

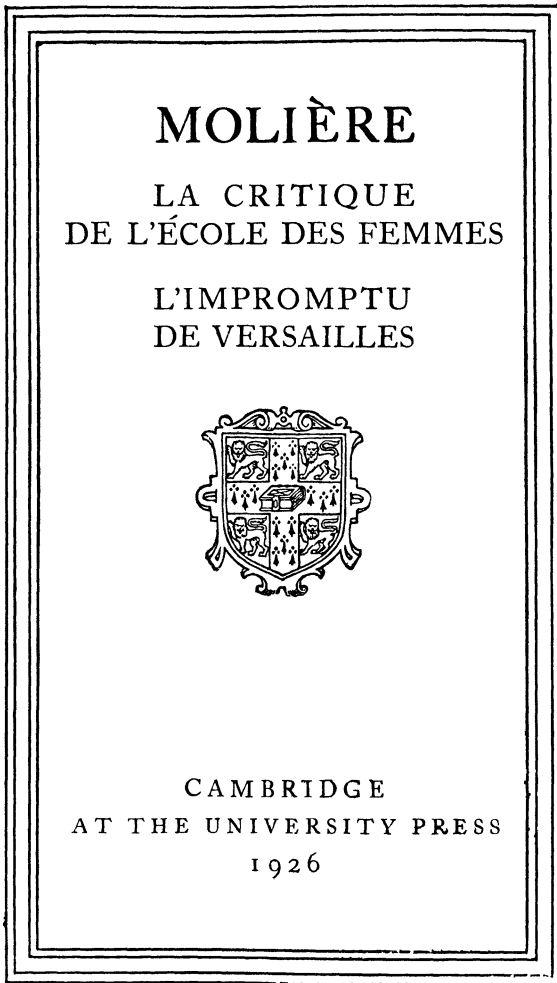
Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-64182-2 - La Critique de L'École des Femmes:
L'Impromptu de Versailles
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MOLIÈRE
LA CRITIQUE
DE L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES
L'IMPROMPTU
DE VERSAILLES

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107641822

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First published 1926
Re-issued 2013

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-64182-2 Paperback

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NOTE

THESE two brilliant and highly original comedies arose out of the attack made by Molière's enemies on *L'École des Femmes*. In *La Critique* Molière replies to the *précieuses*, the *dévots*, the *marquis ridicules*, and the critics—chiefly rival dramatists—who had all joined in the attack. But *La Critique* is more than a weapon of warfare. It is Molière's *Art poétique*. It is a defence of comedy which is founded upon common sense, which sees men as they are and not as what they might be, which tries to reform society by laughing at folly, but which can sympathise while it ridicules.

In *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, which was produced before the King at Versailles between October 15 and 22, 1663, Molière's main attack is directed against the rival company of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, who had put up a young author, named Edme Boursault, to write a piece entitled *Le Portrait du Peintre ou la Contre-critique de l'École des Femmes*. While he does not forget either the *précieuses* or the *marquis*—"Le marquis aujourd'hui est le plaisant de la comédie"—or the rival poets, he takes off the chief actors of the Hôtel—except Floridor, who was a favourite with the King—with all his powers of mimicry and impersonation. The play incidentally testifies to the scrupulous care with which he conducted his rehearsals, and throws light as well on the characters of some of his troop as on his own irritability. It also bespeaks his confidence in the King's favour, a confidence which was justified by the King conferring after the representation a pension of 1000 *livres* on his company.

A. TILLEY

April, 1926