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Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Vinci
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Gogol Busch
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Potter Freud Zola Lawrence Dickens Harte
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The Little French Lawyer A Comedy

Francis Beaumont

Imprint

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THE
Little French Lawyer.
A
COMEDY.

Persons Represented in the Play.

Dinant, *a Gentleman that formerly loved, and still pretended to love Lamira.*

Cleremont, *a merry Gentleman, his Friend.*

Champernell, *a lame old Gentleman, Husband to Lamira.*

Vertaign, *a Noble-man, and a Judge.*

Beaupre, *Son to Vertaign.*

Verdone, *Nephew to Champernell.*

Monsieur La Writt, *a wrangling Advocate, or the Little Lawyer.*

Sampson, *a foolish Advocate, Kinsman to Vertaign.*

Provost.

Gentlemen.

Clients.

Servants.

WOMEN.

Lamira, *Wife to Champernell, and Daughter to Vertaign.*

Anabell, *Niece to Champernell.*

Old Lady, *Nurse to Lamira.*

Charlotte, *Waiting Gentlewoman to Lamira.*

The Scene France.

The principal Actors were,

Joseph Taylor.

John Lowin.

John Underwood.

Robert Benfield.

Nicholas Toolie.

William Egleston.

Richard Sharpe.

Thomas Holcomb.

Actus Primus. Scena Prima.

Actus Secundus. Scena Prima.

Actus Tertius. Scena Prima.

Actus Quartus. Scena Prima.

Actus Quintus. Scena Prima.

Prologue.

Epilogue.

APPENDIX

[Pg 374]

Actus Primus. Scena Prima.

Enter Dinant, a[n]d Cleremont.

Din. Disswade me not.

Cler. It will breed a brawl.

Din. I care not, I wear a Sword.

Cler. And wear discretion with it,
Or cast it off, let that direct your arm,
'Tis madness else, not valour, and more base
Than to receive a wrong.

Din. Why would you have me
Sit down with a disgrace, and thank the doer?
We are not Stoicks, and that passive courage
Is only now commendable in Lackies,
Peasants, and Tradesmen, not in men of rank
And qualitie, as I am.

Cler. Do not cherish
That daring vice, for which the whole age suffers.
The blood of our bold youth, that heretofore
Was spent in honourable action,
Or to defend, or to enlarge the Kingdom,
For the honour of our Country, and our Prince,
Pours it self out with prodigal expence
Upon our Mothers lap, the Earth that bred us
For every trifle; and these private Duells,
Which had their first original from the *Fr[enc]h*
(And for which, to this day, we are justly censured)
Are banisht from all civil Governments:
Scarce three in *Venice*, in as many years;
In *Florence*, they are rarer, and in all
The fair Dominions of the *Spanish King*,
They are never heard of: Nay, those neighbour Countries,
Which gladly imitate our other follies,

And come at a dear rate to buy them of us,
Begin now to detest them.

Din. Will you end yet—

Cler. And I have heard that some of our late Kings,
For the lie, wearing of a Mistris favour,
[Pg 375] A cheat at Cards or Dice, and such like causes,
Have lost as many gallant Gentlemen,
As might have met the great *Turk* in the field
With confidence of a glorious *Victorie*,
And shall we then—

Din. No more, for shame no more,
Are you become a Patron too? 'tis a new one,
No more on't, burn't, give it to some Orator,
To help him to enlarge his exercise,
With such a one it might do well, and profit
The Curat of the Parish, but for *Cleremont*,
The bold, and undertaking *Cleremont*,
To talk thus to his friend, his friend that knows him,
Dinant that knows his *Cleremont*, is absurd,
And meer Apocrypha.

Cler. Why, what know you of me?

Din. Why if thou hast forgot thy self, I'll tell thee,
And not look back, to speak of what thou wert
At fifteen, for at those years I have heard
Thou wast flesh'd, and enter'd bravely.

Cler. Well Sir, well.

Din. But yesterday, thou wast the common second,
Of all that only knew thee, thou hadst bills
Set up on every post, to give thee notice
Where any difference was, and who were parties;
And as to save the charges of the Law
Poor men seek arbitrators, thou wert chosen

By such as knew thee not, to compound quarrels:
But thou wert so delighted with the sport,
That if there were no just cause, thou wouldst make one,
Or be engag'd thy self: This goodly calling
Thou hast followed five and twenty years, and studied
The Criticisms of contentions, and art thou
In so few hours transform'd? certain this night
Thou hast had strange dreams, or rather visions.

Cler. Yes, Sir,
I have seen fools, and fighters, chain'd together,
And the Fighters had the upper hand, and whipt first,
The poor Sots laughing at 'em. What I have been
It skills not, what I will be is resolv'd on.

[Pg 376] *Din.* Why then you'l fight no more?

Cler. Such is my purpose.

Din. On no occasion?

Cler. There you stagger me.
Some kind of wrongs there are which flesh and blood
Cannot endure.

Din. Thou wouldst not willingly
Live a protested coward, or be call'd one?

Cler. Words are but words.

Din. Nor wouldst thou take a blow?

Cler. Not from my friend, though drunk, and from an enemy
I think much less.

Din. There's some hope of thee left then,
Wouldst thou hear me behind my back disgrac'd?

Cler. Do you think I am a rogue? they that should do it

Had better been born dumb.

Din. Or in thy presence
See me o'recharg'd with odds?

Cler. I'd fall my self first.

Din. Would'st thou endure thy Mistris be taken from thee,
And thou sit quiet?

Cler. There you touch my honour,
No French-man can endure that.

Di[n]. Pl— upon thee,
Why dost thou talk of Peace then? that dar'st suffer
Nothing, or in thy self, or in thy friend
That is unmanly?

Cler. That I grant, I cannot:
But I'll not quarrel with this Gentleman
For wearing stammel Breeches, or this Gamester
For playing a thousand pounds, that owes me nothing;
For this mans taking up a common Wench
In raggs, and lowsie, then maintaining her
Caroach'd in cloth of Tissue, nor five hundred
Of such like toys, that at no part concern me;
Marry, where my honour, or my friend is questioned,
I have a Sword, and I think I may use it
To the cutting of a Rascals throat, or so,
Like a good Christian.

Din. Thou art of a fine Religion,
[Pg 377] And rather than we'l make a Schism in friendship
I will be of it: But to be serious,
Thou art acquainted with my tedious love-suit
To fair *Lamira*?

Cler. Too well Sir, and remember
Your presents, courtship, that's too good a name,

Your slave-like services, your morning musique;
Your walking three hours in the rain at midnight,
To see her at her window, sometimes laugh'd at,
Sometimes admitted, and vouchsaf'd to kiss
Her glove, her skirt, nay, I have heard, her slippers,
How then you triumph'd?
Here was love forsooth.

Din. These follies I deny not,
Such a contemptible thing my dotage made me,
But my reward for this —

Cler. As you deserv'd,
For he that makes a goddess of a Puppet,
Merits no other recompence.

Din. This day friend,
For thou art so —

Cler. I am no flatterer.

Din. This proud, ingratefull she, is married to
Lame *Champernel*.

Cler. I know him, he has been
As tall a Sea-man, and has thriv'd as well by't,
The loss of a legg and an arm deducted, as any
That ever put from *Marseilles*: you are tame,
Pl — — on't, it mads me; if it were my case,
I should kill all the family.

Din. Yet but now
You did preach patience.

Cler. I then came from confession,
And 'twas enjoyn'd me three hours for a penance,
To be a peaceable man, and to talk like one,
But now, all else being pardon'd, I begin
On a new Tally, Foot do any thing,

I'll second you.

Din. I would not willingly
Make red, my yet white conscience, yet I purpose
[Pg 378] In the open street, as they come from the Temple,
(For this way they must pass,) to speak my wrongs,
And do it boldly. [*Musick playes.*]

Cler. Were thy tongue a Cannon,
I would stand by thee, boy, they come, upon 'em.

Din. Observe a little first.

Cler. This is fine fidling.

Enter Vertaign, Champernel, Lamira, Nurse, Beaupre, Verdone.
An Epithalamium.

SONG at the Wedding.

*Come away, bring on the Bride
And place her by her Lovers side:
You fair troop of Maids attend her,
Pure and holy thoughts befriend her.
Blush, and wish, you Virgins all,
Many such fair nights may fall.*

Chorus.

*Hymen, fill the house with joy,
All thy sacred fires employ:
Bless the Bed with holy love,
Now fair orb of Beauty move.*

Din. Stand by, for I'll be heard.

Verta. This is strange rudeness.

Din. 'Tis courtship, ballanced with injuries,
You all look pale with guilt, but I will dy
Your cheeks with blushes, if in your sear'd veins
There yet remain so much of honest blood
To make the colour; first to ye my Lord,
The Father of this Bride, whom you have sent
Alive into her grave.

Champ. How? to her grave?

Dina. Be patient Sir, I'll speak of you anon
You that allow'd me liberal access,
To make my way with service, and approv'd of
My birth, my person, years, and no base fortune:
You that are rich, and but in this held wise too,
[Pg 379] That as a Father should have look'd upon
Your Daughter in a husband, and aim'd more
At what her youth, and heat of blood requir'd
In lawfull pleasures, than the parting from
Your Crowns to pay her dowr: you that already
Have one foot in the grave, yet study profit,
As if you were assur'd to live here ever;
What poor end had you, in this choice? in what
Deserve I your contempt? my house, and honours
At all parts equal yours, my fame as fair,
And not to praise my self, the City ranks me
In the first file of her most hopefull Gentry:
But *Champernel* is rich, and needs a nurse,
And not your gold: and add to that, he's old too,
His whole estate in likelihood to descend
Upon your Family; Here was providence,
I grant, but in a Nobleman base thrift:
No Merchants, nay, no Pirats, sell for Bondmen
Their Country-men, but you, a Gentleman,
To save a little gold, have sold your Daughter
To worse than slaverie.

Cler. This was spoke home indeed.

Beau. Sir, I shall take some other time to tell you,
That this harsh language was delivered to
An old man, but my Father.

Din. At your pleasure.

Cler. Proceed in your design, let me alone,
To answer him, or any man.

Verd. You presume
Too much upon your name, but may be couzen'd.

Din. But for you, most unmindfull of my service,
For now I may upbraid you, and with honour,
Since all is lost, and yet I am a gainer,
In being deliver'd from a torment in you,
For such you must have been, you to whom nature
Gave with a liberal hand most excellent form,
Your education, language, and discourse,
And judgement to distinguish, when you shall
With feeling sorrow understand how wretched
And miserable you have made your self,
[Pg 380] And but your self have nothing to accuse,
Can you with hope from any beg compassion?
But you will say, you serv'd your Fathers pleasure,
Forgetting that unjust commands of Parents
Are not to be obey'd, or that you are rich,
And that to wealth all pleasure else are servants,
Yet but consider, how this wealth was purchas'd,
'Twill trouble the possession.

Champ. You Sir know
I got it, and with honour.

Din. But from whom?
Remember that, and how: you'l come indeed
To houses bravely furnish'd, but demanding
Where it was bought, this Souldier will not lie,

But answer truly, this rich cloth of Arras
I made my prize in such a Ship, this Plate
Was my share in another; these fair Jewels,
Coming a shore, I got in such a Village,
The Maid, or Matron kill'd, from whom they were ravish'd,
The Wines you drink are guilty too, for this,
This *Candie* Wine, three Merchants were undone,
These Suckets break as many more: in brief,
All you shall wear, or touch, or see, is purchas'd
By lawless force, and you but revel in
The tears, and groans of such as were the owners.

Champ. 'Tis false, most basely false.

Verta. Let losers talk.

Din. Lastly, those joyes, those best of joyes, which *Hymen*
Freely bestows on such, that come to tye
The sacred knot be blesses, won unto it
By equal love, and mutual affection,
Not blindly led with the desire of riches,
Most miserable you shall never taste of.
This Marriage night you'l meet a Widows bed,
Or failing of those pleasures all Brides look for,
Sin in your wish it were so.

Champ. Thou art a Villain,
A base, malicious slanderer.

Cler. Strike him.

Din. No, he is not worth a blow.

[Pg 381] *Champ.* O that I had thee
In some close vault, that only would yield room
To me to use my Sword, to thee no hope
To run away, I would make thee on thy knees,
Bite out the tongue that wrong'd me.

Verta. Pray you have patience.

Lamira. This day I am to be your Sovereign,
Let me command you.

Champ. I am lost with rage,
And know not what I am my self, nor you:
Away, dare such as you, that love the smoke
Of peace more than the fire of glorious War,
And like unprofitable drones, feed on
Your grandsires labours, that, as I am now,
Were gathering Bees, and fill'd their Hive, this Country
With brave triumphant spoils, censure our actions?
You object my prizes to me, had you seen
The horror of a Sea-fight, with what danger
I made them mine; the fire I fearless fought in,
And quench'd it in mine enemies blood, which straight
Like oyle pour'd out on't, made it burn anew;
My Deck blown up, with noise enough to mock
The lowdest thunder, and the desperate fools
That Boorded me, sent, to defie the tempests
That were against me, to the angrie Sea,
Frighted with men thrown o're; no victory,
But in despite of the four Elements,
The Fire, the Air, the Sea, and sands hid in it
To be atchiev'd, you would confess poor men,
(Though hopeless, such an honourable way
To get or wealth, or honour) in your selves
He that through all these dreadfull passages
Pursued and overtook them, unaffrighted,
Deserves reward, and not to have it stil'd
By the base name of theft.

Din. This is the Courtship,
That you must look for, Madam.

Cler. 'Twill do well,
When nothing can be done, to spend the night with:
Your tongue is sound good Lord, and I could wish

[Pg 382] For this young Ladyes sake this leg, this arm,
And there is something else, I will not name,
(Though 'tis the only thing that must content her)
Had the same vigour.

Champ. You shall buy these scoffs
With your best blood: help me once noble anger,
(Nay stir not, I alone must right my self)
And with one leg transport me, to correct
These scandalous praters: O that noble wounds [*Falls.*
Should hinder just revenge! D'ye jear me too?
I got these, not as you do, your diseases
In Brothels, or with riotous abuse
Of wine in Taverns; I have one leg shot,
One arm disabled, and am honour'd more,
By losing them, as I did, in the face
Of a brave enemy, than if they were
As when I put to Sea; you are *French-men* only,
In that you have been laied, and cur'd, goe to:
You mock my leg, but every bone about you,
Makes you good Almanack-makers, to foretell
What weather we shall have.

Din. Put up your Sword.

Cler. Or turn it to a Crutch, there't may b[e] usefull,
And live on the relation to your Wife
Of what a brave man you were once.

Din. And tell her,
What a fine vertue 'tis in a young Lady
To give an old man pap.

Cler. Or hire a Surgeon
To teach her to roul up your broken limbs.

Din. To make a Pultess, and endure the scent
Of oils, and nasty Plasters.

Verta. Fie Sir, fie,
You that have stood all dangers of all kinds, to
Yield to a Rivalls scoffe?

Lamira. Shed tears upon
Your Wedding day? this is unmanly Gentlemen.

Champ. They are tears of anger: O that I should live
To play the woman thus! All powerfull heaven,
Restore me, but one hour, that strength again,
[Pg 383] That I had once, to chastise in these men
Their folies, and ill manners, and that done,
When you please, I'll yield up the fort of life,
And do it gladly.

Cler. We ha' the better of him,
We ha' made him cry.

Verdo. You shall have satisfaction.
And I will do it nobly, or disclaim me.

Beaup. I say no more, you have a Brother, Sister,
This is your wedding day, we are in the street,
And howsoever they forget their honour,
'Tis fit I lose not mine, by their example.

Vert. If there be Laws in *Paris*, look to answer
This insolent affront.

Cler. You that live by them,
Study 'em for heavens sake; for my part I know not
Nor care not what they are. Is the[re] ought else
That you would say;

Din. Nothing, I have my ends.
Lamira weeps, I have said too much I fear;
So dearly once I lov'd her, that I cannot
Endure to see her tears. [*Exeunt Dinant, and Cleremont.*]