

## THE FIRST ACT

## A Performance at the Hôtel de Bourgogne

THE HALL OF THE HÔTEL DE BOURGOGNE in 1640. A sort of Tennis Court, arranged and decorated for Theatrical productions.

The Hall is a long rectangle; we see it diagonally, in such a way that one side of it forms the back scene, which begins at the First Entrance on the Right and runs up to the Last Entrance on the Left, where it makes a right angle with the Stage which is seen obliquely.

This Stage is provided on either hand with benches placed along the wings. The curtain is formed by two lengths of Tapestry which can be drawn apart. Above a Harlequin cloak, the Royal Arms. Broad steps lead from the Stage down to the floor of the Hall. On either side of these steps, a place for the Musicians. A row of candles serving as footlights. Two tiers of Galleries along the side of the Hall; the upper one divided into boxes.

There are no seats upon the Floor, which is the actual stage of our theatre; but toward the back of the Hall, on the right, a few benches are arranged; and underneath a stairway on the extreme right, which leads up to the galleries, and of which only the lower portion is visible, there is a sort of Sideboard, decorated with little tapers, vases of flowers, bottles and glasses, plates of cake, et cetera.

Farther along, toward the centre of our stage is the Entrance to the Hall; a great double door which opens only slightly to admit the Audience. On one of the panels of this door, as also in other places about the Hall, and in particular just over the Sideboard, are Playbills in red, upon which we may read the title LA CLORISE.

As the CURTAIN RISES, the Hall is dimly lighted and still

empty. The Chandeliers are lowered to the floor, in the middle of the Hall, ready for lighting.

(Sound of voices outside the door. Then a Cavalier enters abruptly.)

THE PORTER

(Follows him)

Halloa there!-Fifteen sols!

THE CAVALIER

I enter free.

THE PORTER

Why?

THE CAVALIER

Soldier of the Household of the King!

THE PORTER

(Turns to another Cavalier who has just entered)

You?

SECOND CAVALIER

I pay nothing.

THE PORTER

Why not?

SECOND CAVALIER

Musketeer!

FIRST CAVALIER

(To the Second)

The play begins at two. Plenty of time-

And here's the whole floor empty. Shall we try

Our exercise?

(They fence with the foils which they have brought)

A LACKEY

(Enters)

-Pst!...Flanquin!...

**ANOTHER** 

(Already on stage)

What, Champagne?

FIRST LACKEY

(Showing games which he takes out of his doublet)

Cards. Dice. Come on.

(Sits on the floor)

SECOND LACKEY

(Same action)

Come on, old cock!

**FIRST LACKEY** 

(Takes from his pocket a bit of candle, lights it, sets it on the floor)

I have stolen

A little of my master's fire.

A GUARDSMAN

(To a flower girl who comes forward)

How sweet

Of you, to come before they light the hall!

(Puts his arm around her)

FIRST CAVALIER

(Receives a thrust of the foil)

A hit!

SECOND LACKEY

A club!

THE GUARDSMAN

(Pursuing the girl)

A kiss!

THE FLOWER GIRL

(Pushing away from him)

They'll see us!-

THE GUARDSMAN

(Draws her into a dark corner)

No danger!

A MAN

(Sits on the floor, together with several others who have brought packages of food)

When we come early, we have time to eat.

A CITIZEN

(Escorting his son, a boy of sixteen)

Sit here, my son.

FIRST LACKEY

Mark the Ace!

## Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand

Cyrano de Bergerac is Edmond Rostand's immortal play in which chivalry and wit, bravery and love, are forever captured in the timeless spirit of romance. Set in Louis XIII's reign, it is the moving and exciting drama of one of the finest swordsmen in France, a gallant soldier, brilliant wit, tragic poet-lover with the face of a clown. Rostand's extraordinary lyric powers gave birth to a universal hero—Cyrano de Bergerac—and ensured his own reputation as author of one of the best-loved plays in the literature of the stage.

This translation, by the American poet Brian Hooker, is nearly as famous as the original play itself, and is generally considered to be one of the finest English verse translations ever written.

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