

LE MALADE IMAGINAIRE









MALADE IMAGINAIRE

A THREE-ACT COMEDY IN PROSE INTER-SPERSED WITH SONGS AND DANCES

BY

MOLIÈRE

EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND VOCABULARY BY

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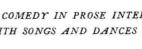


























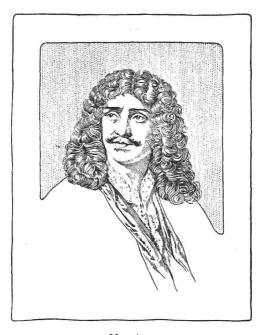




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Molière

DR. ALVIN ALLACE HUBBELL, M.D., Ph.D.

WHOSE LIBERAL MIND AND KEEN SENSE OF HUMOR
WILL APPRECIATE THIS SATIRE
UPON HIS CONFRÈRES OF FORMER TIMES
THE PRESENT EDITION IS DEDICATED
WITH AFFECTIONATE REGARD

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PREFACE

This edition of *le Malade imaginaire*, which is perhaps the most popular play of Molière (for it is very often produced at the Théâtre Français, and always at each anniversary of the author's birth), has been prepared with a view to its use in preparatory-school, as well as college and university, classes.

For this reason a vocabulary has been appended, which contains the words not only of the text, but of all the French citations given in either the Introduction or the notes.

The notes have been placed at the bottom of the pages, so as to save for both student and teacher the time that is usually wasted in turning to the back of the book. They contain few translations, modern idioms being explained for the most part in the vocabulary. The objection on the part of some teachers, therefore, that foot-notes often serve as an interlinear translation, does not hold in this case. Words and expressions that are quite different from those in use to-day have been given in their modern form in the foot-notes. This will keep the student from confounding obsolete expressions with those still in vogue.

The Introduction contains a brief biographical sketch of Molière, an essay upon his relations to the medical profession, and notes on the play itself. The information contained in the second division is of a kind that would be difficult for the ordinary teacher or student to find, as the authorities consulted are not in most libraries; and it is believed that this part will be found helpful to the understanding of Molière's motive in writing the play.

The text is that of the édition des Grands Écrivains 1 (vol. 9), which is based upon the edition of 1673 (Paris, Christophe Ballard) for the first prologue and the interludes, upon that of 1674 for the second prologue, and upon that of 1682 for the play. The punctuation of the original editions has been preserved, but the spelling and capitalization modernized. In one or two cases, where the reading of other editions has seemed more natural, it has been adopted. The edition of 1734 has been followed in the main for the stage directions and the division into scenes, as being clearer and as fulfilling more exactly the requirement of modern French usage.

In a few places, where the humor of the seventeenth century has seemed too coarse for the modern taste, slight omissions have been made. These omissions have been

¹ Whenever reference is made to this edition, the abbreviation éd. des G. É. is used throughout the book; and where reference is made to Molière's plays, if the edition is not mentioned, that of the Grands Écrivains is understood.

indicated by asterisks, as the editor does not consider it justifiable to present to the public a mutilated text as though whole. The liberty has been taken of changing the wording in one place, but the substitution is indicated by italics. The changes have been few in number, and in no way affect the interest or essential character of the play. As it now stands, it can be read in any class.

In conclusion, I have the pleasant duty of expressing my deep obligation to Mr. William Raleigh Price, head of the department of modern languages, East High School, Rochester, N.Y., and to Professor Othon Geepp Guerlac, of Cornell University, for their valuable suggestions and for the time that they have most generously given to this work.

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CORNELL UNIVERSITY, ITHACA, N.Y. November 15, 1904

INTRODUCTION

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF MOLIÈRE

On January 15, 1622, 1 according to the register of the parish of Saint-Eustache, in Paris, there was baptized an infant son of Jean Poquelin and Marie Cressé. The father was a bourgeois in good circumstances, an upholsterer, and later tapissier valet de chambre du roi. Of the mother little is known. She died in the month of May, 1632, when little Jean-Baptiste, her oldest child, was but ten years of age, leaving besides this son two younger boys and one girl. Two other children had died before their mother. One year after the death of his wife Jean Poquelin married again. His second wife, Catherine Fleurette, died November 12, 1636, some three years after her marriage, leaving two daughters.

Some writers, in default of more accurate information regarding the personality of the parents of Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, better known under the name of Molière, have ventured to find in his father the original of Harpagon and the various other uncongenial fathers of his plays; in his mother, the model of those simple housewives, busy with their needle and the oversight of servants, the representatives of common sense, whose virtues he extols in *les Femmes savantes*; and in his stepmother, the original of the

^{1 &}quot;It is probable that the record would have mentioned the day of his birth, if it had been other than the day of baptism." See éd. des G. É., vol. 10, p. 9.

unlovely Béline of *le Malade imaginaire*. Such speculations are as futile as they are ingenious. No authoritative record has come down to us regarding the traits of character of these persons, and we must not seek too often in an author's work allusions to events of his own life.

Molière received his early education in the collège de Clermont, which is to-day the lycée Louis-le-Grand, a school attended by the children of many rich and noble families. The Prince de Conti, though younger than Molière, is said to have been one of his fellow-students.

On leaving the collège de Clermont, Jean Poquelin, together with Chapelle, Bernier, J. Hesnault, and Cyrano de-Bergerac, came under the instruction of the Epicurean philosopher Gassendi, a man of temperate mind, independent views, profound scholarship, and genial philosophy. Gassendi, who was a great admirer of the Latin poet Lucretius, so fired with enthusiasm the young Poquelin that the youth undertook a translation of the poem *De Rerum Natura*, fragments of which have come down to us in *le Misanthrope*.

After leaving the instruction of Gassendi, whose influence upon his mind had been profound, Molière began the study of law at Orléans, where he took his degree of *licencié*. He was not destined to practice law, however. A far different career awaited him.

We do not know what first inspired him with a passion for the stage. It is said that his maternal grandfather, Louis Cressé, used to take him as a lad to the theater, and had much to do with turning his mind in that direction. Be that as it may, in 1643 we find him in company with Joseph Béjart and his sisters Geneviève and Madeleine at

the head of a theatrical company known as l'Illustre Thé âtre. It was at this time that he assumed the name Molière.

The hostility of the established theaters, l'Hôtel de Bourgogne and the Théâtre du Marais, was so intense that the Illustrious Theater, in spite of its pretentious name, after a vain attempt to gain the favor of the public, at first in the Jeu de paume du Métayer, near the Porte de Nesle, and then in the Jeu de paume de la Croix-Noire, was obliged to beat an inglorious retreat to the provinces. It had given its first representation in Paris on December 31, 1643; in 1646 it left the city, and did not again play before a Parisian audience until October 24, 1658.

Scholars have attempted to follow step by step the peregrinations of Molière's troupe through the provinces, but there are still many gaps in the record. "In 1647, he resides successively at Toulouse, Albi, Carcassonne; he is at Nantes in 1648. La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas and Monsieur de Pourceaugnac permit us to suppose that he went from there to Angoulême and to Limoges; no official document informs us of the exact date of his stay there. 1649 he sojourns at Toulouse and at Narbonne; in 1650, at Agen and at Pézenas. From 1651 to the end of 1657 he establishes his general headquarters at Lyon, which does not hinder him, however, from being absent half the year, from playing in 1653 in the neighborhood of Pézenas before the Prince de Conti, and at Montpellier; in 1655, at Avignon and at Pézenas; in 1656, at Narbonne and Béziers; in 1657, at Dijon, then at Avignon and again at Pézenas. Finally, in 1658, from Grenoble he goes to Rouen, and reaches the end of his Odyssey." 1

¹ Petit de Julleville, Hist. de la langue et de la litt. fr., vol. V, p. 5.

It was a life of many hardships; comforts and conveniences were few; and yet there must have been a certain charm about these wanderings, to so interested an observer of human nature as Molière. Many new and striking types were seen in journeying from town to town, and in his later comedies our author turned his observations to practical account. The legend that pictures Molière in a barbershop at Pézenas with his ears open to all the petty gossip of the place is probable enough to be accepted.

The management of a troupe like his, in addition to his duties as actor, left little time for writing. So, with the exception of some three or four farces and comedies, the whole bulk of Molière's literary treasures dates from his return to Paris. The value of his stay in the provinces, however, can hardly be overestimated. "Perhaps his characters would have had less relief, if he had not so carefully observed the complete and expressive types that provincial life affords," 1 suggests M. Le Breton.

Upon his return to Paris, Molière had the honor of playing for the first time before Louis XIV and his court, in the palace of the Louvre. At the conclusion of the play, Corneille's Nicomède, "Molière came forward upon the stage, and, after having thanked his Majesty in very modest terms, said that since the king had been kind enough to endure their country manners, he very humbly begged to be allowed to present one of those little plays that had secured for him a certain reputation, and with which he had amused the provinces. This compliment was so agreeably turned and so favorably received that the

¹ Petit de Julleville, ibid., p. 7.

whole court applauded it, and even more the little comedy, which was that of the *Docteur amoureux*." ¹

Their success was so conspicuous that in addition to the title of comédiens de Monsieur, which the troupe had been allowed to assume under the patronage of the king's brother, they were further honored by the king himself with permission to install themselves in the Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon. Here Molière presented his famous Précieuses ridicules, and here his troupe remained until 1661, when they received permission to occupy permanently the great hall of the Palais-Royal, built by Cardinal Richelieu as the scene of his own dramatic efforts. The Maison de Molière, as it came to be called, witnessed many triumphs and some failures in the succeeding years, and, on February 17, 1673, the sad end of the great French comique, who while playing le Malade imaginaire was seized with hemorrhage of the lungs, and breathed his last in his home in a neighboring street.

Mention must be made of the unhappy marriage which Molière contracted in 1662 with Armande Béjart, a younger sister, or daughter, of Madeleine Béjart, and like her an actress in his troupe. He was then forty years of age. Armande was much younger, and of a coquettish nature. The pangs of jealousy, together with the sufferings from prolonged ill-health, gave to Molière that melancholy temperament which he is known to have had in common with many other writers whose calling it has been to make men laugh.

¹ Translated from La Grange, Préface de l'éd. des Œuvres de Molière, publiée en 1682. Molière's Docteur amoureux has not come down to us.

If his wife had been small comfort to him during his lifetime, she was at least loyal to his memory after his death. When the Church, on account of his profession, refused him Christian burial in consecrated ground, she besought the king to have this refusal revoked, with such success that on February 21 Molière was interred in the cemetery of Saint-Joseph. Nor did her good offices end there. It was due to her efforts, and to those of La Grange, that the troupe which her husband had founded was kept from disbanding during the trying times that succeeded. In the Easter vacation of 1673 the actors La Thorillière and Baron, as well as Mlle 1 Beauval and her husband, went over to the rival theater, l'Hôtel de Bourgogne. Their hall in the Palais-Royal was given to Lulli for his opera; but with a courage truly admirable in the midst of adversity Mlle Molière and her troupe purchased the theater known as the Théâtre Guénégaud, enlisted the best actors of the Théâtre du Marais, which was discontinued at this time by order of the king, and succeeded in preserving their old title of troupe du Roi. This triumph was crowned by one still more brilliant when, on October 21, 1680, the Hôtel de Bourgogne was merged with theirs, thus forming the one and only Théâtre Français.

In 1677 Mlle Molière was married to Guérin d'Estriché, one of the actors who had come to her from the Théâtre du Marais. She has been much criticised for thus abdicating her glorious name, but the circumstances of her profession seem to have justified this proceeding, as a means of protection from slander and abuse.

Throughout his life Molière was much honored by Louis XIV. In 1664 the king consented to be godfather to the

¹ See p. 2. note 4.

first of the poet's three children, and on many other occasions and in various ways he gave evidence of the high favor in which he held Molière. Even this favor, however, did not procure for the great writer a place in the French Academy. His profession was an insuperable barrier. In 1778 the members of this body, on placing his bust in their midst, tried to make honorable, if tardy, amends, by engraving below it this inscription, the justice of which needs no comment:

"Rien ne manque à sa gloire; il manquait à la nôtre."

LIST OF MOLIÈRE'S COMEDIES AND FARCES

- La Jalousie du Barbouillé.
- Le Médecin volant.
- 1653? L'Étourdi.
- 1656 Le Dépit amoureux.
- 1659 Les Précieuses ridicules.
- 1660 Sganarelle.
- 1661 Don Garcie de Navarre (comédie héroïque).
 L'École des maris.
 Les Fâcheux.
- 1662 L'École des femmes.
- 1663 La Critique de l'École des femmes. L'Impromptu de Versailles.
- 1664 Le Mariage forcé.
 - La Princesse d'Élide.
 - Le Tartuffe. This play, completed in November, 1664, was not allowed permanently upon the stage until February 5, 1669.
- 1665 Don Juan. L'Amour médecin.
- 1666 Le Misanthrope.

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1666	Le Médecin malgré lui.
	Mélicerte (comédie pastorale héroïque).
1667	La Pastorale comique.
	Le Sicilien.
1668	Amphitryon.
	George Dandin.
	L'Avare.
1669	Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.
1670	Les Amants magnifiques.
	Le Bourgeois gentilhomme.
1671	Psyché.
	Les Fourberies de Scapin.
	La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas.
1672	Les Femmes savantes.
1673	Le Malade imaginaire.

What was the reason for this antipathy against one of the most dignified professions of his day?

"It was late in 1658 that our comique arrived in Paris, and while the doctors and their differences were still in full possession of public attention. He was consequently partaker in the hopes and fears which the malady and treatment of the royal patient (Louis XIV) excited.\(^1\) The dramatic nature of the consultation of the court physicians with Cardinal Mazarin presiding, held on the occasion, where the usual conflict of opinions was observed, was no doubt calculated to revive recollections fading in the past, reminding him that if the Tabarins and Turlupins, with their screaming comicalities and their grotesque doctors, were no more, the Faculty and its privileged practitioners still held their own, and that seemingly their artistic mummeries were quite as much in public favor as ever.\(^2\)

The death of his early teacher, the philosopher Gassendi, who succumbed at the thirteenth blood-letting, inflicted upon him by the Parisian doctors in 1655, must have had its influence, too, in convincing Molière of the futility of the Faculty's pretensions. In 1664 this conviction was still further strengthened by the death of the son of his old friend Lamothe le Vayer, likewise a victim of blundering practitioners. His own experience was not in any way calculated to lessen these prejudices. His friend and doctor, Armand de Mauvillain, was a frank, outspoken man, and had doubtless pointed out to his patient the inability of the science which he himself professed, to effect a permanent cure. It was therefore through discouragement, because he felt himself condemned to suffer, and with a certain "bravado

¹ See p. xxxiii.

² A. M. Brown, ibid., p. 42.