

The Waltz of the Toreadors

some scenes Englished to compare with the standard translation

Act I, sc.i

(page references to Methuen Drama edition)

1, p. 141:

EMILY. Liar! You are thinking about women being beautiful and good to touch, and then you don't feel alone in the world for a while, you told me so once.

cf. my version :

AMÉLIE. You're lying. You're thinking that women are beautiful, that they're warm up under their skirts and a man can feel them. One hand up their skirt and never ever being lonely again for a minute, you told me that once.

2, pp. 141-142:

EMILY. I fell ill with thinking of all the things you are busy doing in your head while you pretend to comfort me. Admit it, hypocrite. Where were you just now in your head? With what woman? In which kitchen, tumbling Heaven knows what drab that scrubs away there on all fours. Leon, you make me sick.

GENERAL. By Hades, madam, you are dreaming. I am sitting at my desk, writing to M. Poincaré.

EMILY. He's a good scapegoat — M. Poincaré. Have you no shame, man, no refinement? Stop it, Leon.

GENERAL. Will you let me finish my letter in peace?

cf. my version :

AMÉLIE. The only reason I'm ill is with thinking about everything you get up to inside your head while you're pretending to calm me down. Own up, you hypocrite! Stop hiding things from me. Where were you inside your head a moment ago? Who was that woman you were with? Which divan were you on, in some bedroom that I'll never set eyes on, never, no matter how hard I try (you'll never have the honesty to describe it to me), or in some kitchen more like, tugging some skivvy who's down on her hands and knees scrubbing the floor. You've come padding in like a big tomcat, in your big slippers, and you're doing it from behind, biting her on the neck, with all her hair in your mouth and you're not saying a word about it being disgusting, though you make such a great fuss if you find so much as one hair in the soup! And the grotty little bitch hasn't even let go

GASTON. The Saint-Pé sisters have many admirable qualities.

GENERAL. No doubt. The sort of thing to make life a misery for any poor sod who fancies them. But they've got nothing to hook a man, my boy, there's the rub. They're got up like a couple of scarecrows, with hair like a lavatory brush, and once they've learned to hold a cup of tea with their little finger stuck out, they think they're the acme of grace and femininity. Ye Gods. Just between you and me, my boy, to think that I, who've spent so much of my life falling in love with pretty women, should have brought them into the world in a moment of intoxication — no, not intoxication! With Madame Saint-Pé, there was no danger of that! Let's say, in a moment of inadvertence.

GASTON. Mademoiselle Estelle has a kind of grace.

GENERAL. A kind of, yes, but not the right kind. And Sidonie hasn't got anything. Estelle with her ringlets, screeching Gabriel Fauré at the piano, it's her mother's arty-farty type to a T. And Sidonie's just the same with her baking and cookery, always concocting those nice little dishes that keep a man for a lifetime, fattening him up so that he can't get out of the door. My daughters' virtues are taken after their mother's. They'll ruin the lives of two bloody fools instead of just one. But am I ever going to find two bloody fools, that is the question?

GASTON. Undoubtedly, General.

GENERAL. Pull the other one, it's got bells on it. Times have changed, you know. Second lieutenants don't grow on trees these days. Once upon a time, at the garrison ball, you were always sure to catch one or two of them. Send him a little invitation a week later. A little glass of Vouvray, a slice of strawberry tart and hey presto, as long as you had your five gold braids on your sleeve, you had the bugger! But nowadays, since they've pardoned Dreyfus, no fear! Even with a General's oak-leaves, like me. Rank has lost all its prestige. These young fellows are after dowries and a pretty girl, like everyone else. I'll never marry them off! Where were we?

GASTON. Relations between the Sultan and the Government.

5, pp. 145-146:

....naked in a corner, a little creature that knows it will be forced, and that desires it almost. Two young beasts [*sic!!!*], tender as fawns, and cruppers, me lad! And eyes! And you the soldier. the conqueror, the master. Your sword still steaming in your hand