar turned impertinently upon us. We were then two or three wretches who became pale with fright; each gained his tree, and the princess was left alone, exposed to the fury of the beast, when Sostratus appeared, just in time, as if the very gods had sent him.

ERI. And so, Clitidas?

CLI. If this account wearies you, Madam, I can put off the remainder for another occasion.

ERI. End it quickly.

CLI. It is, indeed, quickly that I shall end, for a grain of cowardice prevented me from seeing the details of the struggle, and all that I can tell you is that, when we came back to the spot, we found the boar dead and bleeding, and the princess full of joy, and proclaiming Sostratus her deliverer and your husband, according to the words spoken by the gods. When I heard this, I did not stop to hear any more, and I ran in search of you to bring you this piece of news.

ERI. Ah! Clitidas, you could never have given me a more welcome one.

CLI. Oh! here they are coming to find you.

SCENE II.—ARISTIONE, SOSTRATUS, ERIPHYLE, CLITIDAS.

ARI. I perceive, my daughter, that you already know everything which we are coming to tell you. You see that the gods have explained themselves sooner than we expected. The danger I have just run has told us what their will is, and it is easy to see that the choice comes from them, since merit alone shines in the selection they have made. Will it be repugnant to you to recompense with the gift of your heart the one to whom I owe my life, and will you refuse to accept Sostratus for your husband?

ERI. Both from the hands of the gods and from yours, Madam, I could receive no gift that would be disagreeable to me.

SOS. Is not this a glorious dream with which the gods wish to flatter me? Am I not to expect some dreadful awakenings which will plunge me back into all the baseness of my former fortune?

SCENE III.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE, SOSTRATUS, CLEONICE, CLITIDAS.

CLEON. Madam, I am come to tell you that Anaxarchus had till now deceived both the princes, with the hope of favouring the choice upon which their souls were bent; and that, hearing what has taken place, they have both given way to their resentment against him, and things growing worse, he has received several wounds, from which it is impossible to say what may happen. But here they are both coming.

**SCENE IV.—ARISTIONE, ERIPHYLE, IPHICRATES, TIMOCLES,
SOSTRATUS, CLEONICE, CLITIDAS.**

ARI. Princes, you are very quick in avenging yourselves; if Anaxarchus offended you, I was here to do you justice.

IPH. And what justice can you have done us, Madam, when you do so little to our rank in the choice you have made?

ARI. Had you not both agreed to submit to what the order of the gods or my daughter's inclination might decide in this matter? and of what consequence can the interests of a rival be to you?

TIM. Yes, Madam; we were ready to submit to a choice between the Prince Iphicrates and myself, but not to find ourselves both repulsed. It were some consolation to see the choice fall on an equal, but your blindness is something terrible.

ARI. Prince, I have no wish to fall out with one who has had the kindness to praise me so much; and I beg of you, in all sincerity, to base your sorrow upon better foundation. Try and remember, I pray, that Sostratus' merit is known throughout Greece, and that by the rank to which the gods raise him to-day the distance between you and him disappears.

IPH. Yes, we shall remember it, Madam. But, perhaps, you will be pleased also to remember that two insulted princes may be enemies to be feared.

TIM. You may not have long to enjoy the contempt in which you hold us.

ARI. I forgive all these threats for the sake of the sorrow of a love which thinks itself insulted; and we will none the less go and see the Pythian Games in all peace. Let us go at once, and let us crown by the glorious spectacle this wonderful day.

SIXTH INTERLUDE.

The scene represents a great hall in the form of an amphitheatre, with a grand open arcade at the farther end, above which is a tribune, closed by a curtain, and in the distance is seen an altar prepared for the sacrifice. Six men, dressed as if they were almost naked, each carrying an axe on his shoulder, like executioners of the sacrifice, enter by the portico, to the sound of violins, and are followed by two sacrificers who play, by a priestess, also playing, and by their suite.

BALLET AND DIVERTISSEMENT.