

**A THOUSAND FLASHES OF
FRENCH WIT, WISDOM,
AND WICKEDNESS**

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A Thousand Flashes of French Wit, Wisdom, and Wickedness by J. de Finod

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OF FRENCH
WIT,
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AND
WICKEDNESS.

COLLECTED AND TRANSLATED
BY
J. DE FINOD.

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PREFATORY.

READER : As an amateur botanist, I have penetrated some avenues of the vast garden of literature, and I have gathered flowers of different species to compose a bouquet which I offer to you.

Occasionally, I have allowed myself to insert some of my own thoughts among those of the great thinkers here represented, as one shelters timid violets by planting them at the foot of majestic oaks.

In compiling this book, I have carefully excluded everything that would seem objectionable to you, my liberal but virtuous reader, the English language being more austere than the French in its expressions ; but, after having paid a legitimate tribute to your just susceptibilities, I have, without timorous scruples, preserved such piquant gems as could be enjoyed without endangering your morals.

In an orderly spirit, for which posterity, if not the present generation, will give me thanks, I have mixed the serious with the jocular; for I feared that, if I placed the wisdom at the beginning and the wickedness at the end of the book, you would begin your reading retrogressively, which is contrary to established principles. At the worst, this subterfuge is not more criminal than that of the physician who coats his bitter pills with sugar.

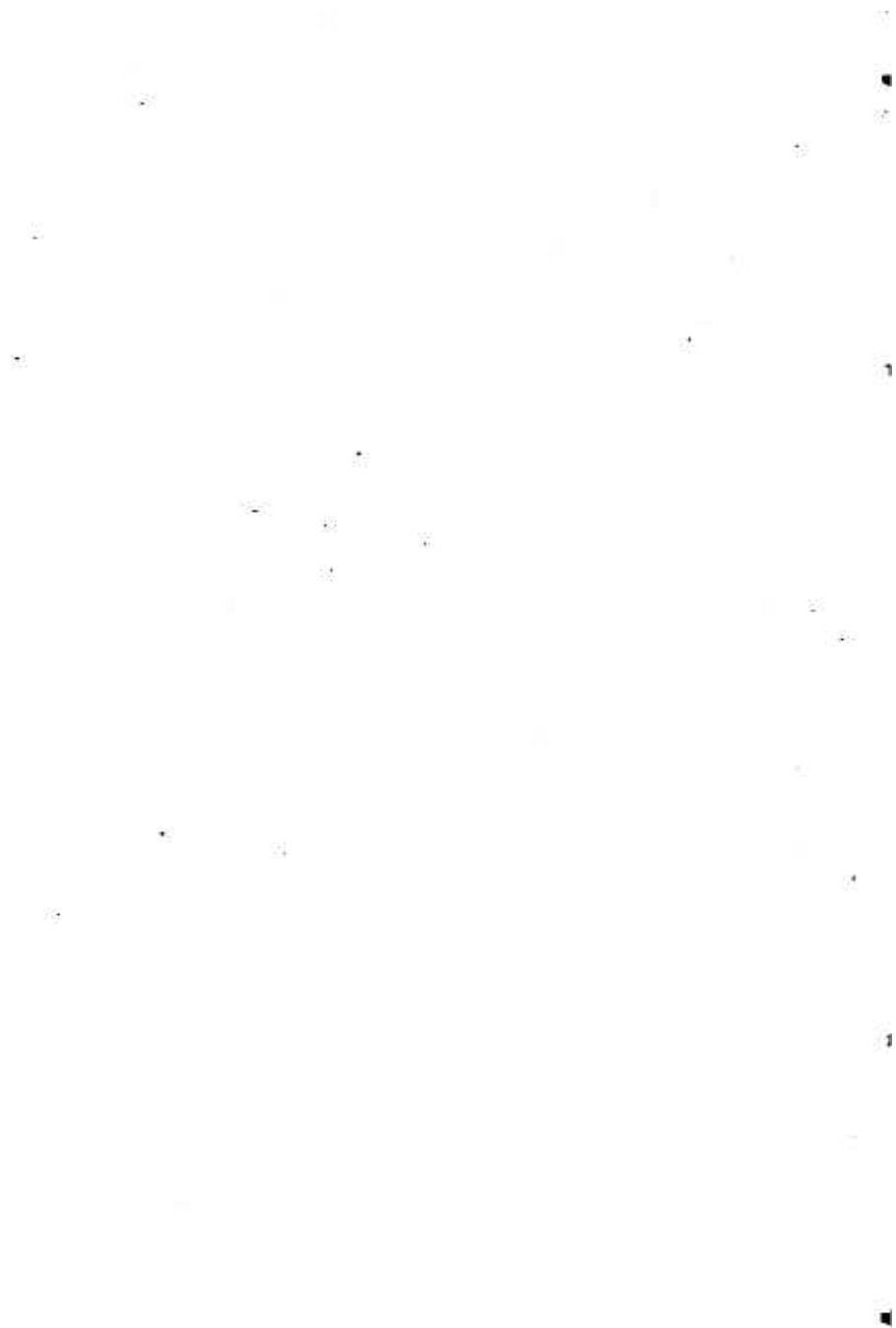
The thinker, the skeptic, the misanthrope, the sentimentalist, the melancholic, and the mirthful will find in these pages ample food for their different appetites. Democritus elbows Heraclitus all the way long; and I have no doubt that, after having perused meditatively these deep or fanciful lucubrations of eminent authors, you will have greatly improved your natural disposition.

A final word to the lady reader: You will see, fair reader, that much good has been said of you, and, alas! much bad also; this is because no subject more worthy of attention has ever haunted the minds of all the great philosophers of the world. But listen to this well-meant injunction: believe unhesitatingly all that is said in your favor, and deny energetically, as I myself do, all that is said

to your prejudice. Do not criminate an innocent compiler, who would not exchange one of your smiles for all the wisdom of Solomon, and who has inserted in his book the malicious remarks of certain ill-natured philosophers, only to show how far man's ingratitude can go.

DE FINOD.







INTRODUCTORY.

To select well among old things is almost equal to inventing new ones.

Trublet.

The flavor of detached thoughts depends upon the conciseness of their expression: for thoughts are grains of sugar, or of salt, that must be melted in a drop of water.

J. Petit-Senn.

When we say there is nothing new under the sun, we do not count forgotten things.

E. Thierry.

A burlesque word is often a mighty sermon.

Boileau.

He who hears but one bell, hears but one sound.

Proverb.