

# **Tales and Novels of J. de La Fontaine — Volume 23 eBook**

## **Tales and Novels of J. de La Fontaine — Volume 23 by Jean de La Fontaine**

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# Page 1

## THE CLYSTER

If truth give pleasure, surely we should try;  
To found our tales on what we can rely;  
Th' experiment repeatedly I've made,  
And seen how much realities persuade:  
They draw attention: confidence awake;  
Fictitious names however we should take,  
And then the rest detail without disguise:  
'Tis thus I mean to manage my supplies.

It happened then near Mans, a Normand town,  
For sapient people always of renown,  
A maid not long ago a lover had  
Brisk, pleasing, ev'ry way a handsome lad;  
The down as yet was scarcely on his chin;  
The girl was such as many wished to win:  
Had charms and fortune, all that was desired,  
And by the Mansian sparks was much admired;  
Around they swarmed, but vain was all their art  
Too much our youth possessed the damsel's heart.

The parents, in their wisdom, meant the fair  
Should marry one who was a wealthy heir;  
But she contrived to manage matters well;  
In spite of ev'ry thing which might repel,  
(I know not how) at length he had access;  
Though whether through indulgence or address,  
It matters not: perhaps his noble blood  
Might work a change when fully understood:  
The *Lucky*, ev'ry thing contrives to please;  
The rest can nothing but misfortune seize.

The lover had success; the parents thought  
His merit such as prudence would have sought;  
What more to wish?—the miser's hoarded store:  
The golden age's wealth is now no more,  
A silly shadow, phantom of the brain;  
O happy time! I see indeed with pain,  
Thou wilt return:—in *Maine* thou shalt arise;  
Thy innocence, we fondly may surmise,  
Had seconded our lover's ardent flame,  
And hastened his possession of the dame.



The slowness usually in parents found,  
Induced the girl, whose heart by *love* was bound;  
To celebrate the Hymeneal scene,  
As in the statutes of Cythera's queen.  
Our legendary writers this define  
A present contract, where they nothing sign;  
The thing is common;—marriage made in haste:  
Love's preparation: Hymen's bit for taste.

Not much examination Cupid made,  
As parent, lawyer, priest, he lent his aid,  
And soon concluded matters as desired;  
The Mansian wisdom no ways was required.

Ourspark was satisfied, and with his belle,  
Passed nights so happy, nothing could excel;  
'Twere easy to explain;—the double keys,  
And gifts designed the chambermaid to please,  
Made all secure, and ev'ry joy abound;  
The soft delights with secrecy were crowned.



## Page 2

It happened that our fair one evening said,  
To her who of each infant step had led,  
But of the present secret nothing knew:—  
I feel unwell; pray tell me what to do.  
The other answered, you my dear must take  
A remedy that easily I'll make,  
A clyster you shall have to-morrow morn:  
By me most willingly it will be borne.

When midnight came the sly gallant appeared,  
Unluckily no doubt, but he revered  
The moments that so pleasantly were passed,  
Which always seemed, he thought, to glide too fast;  
Relief he sought, for ev'ry one below  
Is destined torments more or less to know.  
He not a word was told of things designed,  
And just as our gallant to sleep inclined,  
As oft's the case at length with lovers true,  
Quite open bright Aurora's portals flew,  
And with a smile the aged dame arrived;  
The apparatus properly contrived,  
Was in her hand, she hastened to the bed,  
And took the side that to the stripling led.

Our lady fair was instantly confused,  
Or she precaution properly had used,  
'Twas easy to have kept a steady face,  
And 'neath the clothes the other's head to place.  
Pass presently beyond the hidden swain,  
And t'other side with rapid motion gain,  
A thing quite natural, we should suppose;  
But fears o'erpow'ered; the frightened damsel chose  
To hide herself, then whispered her gallant,  
What mighty terrors made her bosom pant.  
The youth was sage, and coolly undertook  
To offer for her:—t'other 'gan to look,  
With spectacles on nose: soon all went right;  
Adieu, she cried, and then withdrew from sight.  
Heav'n guard her steps, and all conduct away,  
Whose presence secret friendships would betray:

Should this be thought a silly, idle tale;  
(And that opinion may perhaps prevail)  
To censure me, enough will surely try,



For criticks are severe, and these will cry,  
Your lady like a simpleton escaped;  
Her character you better might have shaped;  
Which makes us doubt the truth of what is told:  
Naught in your prologue like it we behold.

'Tweresueless to reply: 'twould endless prove:  
No arguments such censurers could move;  
On men like these, devoid of sense or taste,  
In vain might Cicero his rhet'rick waste.  
Sufficient 'tis for me, that what is here,  
I got from those who ev'ry-where appear  
The friends of truth:—let others say the same;  
What more would they expect should be my aim?

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### ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Sight of meat brings appetite about  
To avoid the tempting bit, 'Tis better far at table not to sit

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