

THE HYPOCHONDRIAC

Moliere

- ARGAN: Three and two makes five, and five makes ten, and ten makes twenty. Three and two makes five. That's twenty-five francs. Now, what have we here? (*he refers to a paper.*)
- `The twenty-fourth. A minor insinuating and emollient enema to soften, moisten and refresh Monsieur's bowels.' What I like about Monsieur Fleurant, my apothecary is that his bills are always so tactfully phrased. `To soften, moisten and refresh Monsieur's bowels. One and a half francs' But, Monsieur Fleurant, tact isn't everything. You mustn't fleece us invalids. One and a half francs for an enema? I'm your obedient servant, but we've had words about this before. You charged one franc last time, and when an apothecary says one franc, he really means a half. There we are then, half a franc.
- `On the aforementioned day, a good evacuative enema prepared from mel rosatum, diacatholicon, honey, it's all honey, 'rhubarb and etc. as per prescription to flush, wash and brush up Monsieur's lower abdomen. One and a half francs.' By your leave, three quarters.
- `On the evening of the aforementioned day, an hepatic, soporific and somniferous, somniferous? 'sedative to make Monsieur sleep.' Oh, somniferous. 'One and a half francs.' And very good it was too; I slept like a log. Three quarters. The twenty-fifth. A purgative and fortifying philtre prepared from cinnamon, oriental sennapods and etc, under Monsieur Purgon's instructions to expel and evacuate Monsieur's bile. Four francs.', So, Monsieur Fleurant, is this your idea of a joke? You've got to play fair with us invalids. Monsieur Purgon didn't instruct you to charge four francs. We'll call it three. After all, he is a specialist.
- `On the afternoon of the aforementioned day, an astringent anodyne to assist Monsieur to relax. One and a half francs.' Good, three quarters. The twenty-sixth. An exhalatory enema to expel Monsieur's flatulence. One and a half francs.' Three quarters.
- `An additional draft of the anodyne Monsieur asked for the anterior afternoon. One and a half francs.' We'll call it a half; it was a repeat order. The twenty-seventh. A mollifying mixture to ameliorate Monsieur's mauvaises humeurs.' To ameliorate Monsieur's mauvaises humeurs. There's tact for you. 'Three francs.' We'll call that one and a half; I'm glad to see you're being so reasonable.
- `The twenty-eighth. A measure of clarified and sweetened whey to assuage, blend, temper and refresh Monsieur's blood. One franc.' Half.
- `A pleasant and preservative potion, prepared from twelve grains of bezoar,' that's a fatty growth on the inside of cows' stomachs that . . . no, I don't think I want to think about that, 'syrup of lemon, pomegranate and etc.as per prescription. Five francs.' Now, now, Monsieur Fleurant, hold on a minute, if you please. If one is to be treated in this manner, one will no longer wish to be ill. Content yourself with two and a half. Now let's see, that's twenty-five francs , and ... (*He adds up the piles*

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of counters.) That makes thirty-six and a half francs in all. Now, where are we? This month I've taken one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight different types of medicine and had, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve enemas; whereas last month I took twelve medicines and had twenty enemas. No wonder I've not been feeling so good this month as I did last. I'll have to have a word with Monsieur Purgon, so he can take the matter in hand.