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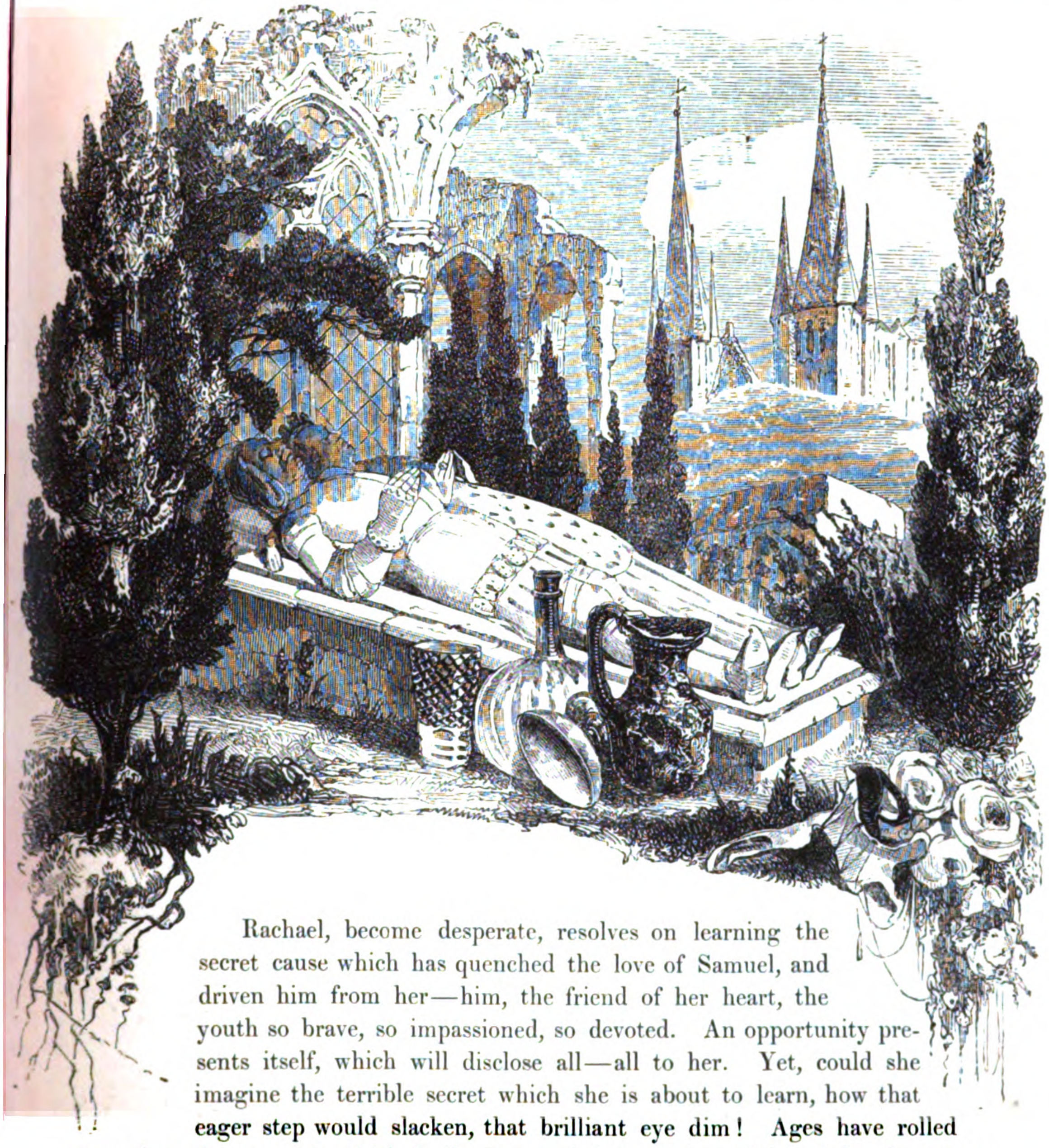

Rachael, become desperate, resolves on learning the secret cause which has quenched the love of Samuel, and driven him from her—him, the friend of her heart, the youth so brave, so impassioned, so devoted. An opportunity presents itself, which will disclose all—all to her. Yet, could she imagine the terrible secret which she is about to learn, how that eager step would slacken, that brilliant eye dim! Ages have rolled away since the scenes to which Scribe has carried us back, and ivy-clad ruins totter over the graves of their chief actors, but there is a revivifying power in the poet who created such a "situation" as this.

The triumphal feasts fill the city of Constance with magnificence and joy. Every where there are garlands, tapestries hanging from the walls, and clouds of incense. Eleazar, who has not forgotten his business amid his troubles, has made the jewel for the Emperor's nephew. Rachael accompanies her father to the palace, where he is about to convey to Eudoxia the splendid collar destined for her faithless spouse. And

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BEAUTIES

OF THE

OPERA AND BALLET.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY MOYES AND BARCLAY, CASTLE STREET,
LEICESTER SQUARE.

BEAUTIES

OF THE

OPERA AND BALLET.

Illustrated

WITH

TEN HIGHLY-FINISHED PORTRAITS, ENGRAVED ON STEEL,

AND NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD,

UNDER THE

SUPERINTENDENCE OF MR. CHARLES HEATH.

BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

LONDON:

DAVID BOGUE, 86 FLEET STREET.

TO

HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,

QUEEN VICTORIA,

AT ONCE

THE ACCOMPLISHED JUDGE AND THE GENEROUS PATRON OF ALL THE ARTS

TO THE ILLUSTRATION OF WHICH THIS VOLUME IS DEVOTED,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES,

IN PREPARING WHICH THE AID OF

PAINTING AND ENGRAVING

HAS BEEN USED TO RECORD SOME OF THE HIGHEST ACHIEVEMENTS

OF

MUSIC AND THE DANCE,

ARE,

WITH THE PROFOUNDEST RESPECT,

Inscribed,

BY HER MAJESTY'S MOST DUTIFUL,

AND MOST OBEDIENT, HUMBLE SERVANT,

CHARLES HEATH.

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LIST OF PLATES.

	Painter.	*Engraver.*
CARLOTTA GRISI	A. E. Chalon, R.A.	H. Robinson.
PERSIANI	Edwin D. Smith.	W. H. Mote.
GIULIETTA GRISI	Vidal.	W. H. Mote.
FANNY ELLSLER	Edwin D. Smith.	W. H. Mote.
CERITO	E. Smith.	W. H. Mote.
TAGLIONI	Vidal.	W. H. Mote.
SONTAG	Paul Delaroche.	H. Robinson.
FALCON	Charpentier.	H. Robinson.
DORUS-GRAS	Charpentier.	W. H. Egleton.
TREILLET-NATHAN	Vidal.	W. H. Mote.

PREFACE.

An English volume devoted to the Beauties of the Opera may not be inaptly prefaced by a slight sketch of the history of the edifice where London has for more than half a century been accustomed to witness those beauties in developement. The limits to which we are restricted must exclude from this account all save essential details; but it is hoped that these will not be found without interest to the readers, who may find it in the succeeding portion of the work.

We must pass over the earlier years of Italian Opera in England, though they are illumined by the fame of the mighty Handel, and—to descend suddenly—are enlivened by anecdotes of the hideous Heidegger. With the courtly sneers of the *Spectator*, the fierce satire of Churchill, alike directed against the Italian school, every body is familiar, and every body is aware that both failed to repress its progress. In vain did Addison wonder why our "forefathers sat together like an audience of foreigners in their own country, hearing whole plays in a tongue they did not understand;" in vain did the English Juvenal rail at "an Italian tribe," and asseverate that

"Never would a truly British age
Bear a vile race of eunuchs on the stage."

From the earlier part of the last century, Opera flourished with but little interruption; and, in 1786, we find it in full vigour under the management of Sir J. Gallini and the eccentric Taylor.

With the year 1789, in which the Old Italian Opera House was destroyed by fire, commences our present sketch. Driven from their own theatre, the Italians found refuge first in the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, and afterwards at the Pantheon. But, during this time, the erection of the new house was urged on with great energy by the indefatigable Taylor; and, so successful were his exertions, that the building now known as Her Majesty's Theatre was opened so early as 1791. The architect was Novosielski; and his genius was universally allowed to be fully displayed in this magnificent work, which, before the curtain, is perfect, though, behind and beneath it, cramped scene-painters and inconvenienced actresses complain, with justice, of want of space for their canvass and place for their *toilettes*.

Taylor, who had been a banker's clerk, but had early been attracted to other "ledger lines" than his employer's, soon got into difficulties; and the latter part of his life was divided between the King's Theatre and the King's Bench. Until 1803 he contrived to retain the management of the former; but, in that year, Mr. Goold, an Irish gentleman of opulence, purchased a third of Taylor's interest in the house itself, and also the exclusive management, which was secured to him for life. This was no long term, for in 1807 Mr. Goold died, his end being accelerated by the complication of annoyances in which his connexion with Mr. Taylor had involved him. The latter then resumed his troublous authority; but a law-suit, prosecuted against him by Mr. Waters, the executor of Mr. Goold, struck a fatal blow at his sovereignty. He fought on till 1813, when Mr. Waters (Goold's executor) became manager, and, in the following April, Waters opened the house. This season was a brilliant one, and, during it, the house was purchased by Mr. Waters for 35,000*l.* This sale was annulled by legal interference, and again Mr. Waters became the purchaser of the theatre—this time for 70,150*l.*

To raise this sum, Waters was obliged to apply for assistance, and he procured it from a gentleman whose name is well known in unfortunate connexion with the Opera House. Mr. Chambers, the banker, took a mortgage of the theatre to secure his advance, and his doing so led to his subsequently embarking in its management.

The year 1817 is celebrated in operatic history, for it introduced to us the glorious Pasta and the *chef-d'œuvre* of the immortal Mozart, *Il Don Giovanni.* But we must not here linger upon these recollections, they will be found in the following pages.

Mr. Waters gradually attained a condition similar to that in which his predecessor had been placed, and, in 1820, he resigned the management to Mr. Chambers, who, however, soon grew terrified, and closed the house abruptly on the 15th of August in that year, a placard announcing to a disappointed public that "no performance would take place that evening." But the age of chivalry was not passed, and Mr. Ebers, a well-known and estimable man, gallantly stepped forward and seized the reins. His arrangements were liberal and judicious; he re-opened the house on the 10th March, 1821, with *La Gazza Ladra*, and, during the season, we had Camporese, Ronzi de Begnis, Ambrogetti, and Eliza Lucy Vestris,—Noblet, Albert, and Coulon. Every body was delighted, and Mr. Ebers lost 7000*l.*

Nothing daunted, Mr. Ebers continued the management, and Mr. Chambers became the purchaser of the theatre for 80,000*l.* He then demanded the enormous rental of 10,000*l.*, and Mr. Ebers agreed to pay it. Caradori and Mercandotti were the new features of the next season. But from the period when this rent was demanded, in the year 1827, Mr. Ebers's management, though most spirited, and apparently successful, was really ruining him. In the meantime, we had the great Rossini among us, and he conducted in the orchestra of the theatre; and the magnificent Catalani, who came and justified to the rising generation the adulation their fathers had lavished upon her voice.

In 1824, the building was reported to be unsafe, and the Lord Chamberlain, who licenses the house (it has no patent), refused to allow performances to take place until it had been examined. In consequence, the Opera once more crossed the way, and the Haymarket Theatre, which was altered to receive it, became again its refuge. The next year, the necessary repairs having been accomplished, the King's Theatre was re-opened. In 1825 (the terrible Bubble Year for the present century), Velluti, the male soprano, was brought forward, and those who shared the singular sensation which the announcement of his coming caused are not likely to forget it. And another acquaintance was this year formed, to which more melancholy recollection attaches—it was the year of the *début* of Malibran—stricken down in the flower of her life—the hour of her triumph.

Mr. Ebers's management terminated with the year 1827, when M. Laporte, an actor of great comic power, and a most indefatigable manager, took the government, and held it, with the exception of one year, until 1842—a long and stormy reign. The interruption was in 1831, in which year Mr. Monck Mason took the house, and brought over a French company and a French opera—*Robert le Diable*. The ill-fated Adolphe Nourrit was among the engagements. The superb work of Meyerbeer was well received, but Mr. Mason did not "put money in his purse."

Laporte's management, among many triumphs, had the credit of introducing to an English audience the glorious Grisi, *prima donna* of the world. Her supremacy has been undisputed, is indisputable, and, until perfection shall be brought forward to rival perfection, the Queen of Song will retain her empire. Praise in regard to Grisi is idle, criticism impossible.

In 1842, the present manager, Mr. Lumley, succeeded to the management, vacant by the death of Laporte. The new manager, a gentleman of high character and business habits, at once obtained the confidence of the subscribers, and a strong demonstration was made in his favour. He has more than realised the expectations he excited. The seasons during which he has presided have been unusually brilliant and prosperous. Mr. Lumley has brought forward the whole of the recognised leaders of vocalism, and has ransacked Europe in quest of additional talent. In most cases, his experiments have been very successful. He has also ventured upon a bold reform in costume, and the eye is no longer offended by the medley of dresses with which the whim or indolence of preceding managers vulgarised the stage. In ballet, Mr. Lumley has been extraordinarily energetic and fortunate; the splendour with which he has produced a series of spectacles in this department has been equalled by their attraction. But let the announcements of the theatre speak for the manager: they have comprised the names of Marie Taglioni, Fanny Elssler, Carlotta Grisi, and Fanny Cerito.

With this tribute to a management which in every respect deserves it, we must conclude our sketch, which assumes to be no more than a sketch, in the words of Philarète Chasles, "*Quant à l'histoire systématique de l'Opéra, elle serait absurde; ce sont des plaisirs vifs et charmants qu'il faut goûter et non décrire.*"

The object of the present Work is to present to the votary of the most refined of public amusements a series of analytical descriptions of the more celebrated achievements in Opera and Ballet, and to illustrate them by engravings, the subjects of which are selected from the "stage effects." The addition of highly finished portraits of the leading vocalists and *danseuses* will, it is hoped, invest the volume with an additional charm for those who are familiar with the talents of the originals, and also for those who know them only by reputation.

LA GISELLE.

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LA GISELLE.

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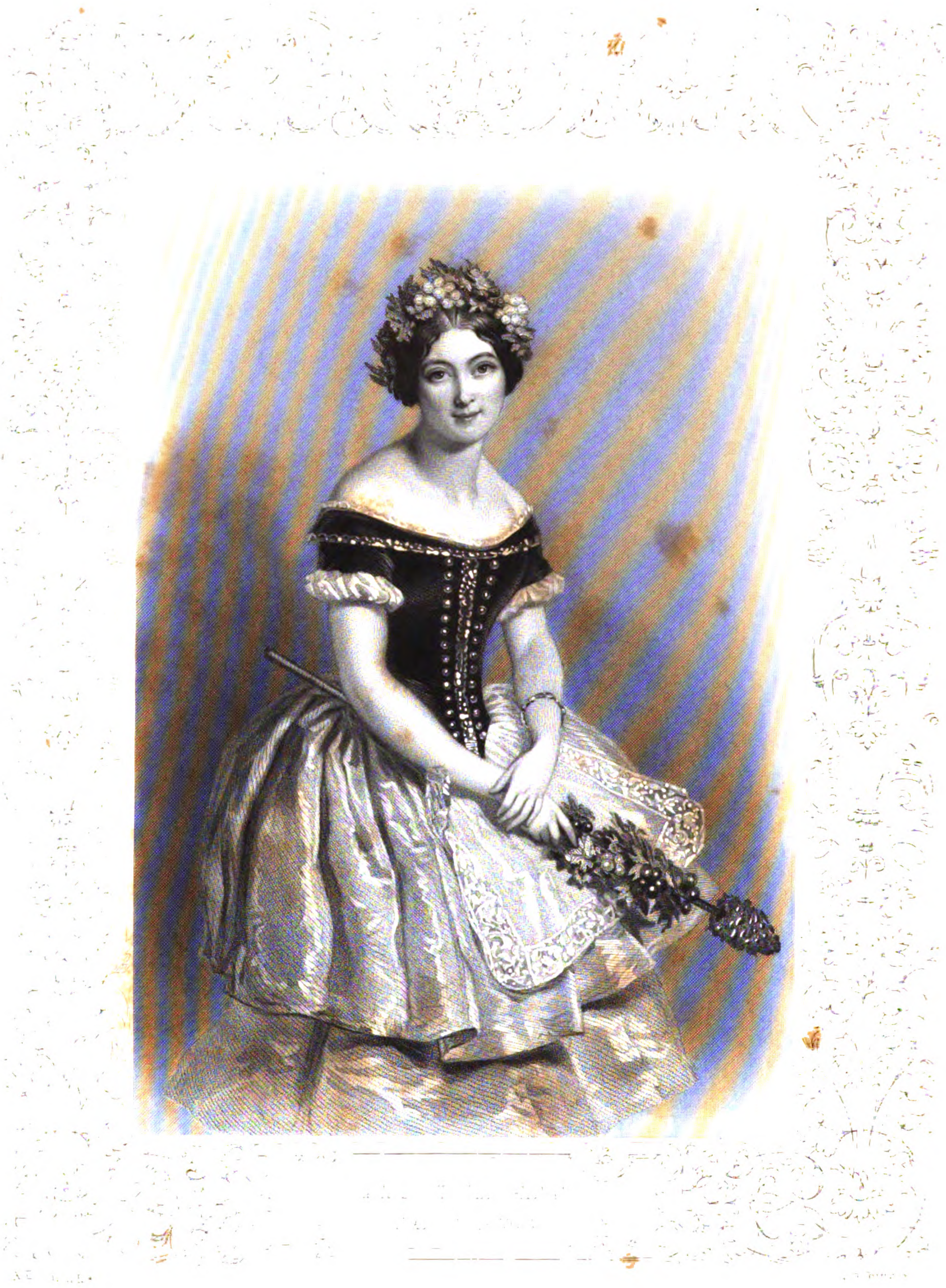
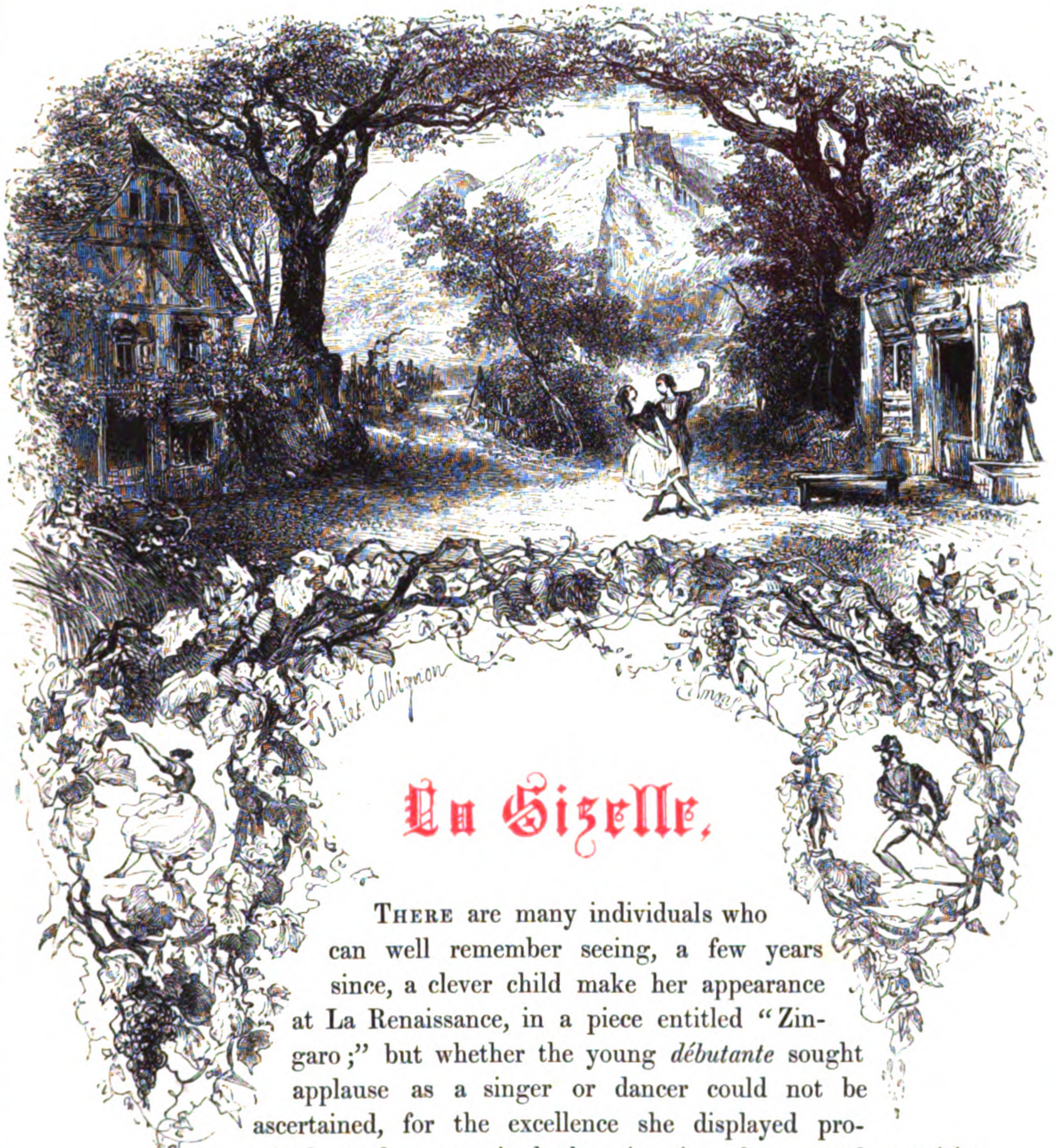




La Gizelle.

THERE are many individuals who can well remember seeing, a few years since, a clever child make her appearance at La Renaissance, in a piece entitled "Zingaro;" but whether the young *débutante* sought applause as a singer or dancer could not be ascertained, for the excellence she displayed promised equal success in both. A voice of pure and exquisite melody, a step light as the winged zephyr, eyes blue as the skies of summer, yet beaming with gentleness and intelligence, were among the rare gifts with which the lavish hand of Nature had invested the subject of this memoir, whose matchless delineations of the tender and love-stricken maiden, Giselle, have elevated to the highest rank both as a dancer and an *artiste*.

Before commencing our analysis of "Giselle," we presume to offer to our readers a few biographical particulars relative to its fair and talented representative.

Carlotta Grisi was born in 1821, at Visinuda, a small, obscure village in Upper Istria; and, as though her distinguished career was shadowed forth in the peculiar circumstances attending her birth, she is said to have first opened her eyes to the light in an old dilapidated palace, celebrated as having been the temporary residence of the Emperor Francis the First; and, in the very bed where the illustrious monarch reposed his head, weary with the weight of a crown, the future empress of the dance tasted her first innocent repose.

From Carlotta's earliest days, she manifested the most decided passion for dancing, and, at the age of only seven years, was engaged at the Milan Theatre as a first-rate *danseuse*. Her extraordinary merit obtained for her the appellation of "La petite Hébérté," as we should now style a child of marvellous talent a "petite Grisi;" for of the period of which we write Mademoiselle Hébérté was the first *danseuse* in Italy. Carlotta's first instructor was a M. Guyet. From his hands, she passed into those of Perrot, who, charmed with his interesting pupil, lavished his utmost care and solicitude for her advancement.

But now for the ballet.

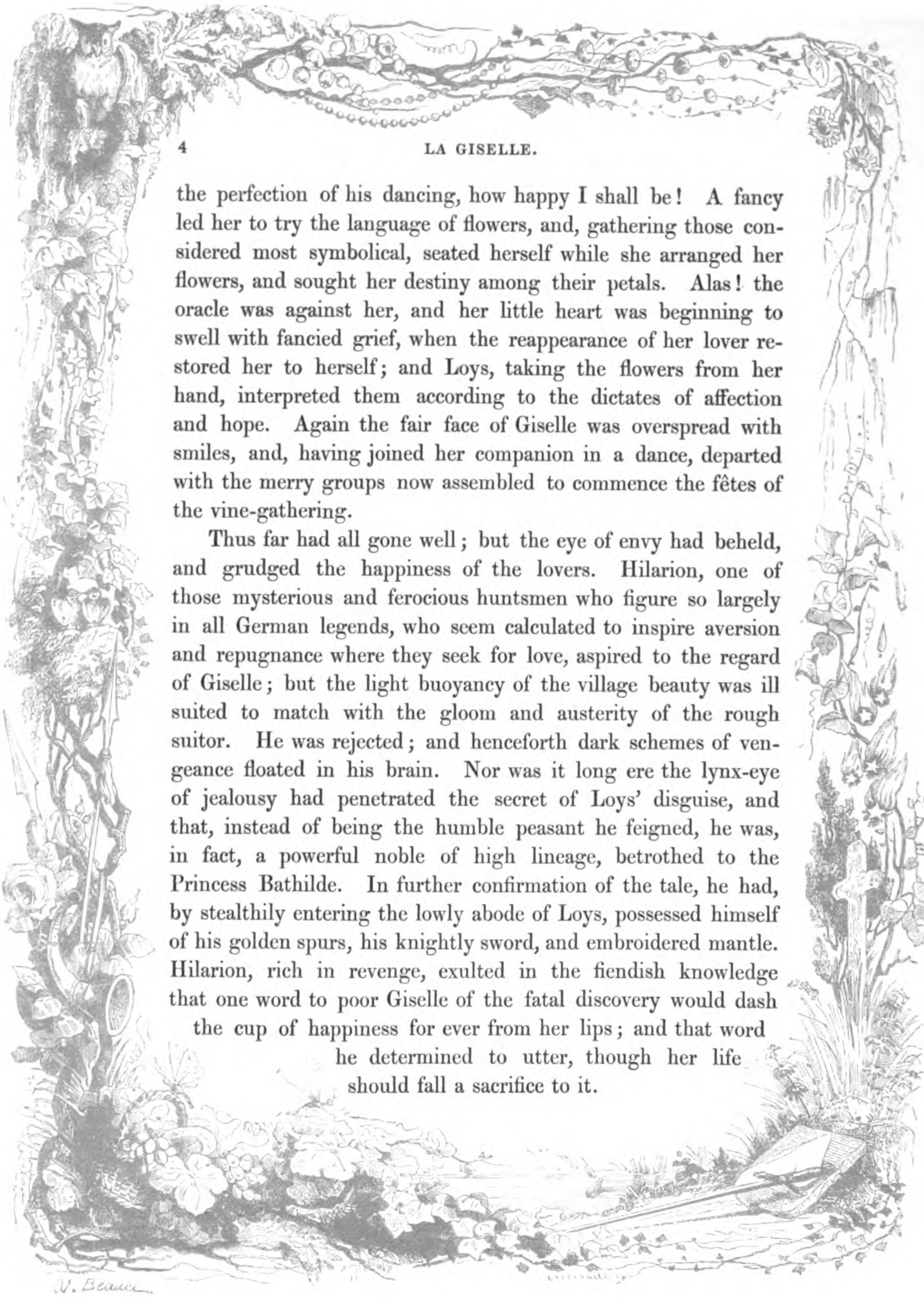
The rising of the curtain displays one of those delicious spots on the Rhine, bathed in its own rich sunlight, and clad in all the magnificence of its autumnal beauty. 'Tis the vintage, and the thick-clustering grapes give ample promise for the coming year. In the distance flows the Rhine, that stream so fraught with inspiration to our poets through all ages.

On one side of the stage, and half hid by the clustering vines and flowering shrubs, is seen a lowly cottage, which, like a coy beauty, seems to shrink from the observation it would appear to invite. Opposite is a similar dwelling; and far in the distance, perched on the summit of a craggy rock, may be discerned the white turrets of one of those feudal mansions, those formidable abodes of despotic power, whose tyrannical owners descended, like hungry vultures, to levy contributions on the unwary traveller.

A youth is perceived traversing the rocky path, and proceeding with light and agile steps towards the first cottage. It is Albrecht, the handsome, graceful owner of the surrounding lands, and possessor of the castellated dwelling on the rock. No thoughts of plunder and warfare fill his mind. Love, mighty love for thee, sweet Giselle! brings him to the plains; and now, in expectation of seeing her at the approaching vine-feast, he quickens his step, while his heart beats high with hope: but he is well aware that to appear adorned in knightly pomp of gold and ermined robe would alarm the timid, modest maiden he loves, who, with all her simplicity, knows well that noble lords do not seek their brides from humble village girls; and this, with many other pure and excellent maxims, she has been taught by Bertha, her mother, a good and amiable creature, worthy of being parent to such a child. Thus, then, Albrecht determines to lay aside all external marks of rank, and, dismissing his esquire, Wilfrid, assumes the attire of a vine-gatherer, and, thus disguised, hastens to taste, in the innocent affection of Giselle, the pure delight of being loved for himself alone.

The opening of the ballet marks the first blush of morning; the door of Bertha's cottage is gently opened, and Giselle, bounding with health and happiness, springs into the open air. And what brings the pretty maiden abroad so early? Is it to proceed to join the groups already at work in the vineyards? But not so industriously disposed is the sweet Giselle. She knows one who loves dancing even as she loves it; and that is, indeed, with an absorbing passion. Even in her dreams, she would whisper to her fond, watchful mother of imaginary dances beneath the green boughs of their village-plain, and of partners who, like herself, knew no fatigue or desire to terminate their flying steps.

The quick eye of Giselle had perceived the approach of the young Albrecht, whom she knew only under the more humble name of Loys, and, bounding towards him, she smiled her pleasure at his approach; but he has disappeared, and the light-hearted maiden becomes thoughtful as she remembers all the stories she has been told of the inconstancy of man. Ah! she thinks, if Loys will only let his love equal

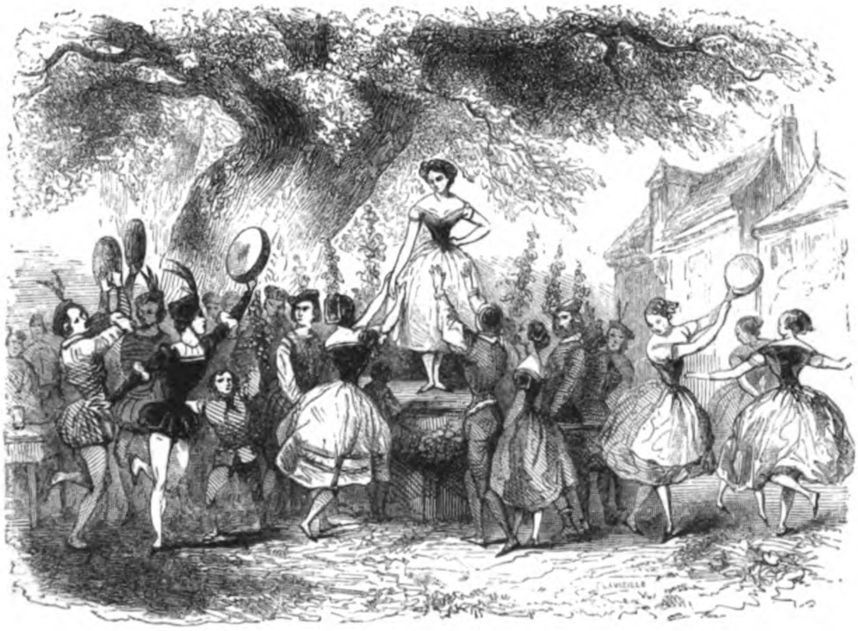


the perfection of his dancing, how happy I shall be! A fancy led her to try the language of flowers, and, gathering those considered most symbolical, seated herself while she arranged her flowers, and sought her destiny among their petals. Alas! the oracle was against her, and her little heart was beginning to swell with fancied grief, when the reappearance of her lover restored her to herself; and Loys, taking the flowers from her hand, interpreted them according to the dictates of affection and hope. Again the fair face of Giselle was overspread with smiles, and, having joined her companion in a dance, departed with the merry groups now assembled to commence the fêtes of the vine-gathering.

Thus far had all gone well; but the eye of envy had beheld, and grudged the happiness of the lovers. Hilarion, one of those mysterious and ferocious huntsmen who figure so largely in all German legends, who seem calculated to inspire aversion and repugnance where they seek for love, aspired to the regard of Giselle; but the light buoyancy of the village beauty was ill suited to match with the gloom and austerity of the rough suitor. He was rejected; and henceforth dark schemes of vengeance floated in his brain. Nor was it long ere the lynx-eye of jealousy had penetrated the secret of Loys' disguise, and that, instead of being the humble peasant he feigned, he was, in fact, a powerful noble of high lineage, betrothed to the Princess Bathilde. In further confirmation of the tale, he had, by stealthily entering the lowly abode of Loys, possessed himself of his golden spurs, his knightly sword, and embroidered mantle. Hilarion, rich in revenge, exulted in the fiendish knowledge that one word to poor Giselle of the fatal discovery would dash the cup of happiness for ever from her lips; and that word he determined to utter, though her life should fall a sacrifice to it.

But the vintage is complete; the grapes are gathered, and the baskets filled to overflowing with their luscious load, and Giselle, elected by common consent as queen of the festival, is crowned with vine-leaves, and carried in triumphal procession. A rural fête is most favourable to dancing, and the little feet of Giselle are kept in continual motion. The anxious Bertha trembled for her child.

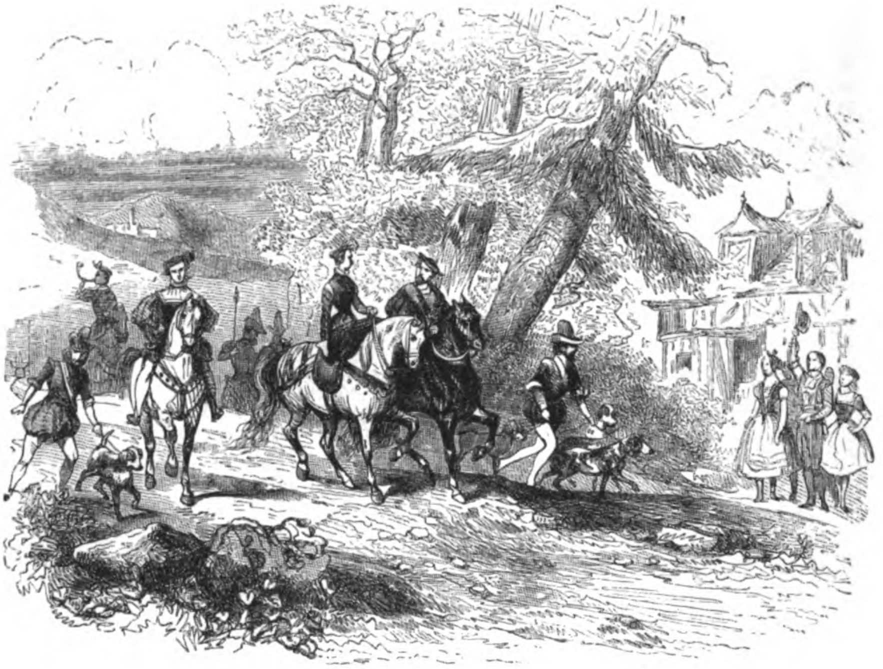
"Unfortunate girl!" cried she, "you will dance yourself into your grave, and even then find no rest; for you will become one of those fearful creatures called *Wilis,* who dance in the midnight hour, clad in the misty vapours of the night, their cold white arms glittering with the damp dews, and, whirling in fearful rapidity around the unfortunate traveller who may cross their path while keeping their unholy revels, they compel him to join in their frantic orgies, till, nearing by insensible degrees the edge of the chill lake near which their fearful rites are celebrated, they oblige the unhappy wretch to plunge into its cold bosom. Oh! my child, my child, you will become a species of dancing vampire."

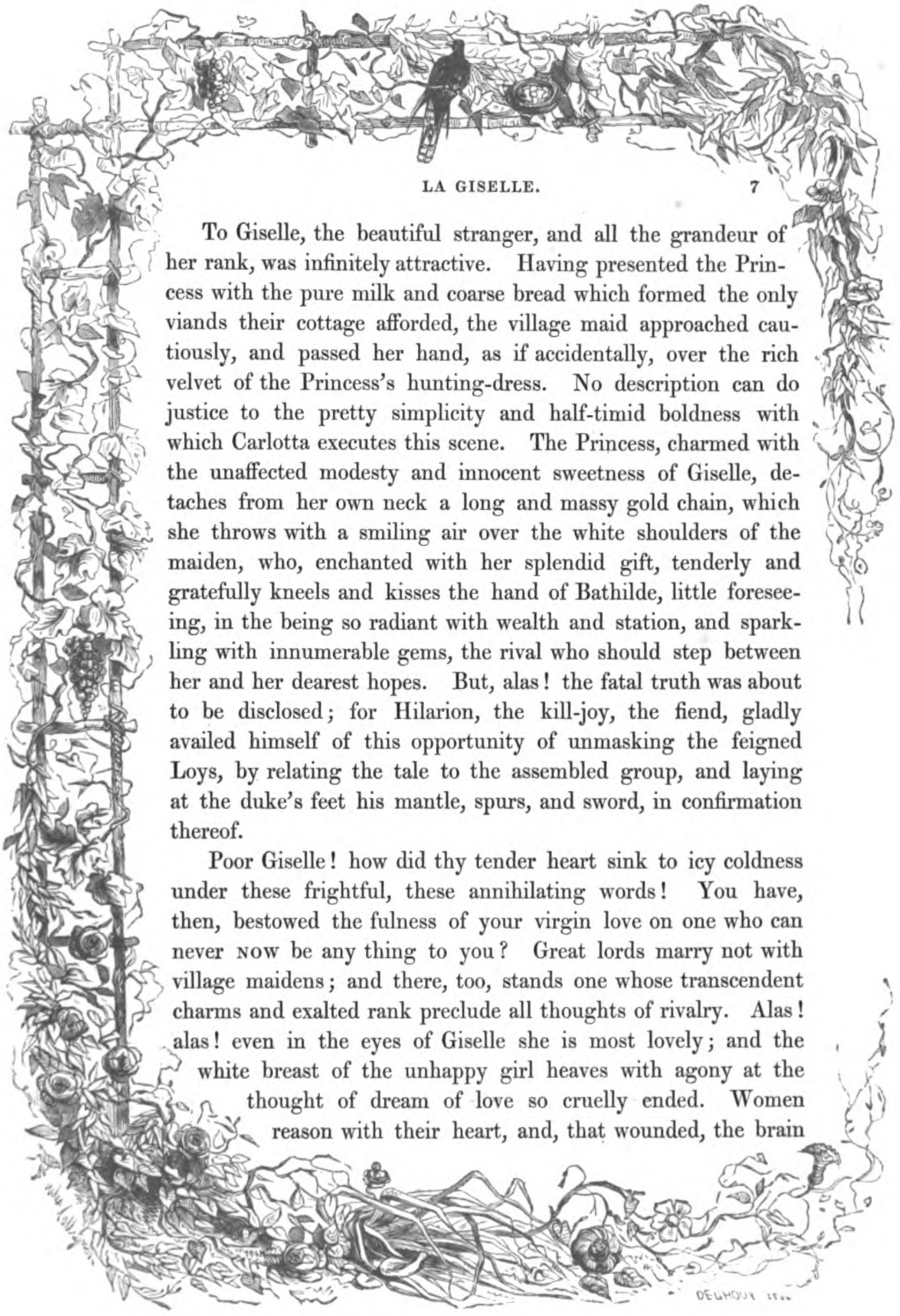


To all these sage maternal remonstrances Giselle replied, as young ladies are in the habit of doing when warned of its being late and time to close the gaiety of the hour, "Nay, *one* dance more; *only* one—a very, very little one;

indeed, indeed, I am not in the least tired." And then, to the threat of becoming a dancing syren after death, the gay-hearted maiden would reply, "Well, surely a dancing probation must be far preferable to being confined, cold and rigid, within the narrow bounds of a coffin." Besides, who, like Giselle, rich in youth, beauty, and love, ever thought seriously of death, or could allow their thoughts to be diverted from the pleasures around them to so gloomy a contemplation as that of the grave?

Tralaloo! hurra! The clear notes of the hunting-horn are heard and repeated by the mountain echoes; the cry of dogs, the restraining voice of the huntsmen, the neighing of steeds, and sound of many voices, announce the arrival of the Princess Bathilde, and the duke, her father, who, with a rich and brilliant *cortège*, have been hunting in the forest. Loys has barely time to conceal himself ere the Princess enters, weary with her day's sport, to seek a little rest, and the refreshment of such homely fare as the hamlet may afford. The attendants knock at the door of Bertha's cottage, and the bustling dame, holding her daughter by the hand, courtesies her readiness and delight to serve so grand a lady, who, spite of her noble air, seems so kind and good as to win all hearts, apart from her being high, and rich, and powerful.

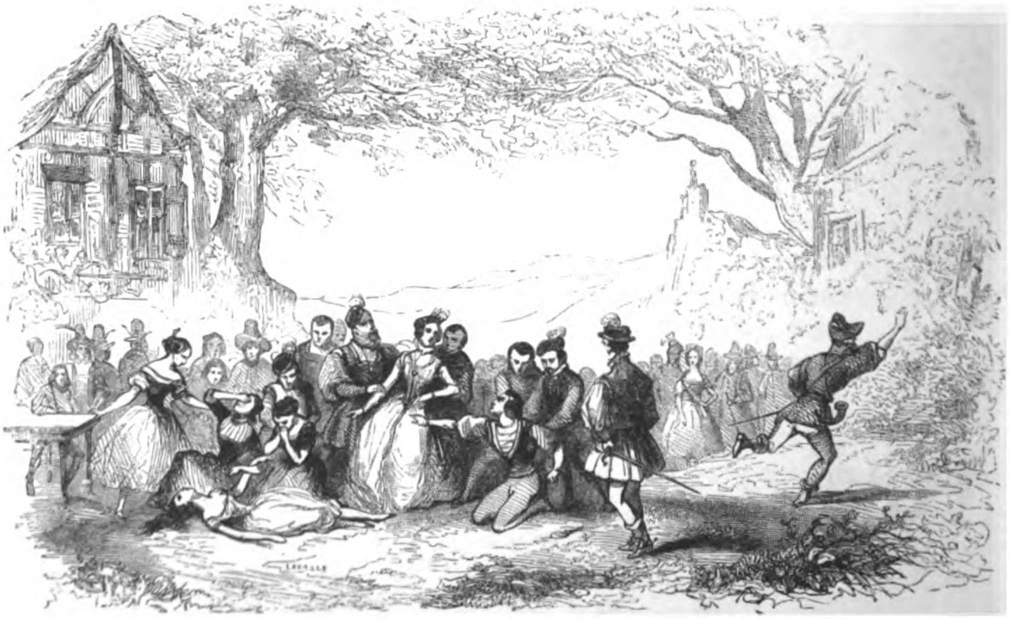


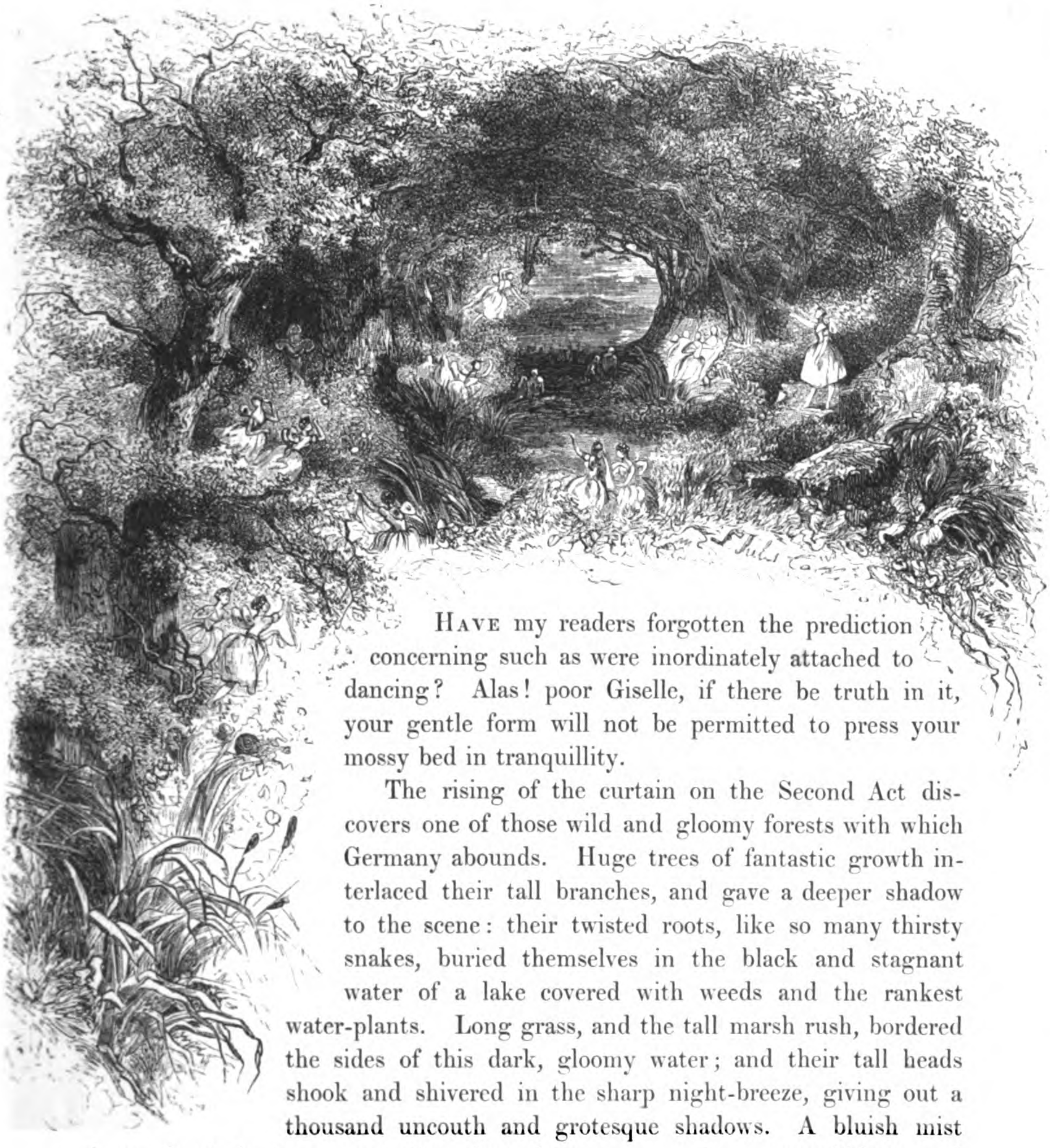


To Giselle, the beautiful stranger, and all the grandeur of her rank, was infinitely attractive. Having presented the Princess with the pure milk and coarse bread which formed the only viands their cottage afforded, the village maid approached cautiously, and passed her hand, as if accidentally, over the rich velvet of the Princess's hunting-dress. No description can do justice to the pretty simplicity and half-timid boldness with which Carlotta executes this scene. The Princess, charmed with the unaffected modesty and innocent sweetness of Giselle, detaches from her own neck a long and massy gold chain, which she throws with a smiling air over the white shoulders of the maiden, who, enchanted with her splendid gift, tenderly and gratefully kneels and kisses the hand of Bathilde, little foreseeing, in the being so radiant with wealth and station, and sparkling with innumerable gems, the rival who should step between her and her dearest hopes. But, alas! the fatal truth was about to be disclosed; for Hilarion, the kill-joy, the fiend, gladly availed himself of this opportunity of unmasking the feigned Loys, by relating the tale to the assembled group, and laying at the duke's feet his mantle, spurs, and sword, in confirmation thereof.

Poor Giselle! how did thy tender heart sink to icy coldness under these frightful, these annihilating words! You have, then, bestowed the fulness of your virgin love on one who can never NOW be any thing to you? Great lords marry not with village maidens; and there, too, stands one whose transcendent charms and exalted rank preclude all thoughts of rivalry. Alas! alas! even in the eyes of Giselle she is most lovely; and the white breast of the unhappy girl heaves with agony at the thought of dream of love so cruelly ended. Women reason with their heart, and, that wounded, the brain suffers with it. The mind of the distracted maiden gave way under the severe trial. Her senses wandered, but her wanderings were characterised by the same gentle sweetness which had always distinguished her. The air to which her beloved Loys and herself had last danced floated in her ears, and she went through all the beautiful steps and attitudes belonging to it with unerring accuracy. Then, as a glimpse of reason darting through her brain reminded her of the sad truth, and her eye fell on the glittering insignia of Count Albrecht's rank and her own desolation, she seized the sword, and sought to plunge it in her side. The rapid hand of Loys dashed the weapon aside, but not before a deep and fatal wound had pierced the young and innocent maiden's breast. Even in last mortal agonies, poor Giselle sought to find relief in dancing; and a wild, unconnected movement, most exquisitely conceived and executed by Carlotta, whose choreographic excellence in the delineation of the dying steps of the heart-broken girl,—now sinking under the cold hand of death, now flying with rapid, bounding step, in frantic joy, as though dancing with her lover as of old,—has never been equalled, and must be seen to be duly appreciated.

But the struggle is over, and Giselle, after a few trembling, faltering steps, falls dead in the arms of Bathilde and Bertha, to the grief and despair of Albrecht, and the remorse of Hilarion, who feels, too late, that his vindictive jealousy has murdered Giselle. And thus terminates the First Act.

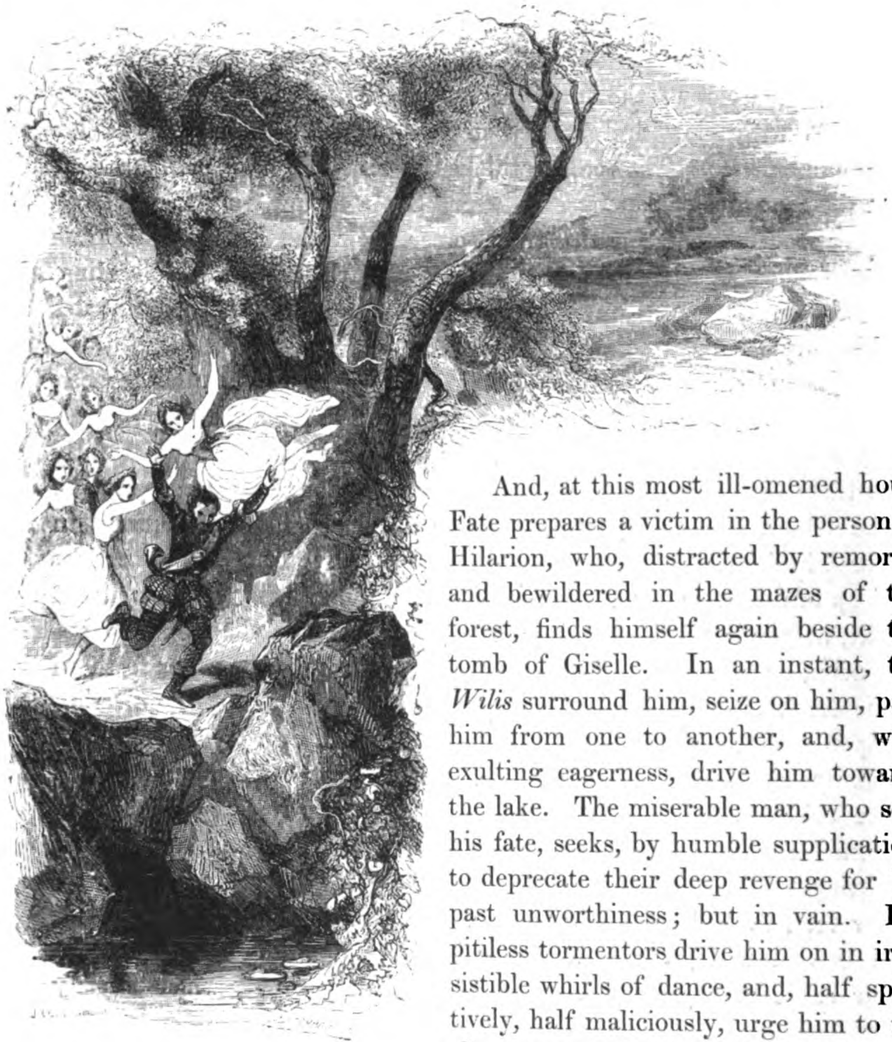




Have my readers forgotten the prediction concerning such as were inordinately attached to dancing? Alas! poor Giselle, if there be truth in it, your gentle form will not be permitted to press your mossy bed in tranquillity.

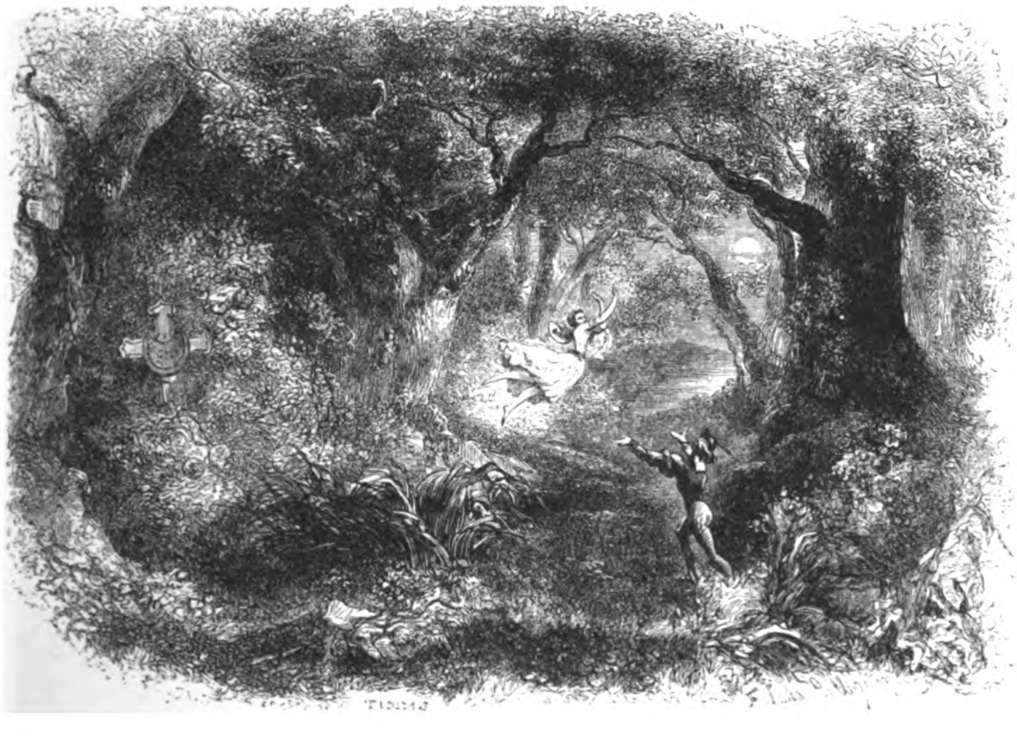
The rising of the curtain on the Second Act discovers one of those wild and gloomy forests with which Germany abounds. Huge trees of fantastic growth interlaced their tall branches, and gave a deeper shadow to the scene: their twisted roots, like so many thirsty snakes, buried themselves in the black and stagnant water of a lake covered with weeds and the rankest water-plants. Long grass, and the tall marsh rush, bordered the sides of this dark, gloomy water; and their tall heads shook and shivered in the sharp night-breeze, giving out a thousand uncouth and grotesque shadows. A bluish mist hung about the trees, converting them, in appearance, to so many hideous and gigantic spectres. The moon, too, has risen, and mournfully seems to shew her pale opal countenance through the fluttering leaves and waving vines. In one corner of this wild spot is a small hillock, covered with moss and wild flowers; on it stands a cross of cold glittering whiteness. A sudden beam of moonlight playing on the cold stone reveals the name of Giselle. Yes, there, at the early age of fifteen, lies the victim of Hilarion,—the tender, loving maiden, whose heart sunk under the weight of his revenge. But a party of hunters approach. What can they want in so wild and mysterious a spot, where, instead of stags and hares, they are only likely to encounter phantoms, on whom powder and ball are alike powerless? The dull secluded spot is ill calculated for such sport as marksmen aspire to. And, hark! the midnight hour tolls its leaden sound on the night-breeze,—that solemn division of time which bids the living seek repose, that the restless dead may arise from their stony couches to seek for it. All unearthly things are in motion; the fiery meteors flits over the dank exhalation of the marshes, and innumerable coruscating lights rise from the bosom of the stagnant water, and give a ghastly illumination to the scene. Let those strong in their bodily and mental courage laugh at such nocturnal horrors; the shuddering feeling engendered by them will find its way to the sternest breast. And so it was with Hilarion and his companions: a cold icy feeling crept through their veins; their trembling limbs refused to support them, and, bathed in drops of perspiring agony, they fled the awe-inspiring spot, leaving the wretched Hilarion, who, as though spell-bound, hung paralysed with dread at the discovery of Giselle's grave being at his feet.

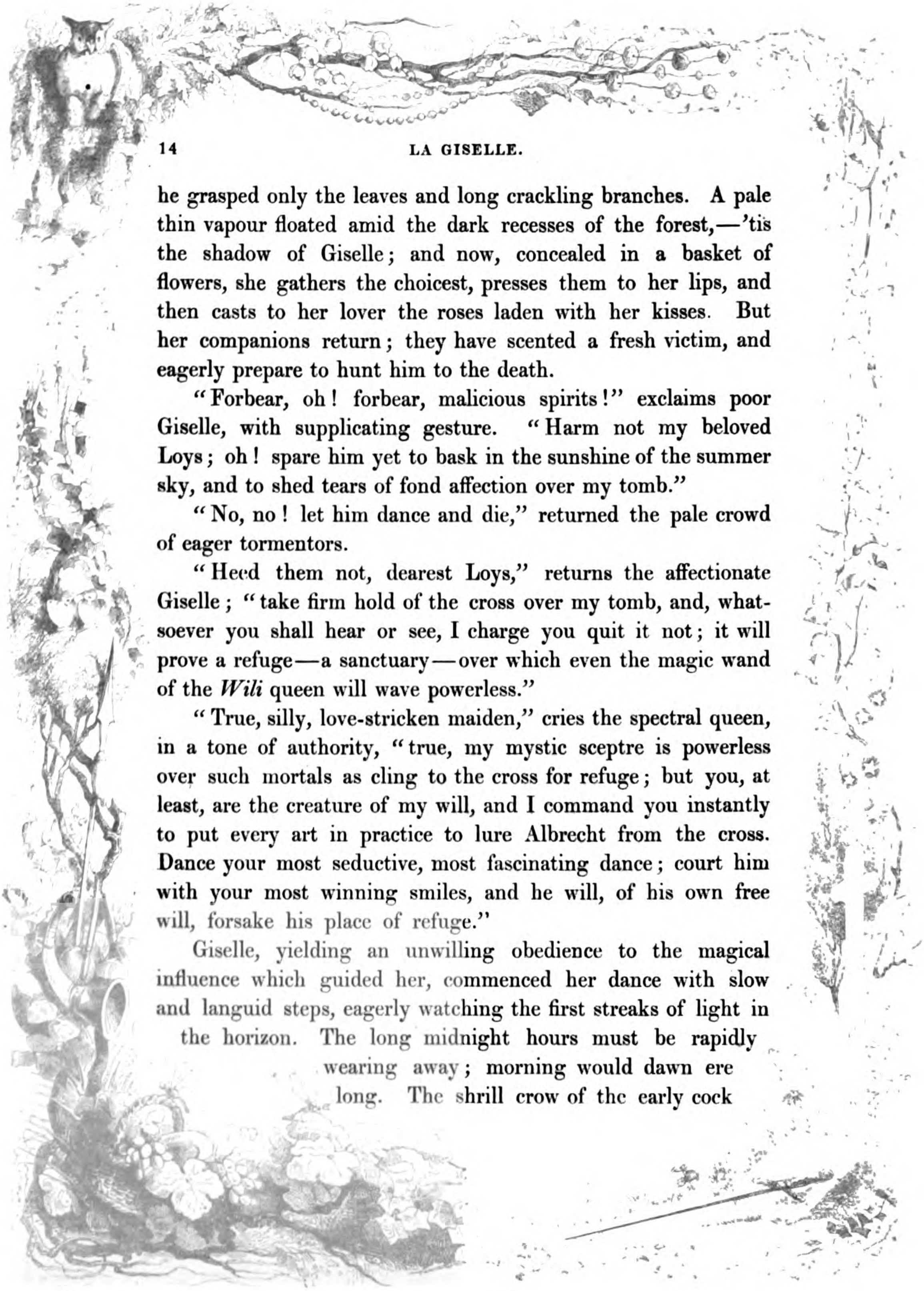
Alone, deserted by his companions, in this wild and deserted spot, his guilty conscience whispered in his ear that the hour of retribution had arrived, and, as the moon poured forth her full light, his eye recognised the mysterious circles on the greensward, traced by the midnight dances of the *Wilis,* as they whirled through their mystic rites. And now is the very witching hour for the commencement of their unholy revels. A gentle movement trembles over the smooth turf, the petals of a night-lily are slightly parted, and a pale vapour is exhaled, which, gradually condensing, becomes distinct and visible, as the light form of a young and lovely girl, cold and white as the moonlight that gleams on her motionless features. The tiny sceptre in her long thin fingers indicates the presence of the queen of the *Wilis.* Elevating this magic wand, she describes various cabalistical signs, by which she summons her subjects from all quarters of the globe. But her reign extends only over the female part of creation. Man,—gross, selfish, pleasure-seeking man,—could never peril his precious life in pursuit of the amusement which has subjected so many fair creatures to the hard penalty of becoming a *Wili*. And now the summoned arrive from all parts of the world: the haughty Andalusian, proud of her beauty and high lineage; the melancholy German; and the dark-eyed Bayadère, her raven locks bound with the gold circlet of the torrid zone from which she comes, and executing, with slow and stately steps, the sacred evolutions of her national dance. The crowd thickens; all who have lived as well as died for love of dancing are here. Some spring from the yawning earth; others descend the trees, creep from the bushes, rise from the sedges of the lake. Numbers still throng to the meeting, until the queen, again waving high her mystic sceptre, intimates the purpose for which they have been called together, namely, the admission of another victim—the fair Giselle—to their sisterhood; one whose life gave fair promise of distinguishing their airy revels when once enrolled among them. The spectral forms bow quiescently to their sovereign, who, extending a cypress-bough over the grave of the departed maiden, straight arises a pale, rigid form, dressed in her winding-sheet. Awakened thus suddenly from the dreamless sleep of death, at the motion of the charmed branch, the resuscitated girl, as yet but half conscious, mechanically obeys the signal to approach, and advances with faltering steps; but, as she steps forth in the fresh air, and sees the silvery moonlight glitter on the quivering aspen-leaves, her full tide of reason returns, and with joyous eagerness she springs over the mossy turf, in rapture at being removed from the cold atmosphere of the grave, like a butterfly just emancipated from his chrysolid state, she dances in exulting happiness, and, lightly flitting round and round the queen of the *Wilis*, kneels at length at her feet, in full submission to her will. The inauguration is now proceeded with; a glittering star is placed upon her forehead; from her shoulders spring out a pair of thin filmy wings, which already seem anxious, by their flutterings, to bear the novice through the regions of air. The queen signs to her attendants to instruct their new sister in their magic waltz. But this is found wholly unnecessary, the fair novice being even more light, airy, and agile, than themselves. And now beware, benighted travellers! Suffer not your weary feet to approach this mystic dell, or a wretched fate is yours,—that of being forced by these dancing syrens to join their revels, till your unguarded steps carry you to the slimy edge of the dark lake, whose stagnant bosom opens to receive and bury you from all human search.



And, at this most ill-omened hour, Fate prepares a victim in the person of Hilarion, who, distracted by remorse, and bewildered in the mazes of the forest, finds himself again beside the tomb of Giselle. In an instant, the *Wilis* surround him, seize on him, pass him from one to another, and, with exulting eagerness, drive him towards the lake. The miserable man, who sees his fate, seeks, by humble supplication, to deprecate their deep revenge for his past unworthiness; but in vain. His pitiless tormentors drive him on in irresistible whirls of dance, and, half sportively, half maliciously, urge him to the slippery summit of the bank. Thence one wild fiendish effort constrains the unfortunate being to precipitate himself into the dark water of the sleeping stream. A splash, a groan, and a struggle, a few bubbles on the surface of the water, and Hilarion's history is ended!

But the crackling branches of the trees are parted with a hasty grasp. Who comes so daringly at this lone hour to so fearful a spot? 'Tis the bereaved and sorrow-stricken Albrecht, hastening to pour forth his soul over the tomb of his beloved Giselle, to supplicate her gentle spirit to pardon the wicked concealment of his rank, for which alone his conscience accuses him, since the purity and intensity of his passion for the lost maiden were equal to any test that might have been applied. The spirit of Giselle sympathised with the deep grief of her lover. A light sigh, as though exhaled by a passing zephyr, sounded on his ear. The youth started,—the sound appeared to proceed from a near thicket of flowering shrubs. From among their clustering leaves he recognised the deep blue eyes of his lost love, watching him with looks like the bright stars of heaven. "Stay; in mercy stay, heavenly vision!" exclaimed the enraptured youth; "quit me not until I have again beheld that lovely form I feared the cold earth had hid for ever from my gaze!" and with eager and extended arms he approached the desired spot; but





he grasped only the leaves and long crackling branches. A pale thin vapour floated amid the dark recesses of the forest,—'tis the shadow of Giselle; and now, concealed in a basket of flowers, she gathers the choicest, presses them to her lips, and then casts to her lover the roses laden with her kisses. But her companions return; they have scented a fresh victim, and eagerly prepare to hunt him to the death.

"Forbear, oh! forbear, malicious spirits!" exclaims poor Giselle, with supplicating gesture. "Harm not my beloved Loys; oh! spare him yet to bask in the sunshine of the summer sky, and to shed tears of fond affection over my tomb."

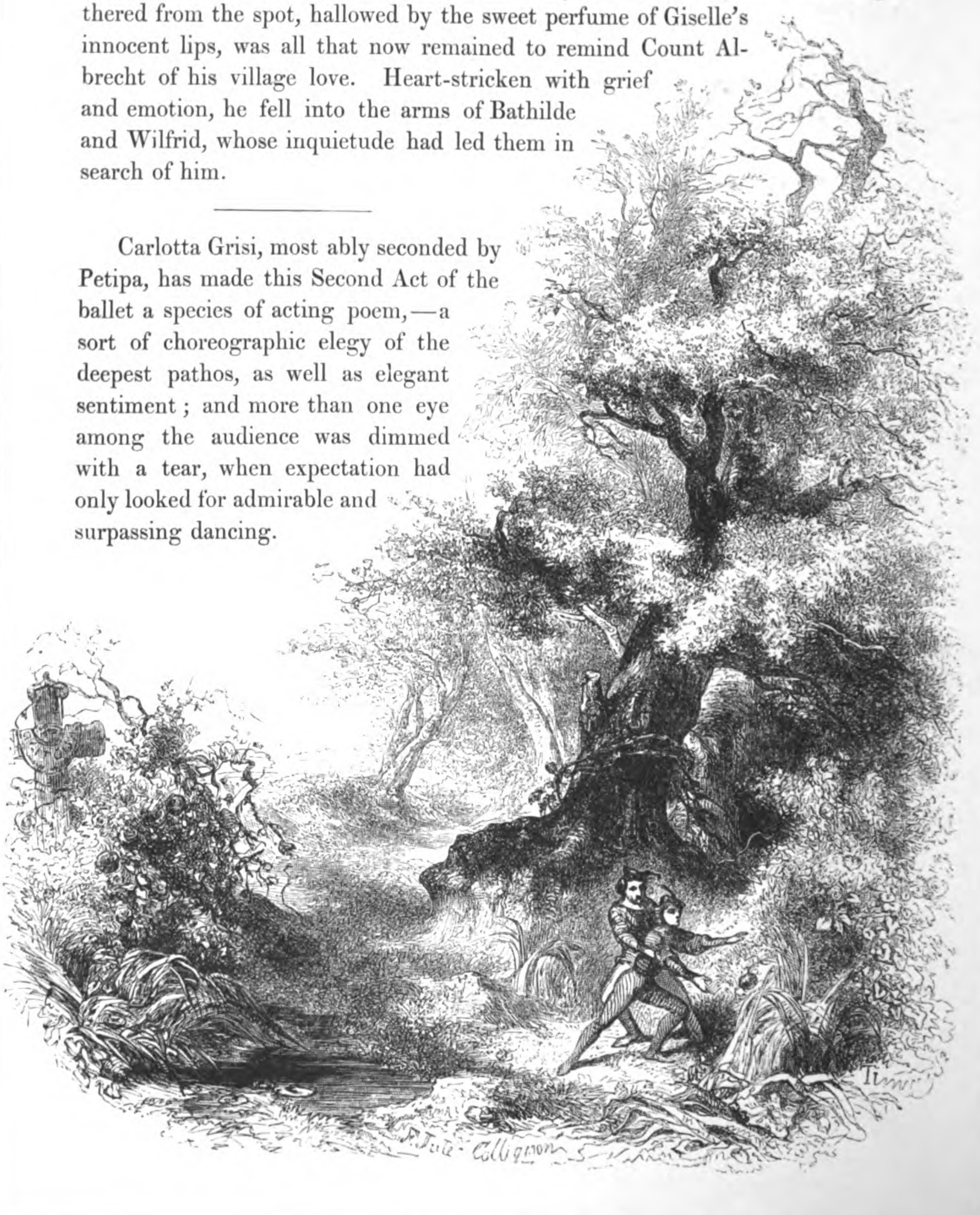
"No, no! let him dance and die," returned the pale crowd of eager tormentors.

"Heed them not, dearest Loys," returns the affectionate Giselle; "take firm hold of the cross over my tomb, and, whatsoever you shall hear or see, I charge you quit it not; it will prove a refuge—a sanctuary—over which even the magic wand of the *Wili* queen will wave powerless."

"True, silly, love-stricken maiden," cries the spectral queen, in a tone of authority, "true, my mystic sceptre is powerless over such mortals as cling to the cross for refuge; but you, at least, are the creature of my will, and I command you instantly to put every art in practice to lure Albrecht from the cross. Dance your most seductive, most fascinating dance; court him with your most winning smiles, and he will, of his own free will, forsake his place of refuge."

Giselle, yielding an unwilling obedience to the magical influence which guided her, commenced her dance with slow and languid steps, eagerly watching the first streaks of light in the horizon. The long midnight hours must be rapidly wearing away; morning would dawn ere long. The shrill crow of the early cock would ere long be heard; and, if Albrecht but retained his holy position till then, he would be in perfect safety from the *Wilis* and their queen: and, full of this delightful hope, the poor, loving semblance of Giselle sought to disguise her powers of attraction, and merely made a faint and languid pretence of dancing, fearful of beguiling her lover from his post. Alas! already the fascinated looks of the young man were fixed on her with so admiring a gaze, that he held his precious asylum with one hand only. The inexorable Myrtha compelled the shrinking Giselle to dance with greater energy and animation; and, obeying the mandate, she gave herself up to the full delight of the moment,—flying, bounding, floating, as it were, upon mid air; while her lover, forgetting the certain destruction that awaited him, flew to her side, took part in her dances, her attitudes, deeming himself but too happy to die for one so dear. The giddy whirling of this almost frantic dance had well-nigh exhausted Albrecht, who, faint, out of breath, and beyond the power of resisting, had approached the very verge of the fatal water, when a neighbouring clock, in clear, distinct tones, chimed the fourth morning hour. A faint glimmer of light broke across the eastern sky; the mists rolled off the valley; the horizon shewed a pale red, the harbinger of coming day, which, rapidly increasing, tinged the surrounding clouds with a golden hue. The *Wilis* hastened to conceal themselves in their accustomed haunts, —the fissures of rocks, the hollow of trees, or crouched beneath the broad leaves of the water-lily. Albrecht is saved—Giselle sinks exhausted on the ground—flowers rise up and form a covering over her—while a pure transparent vapour encompasses the spot. Her small white hand still shewed itself through its leafy covering, waving a last adieu to him she should never more behold. Then the hand disappeared,—the earth had reclaimed its own, to part with it no more. Almost distracted, Albrecht rushed towards the flowery bed; but in vain. A rose gathered from the spot, hallowed by the sweet perfume of Giselle's innocent lips, was all that now remained to remind Count Albrecht of his village love. Heart-stricken with grief and emotion, he fell into the arms of Bathilde and Wilfrid, whose inquietude had led them in search of him.

Carlotta Grisi, most ably seconded by Petipa, has made this Second Act of the ballet a species of acting poem,—a sort of choreographic elegy of the deepest pathos, as well as elegant sentiment; and more than one eye among the audience was dimmed with a tear, when expectation had only looked for admirable and surpassing dancing.



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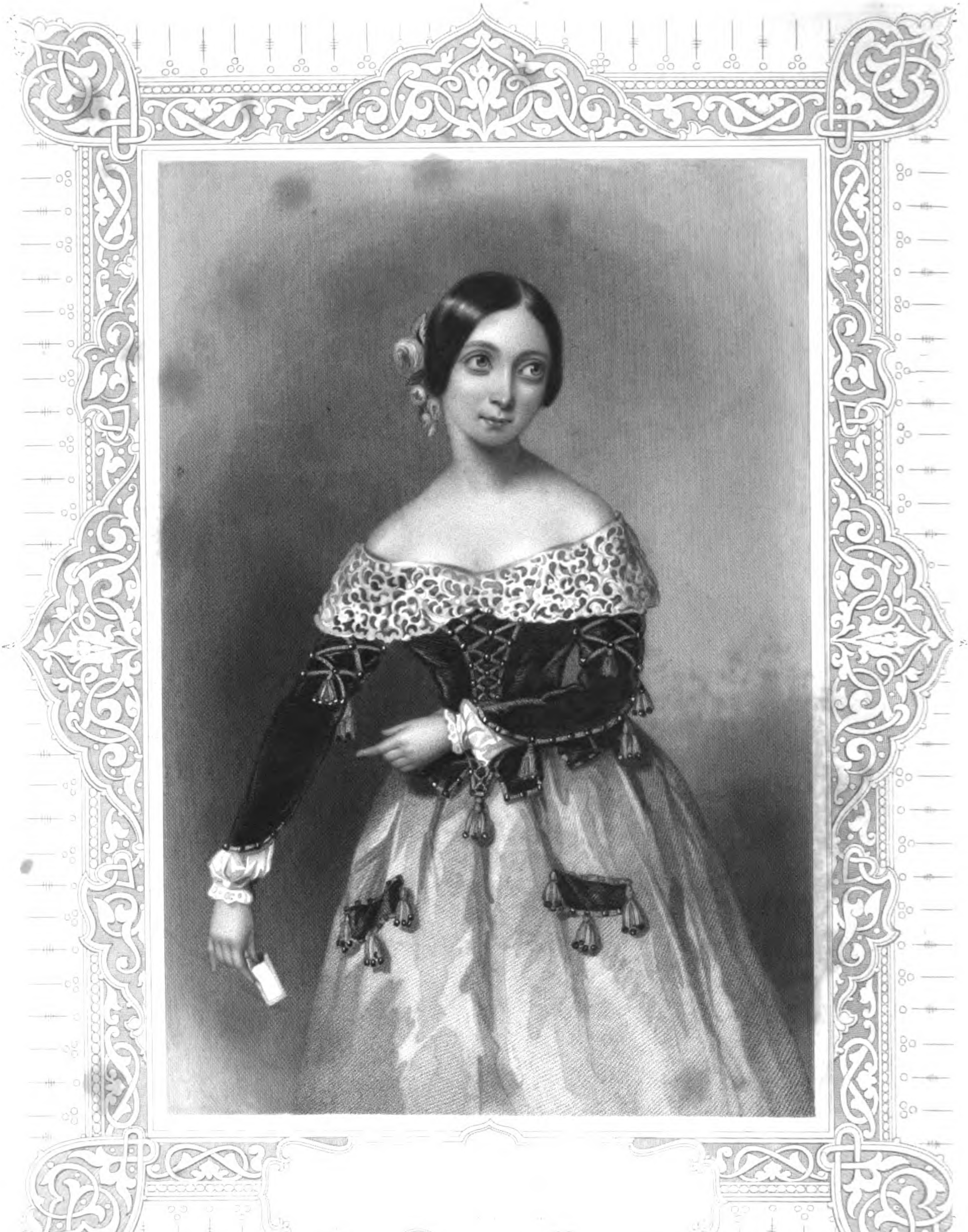
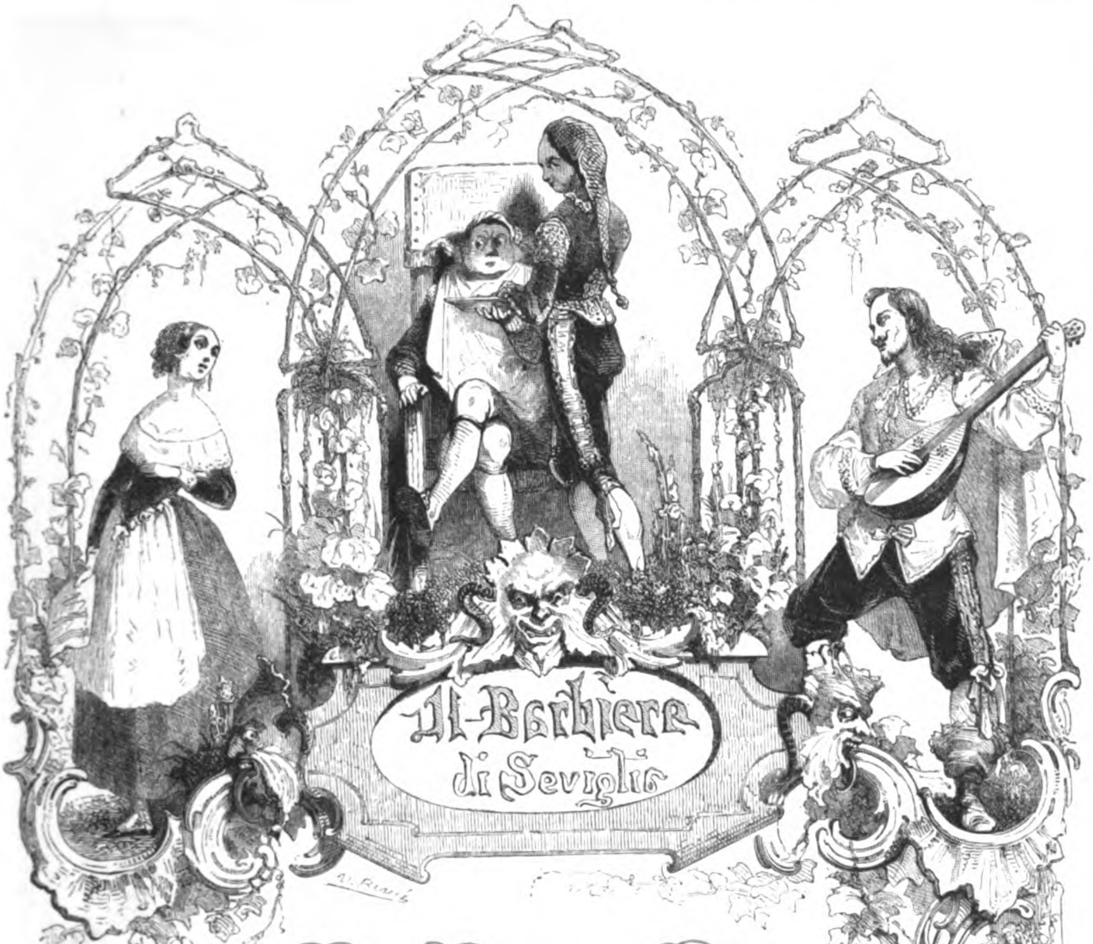




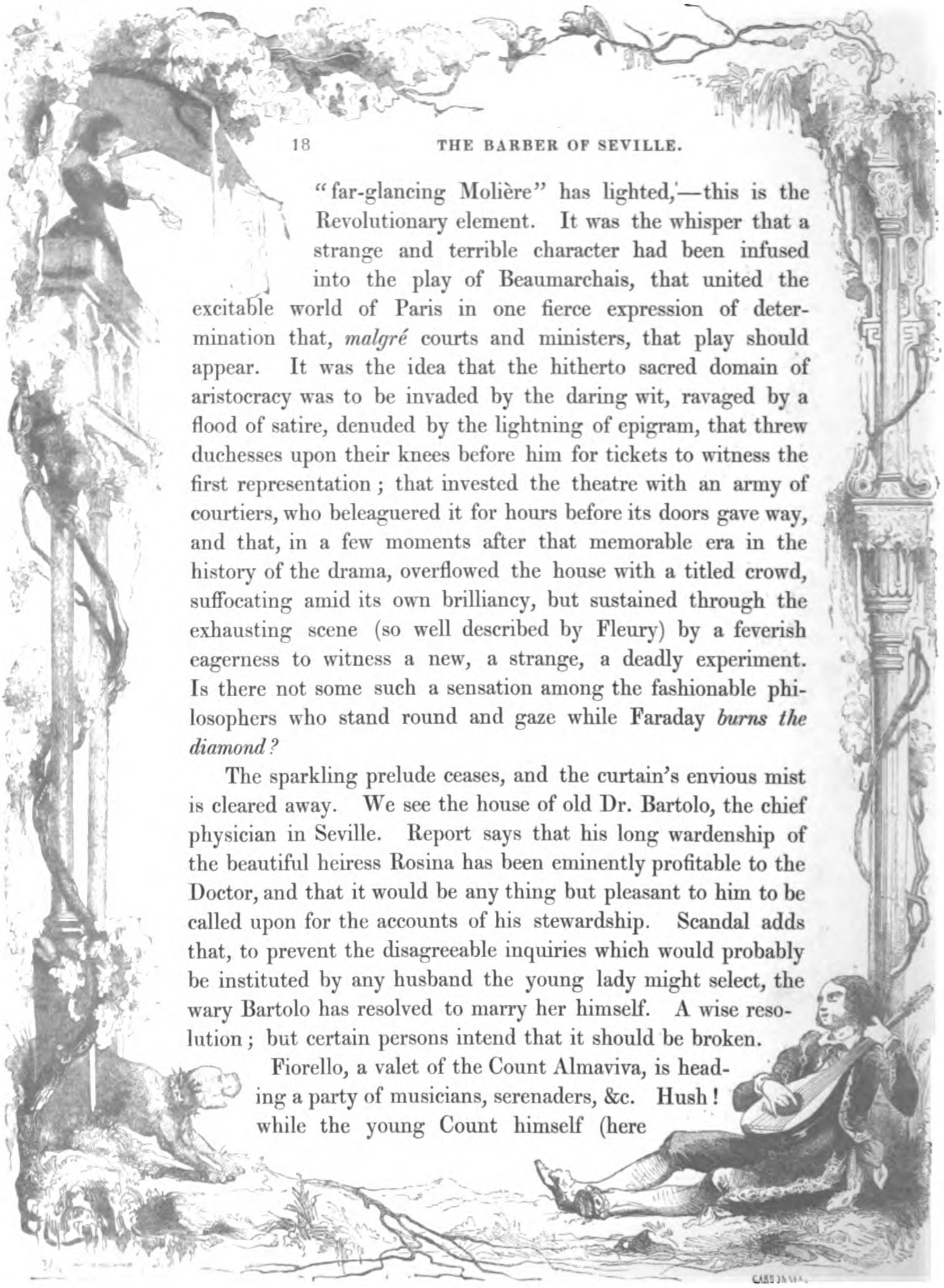
The Barber of Seville.

If there is one dramatic subject better known than another, it is, most assuredly, "The Barber of Seville." The play of Beaumarchais has had a reputation so wide and so popular, that it is hardly possible to offer upon its merits comment or criticism which has not already been pronounced or printed. Figaro, Bartolo, Basilio, Rosina, Almaviva, are names

> "Familiar in our mouths as household words;"

types which, in spite of their sparkling originality, are as common, as human, and as lasting, as the masks of the ancient comedy.

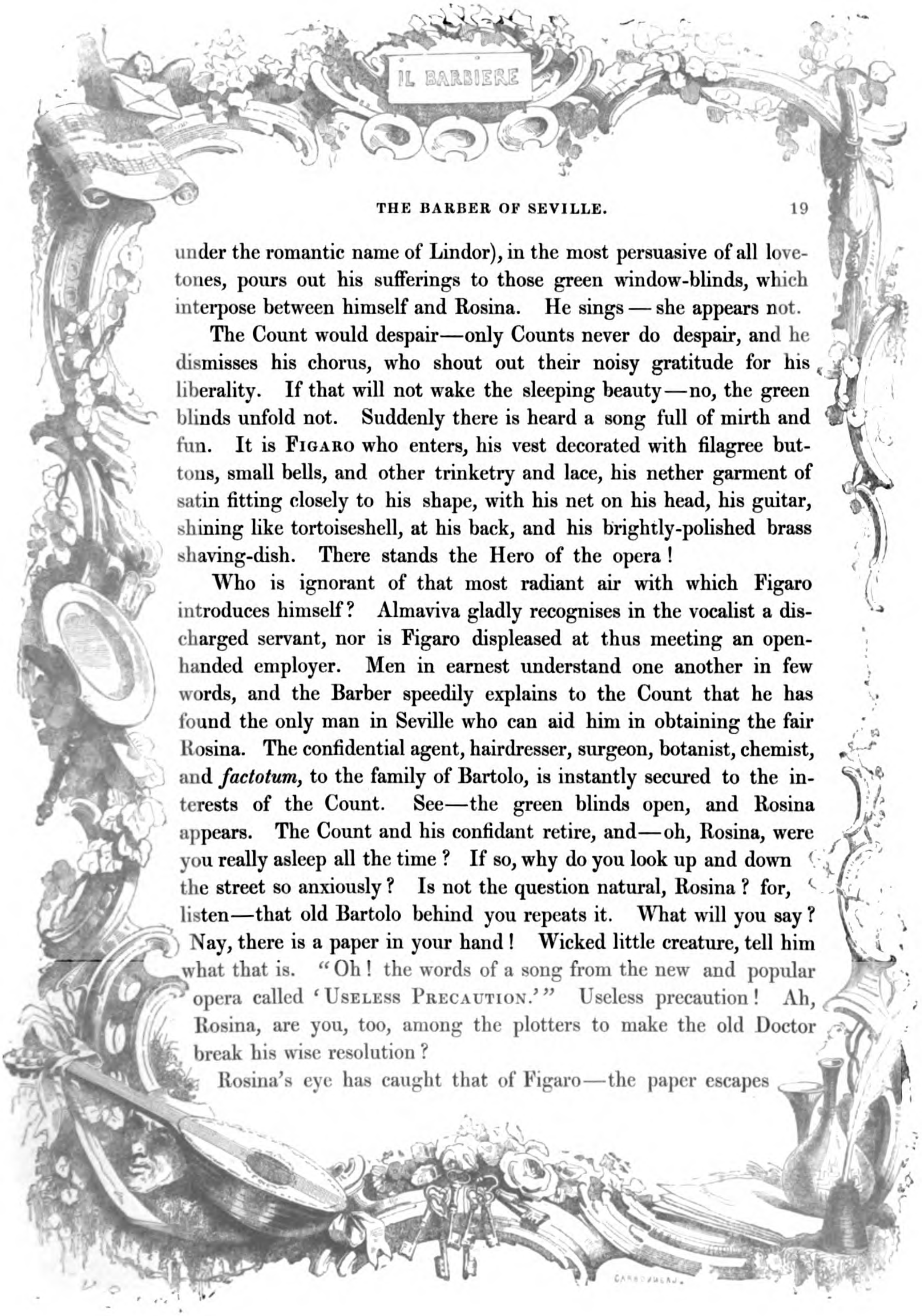
But in the composition of Figaro a new element is detected, employed by neither the African nor the Umbrian dramatist, and upon which not even the



"far-glancing Molière" has lighted,—this is the Revolutionary element. It was the whisper that a strange and terrible character had been infused into the play of Beaumarchais, that united the excitable world of Paris in one fierce expression of determination that, *malgré* courts and ministers, that play should appear. It was the idea that the hitherto sacred domain of aristocracy was to be invaded by the daring wit, ravaged by a flood of satire, denuded by the lightning of epigram, that threw duchesses upon their knees before him for tickets to witness the first representation; that invested the theatre with an army of courtiers, who beleaguered it for hours before its doors gave way, and that, in a few moments after that memorable era in the history of the drama, overflowed the house with a titled crowd, suffocating amid its own brilliancy, but sustained through the exhausting scene (so well described by Fleury) by a feverish eagerness to witness a new, a strange, a deadly experiment. Is there not some such a sensation among the fashionable philosophers who stand round and gaze while Faraday ***burns the diamond?***

The sparkling prelude ceases, and the curtain's envious mist is cleared away. We see the house of old Dr. Bartolo, the chief physician in Seville. Report says that his long wardenship of the beautiful heiress Rosina has been eminently profitable to the Doctor, and that it would be any thing but pleasant to him to be called upon for the accounts of his stewardship. Scandal adds that, to prevent the disagreeable inquiries which would probably be instituted by any husband the young lady might select, the wary Bartolo has resolved to marry her himself. A wise resolution; but certain persons intend that it should be broken.

Fiorello, a valet of the Count Almaviva, is heading a party of musicians, serenaders, &c. Hush! while the young Count himself (here

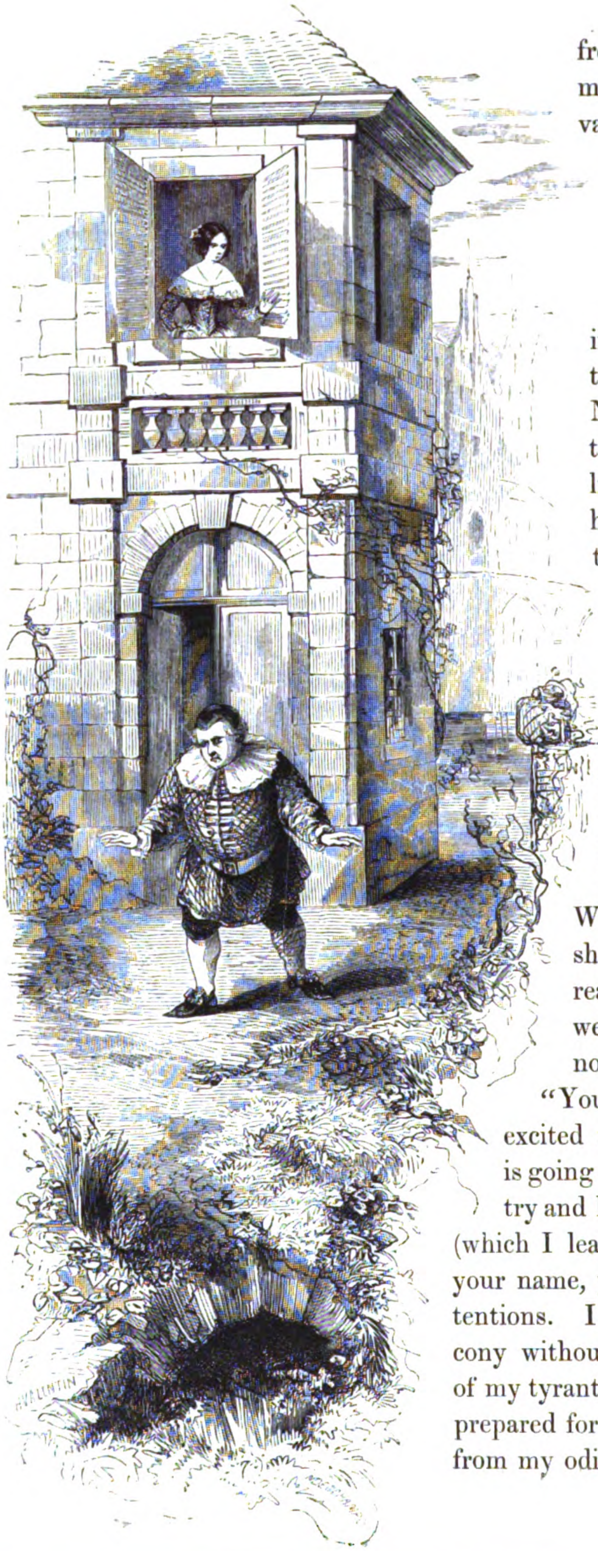


under the romantic name of Lindor), in the most persuasive of all love-tones, pours out his sufferings to those green window-blinds, which interpose between himself and Rosina. He sings — she appears not.

The Count would despair—only Counts never do despair, and he dismisses his chorus, who shout out their noisy gratitude for his liberality. If that will not wake the sleeping beauty—no, the green blinds unfold not. Suddenly there is heard a song full of mirth and fun. It is **Figaro** who enters, his vest decorated with filagree buttons, small bells, and other trinketry and lace, his nether garment of satin fitting closely to his shape, with his net on his head, his guitar, shining like tortoiseshell, at his back, and his brightly-polished brass shaving-dish. There stands the Hero of the opera!

Who is ignorant of that most radiant air with which Figaro introduces himself? Almaviva gladly recognises in the vocalist a discharged servant, nor is Figaro displeased at thus meeting an open-handed employer. Men in earnest understand one another in few words, and the Barber speedily explains to the Count that he has found the only man in Seville who can aid him in obtaining the fair Rosina. The confidential agent, hairdresser, surgeon, botanist, chemist, and *factotum*, to the family of Bartolo, is instantly secured to the interests of the Count. See—the green blinds open, and Rosina appears. The Count and his confidant retire, and—oh, Rosina, were you really asleep all the time? If so, why do you look up and down the street so anxiously? Is not the question natural, Rosina? for, listen—that old Bartolo behind you repeats it. What will you say? Nay, there is a paper in your hand! Wicked little creature, tell him what that is. "Oh! the words of a song from the new and popular opera called 'USELESS PRECAUTION.'" Useless precaution! Ah, Rosina, are you, too, among the plotters to make the old Doctor break his wise resolution?

Rosina's eye has caught that of Figaro—the paper escapes



from her fingers, and the next moment that exemplary servant has placed it in the hands of the Count. "But, oh! Doctor, Doctor," she exclaims, "I have dropped my piece of music into the street; pray run down for it—I would not lose it for the world!" Bartolo run! No; but he obeys his mistress to the best of his abilities, and descends as well as he can. And does he find the music? Look at him in the margin of our page. He retires into the house grumbling; if we mistake not the import of Lablache's thunder, he swears a little into the bargain. He will shut up the balcony—like King Lear, he "will do such things." While he considers what they shall be, let us hear the Count read the young lady's note, for we fear that it is neither more nor less than a *billet-doux*.

"Your constant attentions have excited my curiosity; my guardian is going out; as soon as he has gone, try and let me know by some means (which I leave to your own ingenuity) your name, your position, and your intentions. I cannot appear in the balcony without the inseparable company of my tyrant; but be assured that I am prepared for any step which will free me from my odious chains."

"Somewhat frankly said, for a young maiden." So remarks Werner, upon an occasion when another young lady makes an unhesitating avowal of her affection. But if we think Rosina a little imprudent, it is *but* a little; for what *chaperon* of forty seasons could make more pertinent inquiries,—"Your name and rank, sir; your position and prospects in society; and your intentions?" Truly, we have great hopes that Rosina will be a worthy Countess Almaviva. But what shall we say of Dr. Bartolo, or of parents and guardians of his order, whose practice of immuring maidens from the world and its pleasures teaches them cunning instead of wisdom, and renders them beyond measure clever in securing matches beyond measure foolish?

A less plain-spoken *billet* than Rosina's would have been more than satisfactory to a lover with the Count's spirit, and one question only occurs to him,—"How can I get into the house?"

"Have you money, my lord?" asks the philosophic Figaro.

"Plenty."

"Then I shall soon have plenty of ideas for you. Soon! I have an idea already. Assume the disguise of a soldier."

"Of a soldier,—and why? This is a case of love, not of quarrel."

"The two things come together often enough," says Figaro; "but listen. A regiment has just entered Seville; its commanding officer is an old friend of yours; communicate with him, in order to guard against accidents; and then, dressed *en militaire*, go to Dr. Bartolo, and say you are quartered upon him."

The Count condescends to approve the scheme of the Barber, and hastens away to put it in practice.

Ah! a chamber in Bartolo's house. While the Count goes away to plot and scheme for entrance, we are quietly introduced to

> "The temple where his wishes dwell."

And here Rosina warbles the celebrated confession of love, the exquisite "Una voce poco fa;" which, from the lips of Persiani, resembles a shower of silver spangles flickering and glittering over the theatre.

Figaro enters, announces that he has something to tell, but is interrupted by the entrance of the Doctor and his friend and parasite, Basilio, who has informed Bartolo of Almaviva's arrival in Seville. The two rogues plot to remove this dreaded Lothario, by spreading a slanderous report concerning him; but Figaro overhears the scheme.

And now, pretty Rosina, for another evidence of the wisdom of your guardian in secluding you from the world. Your solitude has kept you innocent and artless, doubtless. What says Figaro, himself no mean judge of innocency and artlessness? You ask him—for you know nothing about it—who is the gentleman with whom he was conversing under your window; and Figaro tells you that the gentleman's name is Lindor, and that he is dying with love. "For whom?" you ask, most unsuspectingly; and most naturally do you start with surprise when he replies, "For Rosina." Then your hurry to see Lindor, to hear him express his ardent passion! Figaro tells you that your lover waits but a note from you—but two lines. Modest child! how shocked you are! you "do not wish"—"you should blush to do it." But he insists—and our dear Rosina takes from her bosom a note ready written. What, we ask again, says the judicious Figaro?—

"Donne! donne! Eterni Dei!
Chi vi arriva a indovinar?"

Figaro is gone; and now for the guardian. His eyes have been opened, and he requests to know the mission of the Barber.

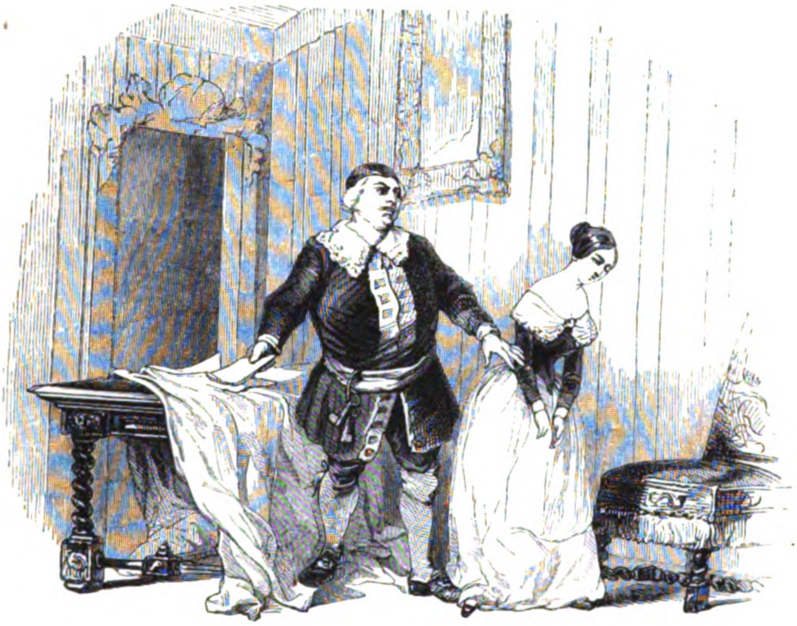
"Did he bring an answer to your note?"

"What note, guardian?"

"Oh! no evasions; that air from the 'Useless Precaution;'—and how," he exclaims, seizing her pretty hand, "how came that finger so marked with ink?"

Rosina pleads an accident, and Bartolo, though utterly sceptical, cannot refute her excuse.

"But," he says, "look at these sheets of paper; in the morning, there were six, now there are but five. Where is the missing sheet?"



Another excuse, true as the former one. Rosina had used it to wrap up some sweetmeats for a little friend.

"And why did you cut that pen?"

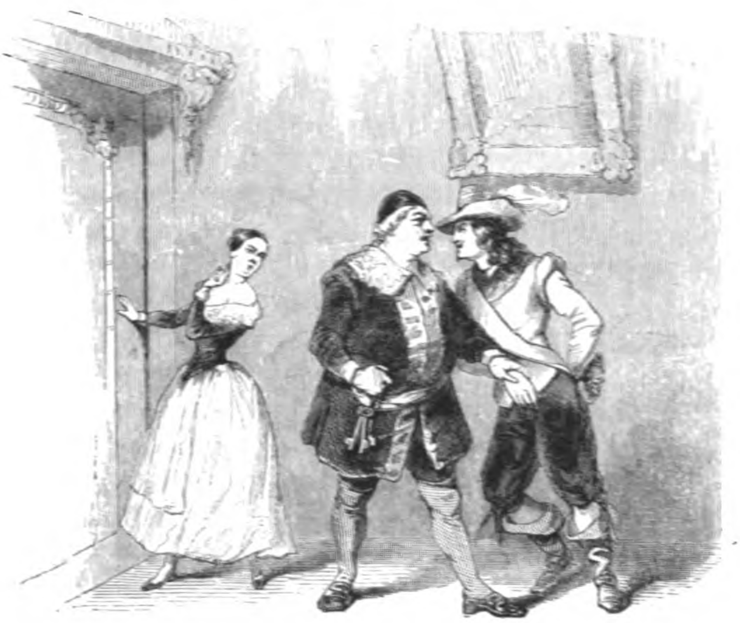
"Oh, to draw a flower for my embroidery."

Artless lady! — the Doctor is unconvinced, and orders you to your bed-room.

Here is a clatter! Has Seville risen in revolt, or have the Moors again invaded Spain? No; all this noise is caused by one handsome young nobleman, really very much in love, and apparently very much in liquor. It is Almaviva, in his soldier's disguise. He sees Bartolo, and he staggers up to him, saluting him affectionately by half a score of names—none the Doctor's own. Bartolo indignantly repels his advances, but the persevering lover clings to him, embraces him, and they scuffle together until the noise attracts Rosina. The

Count whispers his name, and, amid her delight, the wary maiden counsels prudence:—

"Ah! giudizio, per pietà."



The gallant Count keeps up the scene of disturbance until he has an opportunity of shewing a note to Rosina, and of begging her to be ready to drop her handkerchief upon it. He vows to Bartolo that he likes his quarters, and is resolved to stay with him, upon which the Doctor, losing all patience, threatens him with a cudgel. This delights Almaviva, who draws, and, declaring that he will have much pleasure in fighting the Doctor, makes a number of thrusts at him, to the infinite terror of Bartolo. Seizing the moment when the attention of the latter is distracted, the Count drops the note, and the lady's handkerchief falls simultaneously. But Bartolo has noticed the paper, and when Almaviva, with a bow to Rosina, hands her the kerchief and the note, her guardian demands to see the latter.

"It is nothing," replies Rosina.

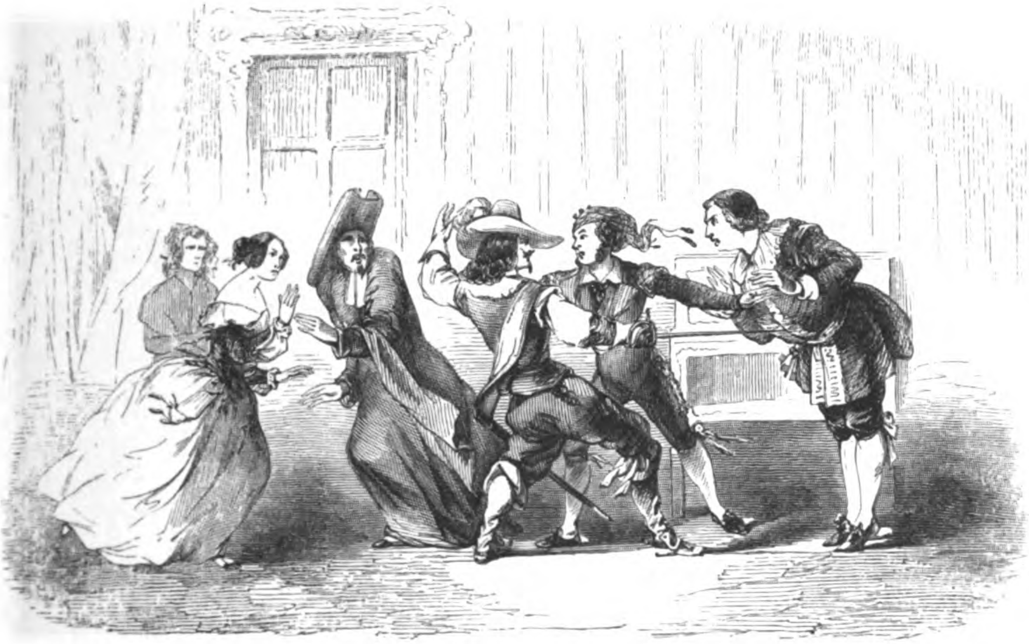
"But exactly what I wish to see."

"It is only a list of articles of dress ——"

"False, false; give it me."

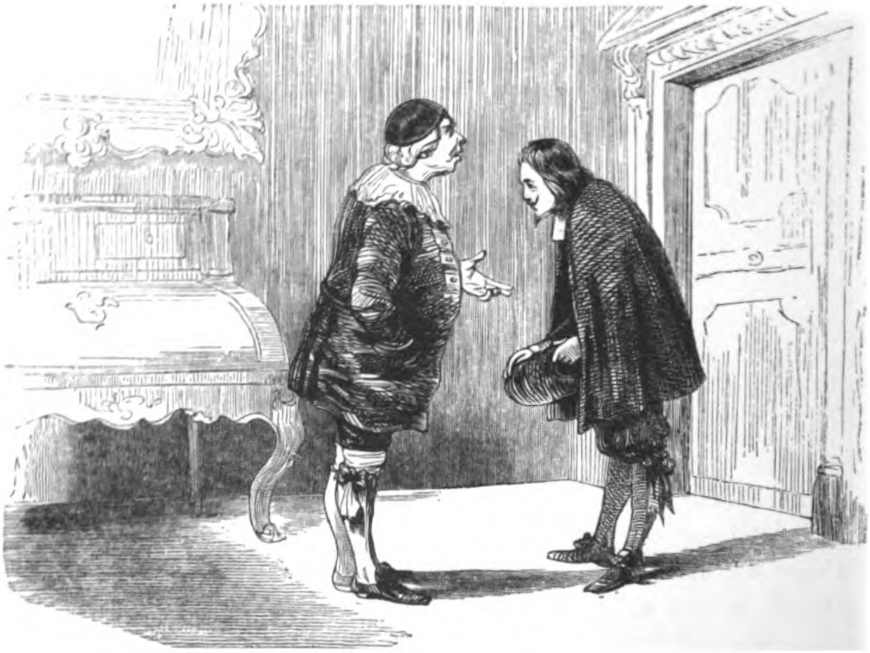
He snatches it from her, and discovers that she has spoken the truth: he does not discover that she has changed the paper.

The storm is renewed, and Figaro enters to remonstrate; the Doctor is really outrageous, and the Count affects to be so. Vowing to put Bartolo to death, he makes a desperate pass at him, but Figaro interferes. Basilio, who has crept in, is terrified out of his senses, and Rosina thinks fit to pretend alarm.



A tremendous knocking announces the police, and an officer with guards appears. All parties speak, threaten, accuse, and counter-accuse, at once; and the Count Almaviva, as the armed and most prominent disturber of the peace, is arrested, to the delight of the Doctor, and the consternation of Rosina. But there are orders which the police are obliged to respect; among them is the Order of the Grandees of Spain. Almaviva privately shews this decoration to the officer in command, and is instantly liberated. All are astonished, and after one of those stirring and spirited choruses of concerted confusion and pre-arranged astonishment, for which Rossini is so famous, the curtain descends upon the end of the First Act.

Dr. Bartolo is in a state of extreme discomfort, and certain presentiments are hovering about him, pertinaciously forcing themselves into gloomy vistas, which terminate in alternate *tableaux*, one representing the marriage of his ward to the unknown Count Almaviva, and the other displaying himself, most reluctantly producing certain unsatisfactory accounts of his stewardship. He has made inquiries in the newly-arrived regiment, and finds that nobody there knows any thing of his tipsy and riotous guest. The Doctor more than suspects that the *soi-disant* soldier is but an emissary of Almaviva, sent to sound the affections of Rosina. While bemoaning his destiny, the eternal Count enters, disguised as a music-master. Most affectionately does he salute the Doctor.

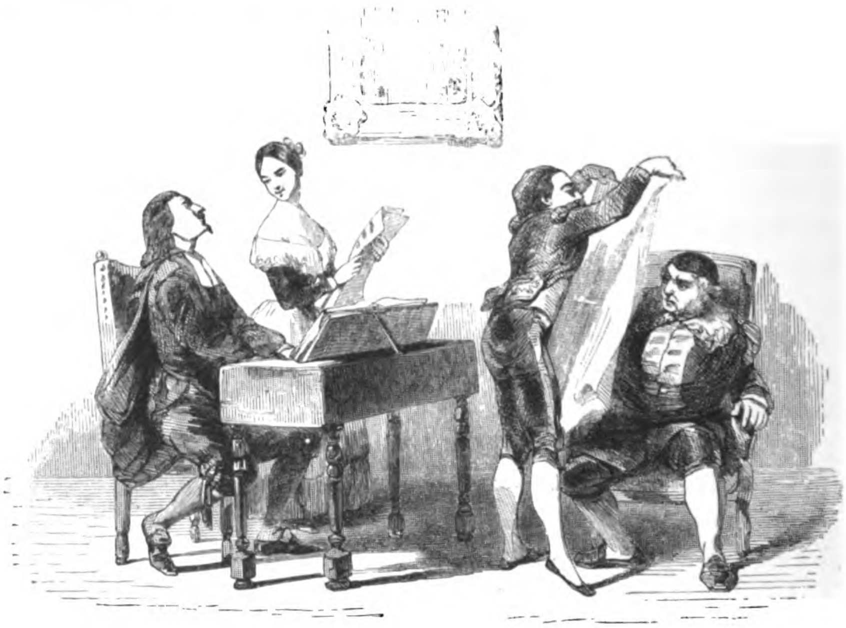


"May Heaven send you peace and joy," implores the Count.

"A thousand thanks! don't trouble yourself," is the ungracious response.

In vain does the lover go through a whole litany of supplications in favour of the Doctor, who threatens him with chastisement if he do not leave his prayers, and come to the point. Thus adjured, the unknown visitor states that he is one Don Alonzo, a professor of music, and pupil of Basilio, who, he says, has been taken seriously ill. The Doctor proposes instantly to visit Basilio, accompanied by his informant; but this does not precisely accord with the Count's wishes. His invention is not quite so ready as that of Figaro. Beaumarchais knew better than to introduce two first-rate wits into one play; and it must be admitted that Almaviva's new expedient is somewhat clumsy. He produces the note which Rosina wrote to him that morning, and suggests that he should see the lady, and should endeavour to persuade her that the faithless Count had betrayed her confidence. The contrivance succeeds better than it deserves to do. Rosina recognises her Lindor, and, in compliance with his request, she sings the charming "Il dolce canto," an air redolent of passion, and as dramatically appropriate as it is beautiful.

The confederate Figaro enters, and proposes to shave his patron, in order to divert his attention from the young couple. Against the Doctor's wishes, he is compelled to yield to the petulance of his servant—how this must have amused that courtly audience!—and consents to submit himself to the hands of Figaro. The latter rogue demands the keys of the Doctor's closet, in order to get the necessary articles for the toilet, and Bartolo incautiously trusts him with the bunch, from which Figaro soon finds means to abstract the key of the lattice opening upon Rosina's balcony. A loud crash is heard, the Doctor rushes out to ascertain its cause, and the Barber runs in and shews the Count that he has possessed himself of the key. Bartolo returns in an outrageous passion at the havoc Figaro has made in his china-closet, but seats himself to be shaved. At this moment, unfortunately for the plotters, the supposed sick Basilio enters; but the audacity of Figaro supports the imposture; and, while the Count secretly slips a purse into Basilio's hand, Figaro loudly implores him to go home, his feverish state being apparent. The parasite is too well bribed to resist the entreaty, and allows himself to be driven out amid a chorus of great humour. Rosina and the Count go to the pianoforte, while Figaro prepares to shave the Doctor, and stand between the latter and the lovers, in order to screen them as much as possible from the sight of Bartolo.



This scene is richly comic; but the hundred devices of Figaro to prevent his patient from observing the endearments of Lindor and his mistress fail at last, and Bartolo overhears enough to throw him into a paroxysm of rage, during which he turns them all out of the room; not, however, until a midnight assignation has been made by the persons most interested.

Basilio, sold to all parties, returns, and convinces the now maddened Doctor that the music-master was no other than Almaviva. Bartolo resolves to free himself from all his fears by marrying his beautiful ward that very evening. More mystery. The notary has been secured by Figaro to assist at the nuptials of a niece. Figaro's niece! "What niece? he has no niece."

The Doctor dismisses Basilio, desiring him to bring the notary, and summons Rosina. The awkward expedient of Almaviva is now made to tell against his courtship with great effect. He has either had no time, or has not remembered—love's memory is, in more senses than one, pitiably short—to explain to Rosina why he has given up her note. This Bartolo produces to her, and, to her shame and sorrow, informs her that her adored Lindor not only jests with her love, but is in league with Figaro to deliver her over to the unknown profligate Almaviva. Poor Rosina! how bitter those tears; how much more bitter that resolve to wed the Doctor. Another of the myriad marriages at which Pique plays the father, and "giveth this woman to be married to this man."

"Do you still wish to marry me, sir?"

Happy doctor! how ready his affirmative.

"Then so be it, sir; and instantly. He is to be here at midnight; let him find me wedded."

Those accounts, Dr. Bartolo, those accounts. After all, they need not be made out; in the marriage contract you will find a release in full of all demands. Go, bridegroom and bride, and prepare.

The hour is stormy, the rain is dashed furiously against the house; but the balcony window opens, and Figaro and the Count, wrapped in cloaks, and the former bearing a dark lantern, enter silently. Almaviva looks impatiently round for Rosina. Her anger to-night brings her forward more readily than did her love this morning. She is right in more easily yielding to the more reasonable passion, for "anger," says the poet, "is a short madness, love a long one." She approaches.

"Ah! my soul's treasure," exclaims the passionate Count.

"Stand back, wretch!"

The lover is petrified, and implores an explanation. Rosina indignantly orders him to be silent.

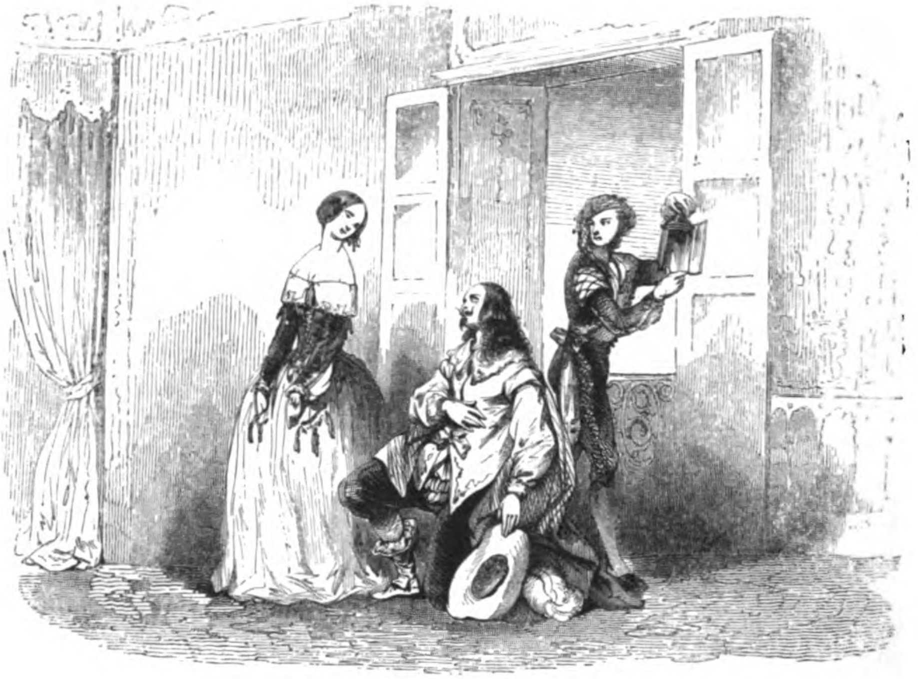
"You have pretended love to me in order to sacrifice me to the profligate Almaviva."

The Count is happy again, his eyes sparkle, his cheeks flush, as he gently inquires,—

"Then Rosina returns the affection of Lindor?"

"Too well, too well," sobs the heart-broken girl.

"Ecstasy for me!" exclaims the Count, throwing back his mantle. "*Anima mia!* in Lindor, behold Almaviva!"



Who forgets the gush of overflowing rapture with which Rossini has terminated this scene?

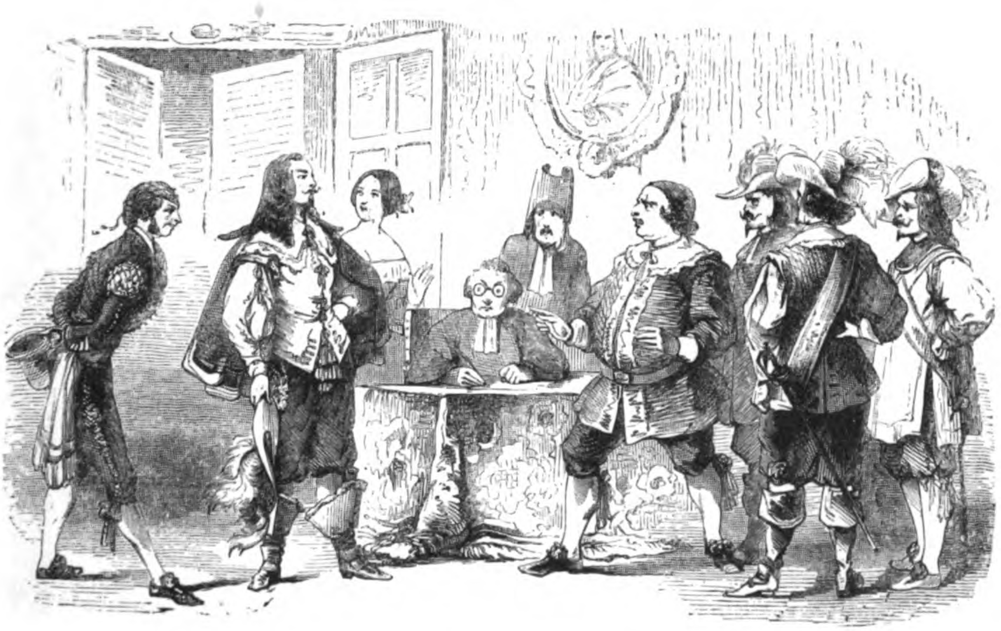
But the catastrophe approaches. Is it to be tragic or comic? Figaro runs to the window, and discovers that the ladder by which he and the Count ascended has been removed. They must await the issue. The happy lovers retire to the side, and Figaro, now rejoicing in an *embarras* worthy of his skill and reputation, lurks watchfully at the back. Basilio enters, introducing the notary. In an instant, Figaro's wit has cleared a passage through the opposing difficulties. He calls the man of law.

"This evening, Sir, you were engaged by me to witness the marriage contract between the Count Almaviva and my niece. They are here. Where is the document?"

The paper is produced, and Figaro invites the lovers to sign it. But Basilio insists upon calling Don Bartolo. Even the bribe of a ring will not silence him. He must be silenced, however, and desperate emergencies justify desperate measures. Friendship is a fine thing; but friendship is forgotten when a pistol, loaded with two balls, is pressed to one's forehead. The contract is signed, and, in the presence of Don Basilio and of Figaro, Rosina is declared the Countess Almaviva.

In rushes Don Bartolo, with an alcalde, alguazils, and soldiers; but the fatal words cannot be unsaid. The officer demands the name of the Count, whose chief business seems to be that of puzzling the police authorities.

"I am a man of honour, and the husband of this lady."



Wild with rage, Bartolo consigns him to the hottest vicinity which occurs to him at that moment, and, somewhat inconsistently, insists upon his being detained.

"I AM THE COUNT ALMAVIVA."

Poor Doctor Bartolo!

And so ends the opera, or, rather, so comes on its finale, which is one of the finest expressions of joy, hope, and congratulation, which Rossini has ever given us. How far its prayer for the now wedded beauty of Seville and her lord—

> "May love and eternal faith
> Reign in your hearts!"

was answered, may, perhaps, appear from a certain other opera, entitled, "The Marriage of Figaro."

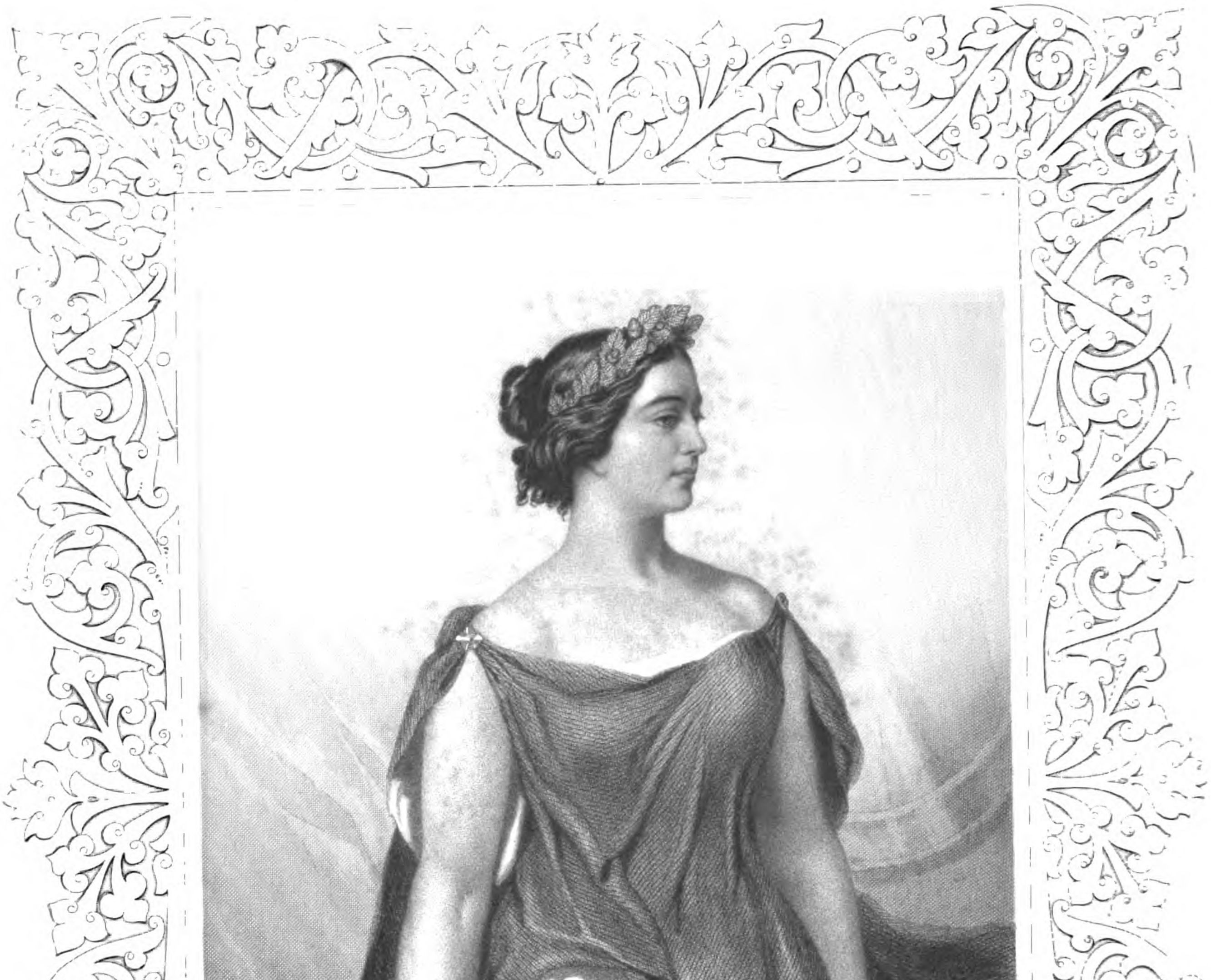
But for the present we will dismiss all anticipations save those of pleasure, to heighten which we will believe (indeed, Beaumarchais gives us reason to think), that when the rout of alguazils and soldiery had been dismissed, and Rosina forgiven by her sorrowful guardian, the high-hearted Almaviva dried the tears of the old man by an intimation that he need give himself no further concern about "those accounts," but might set off the loss of his ward against the gains of his wardenship.

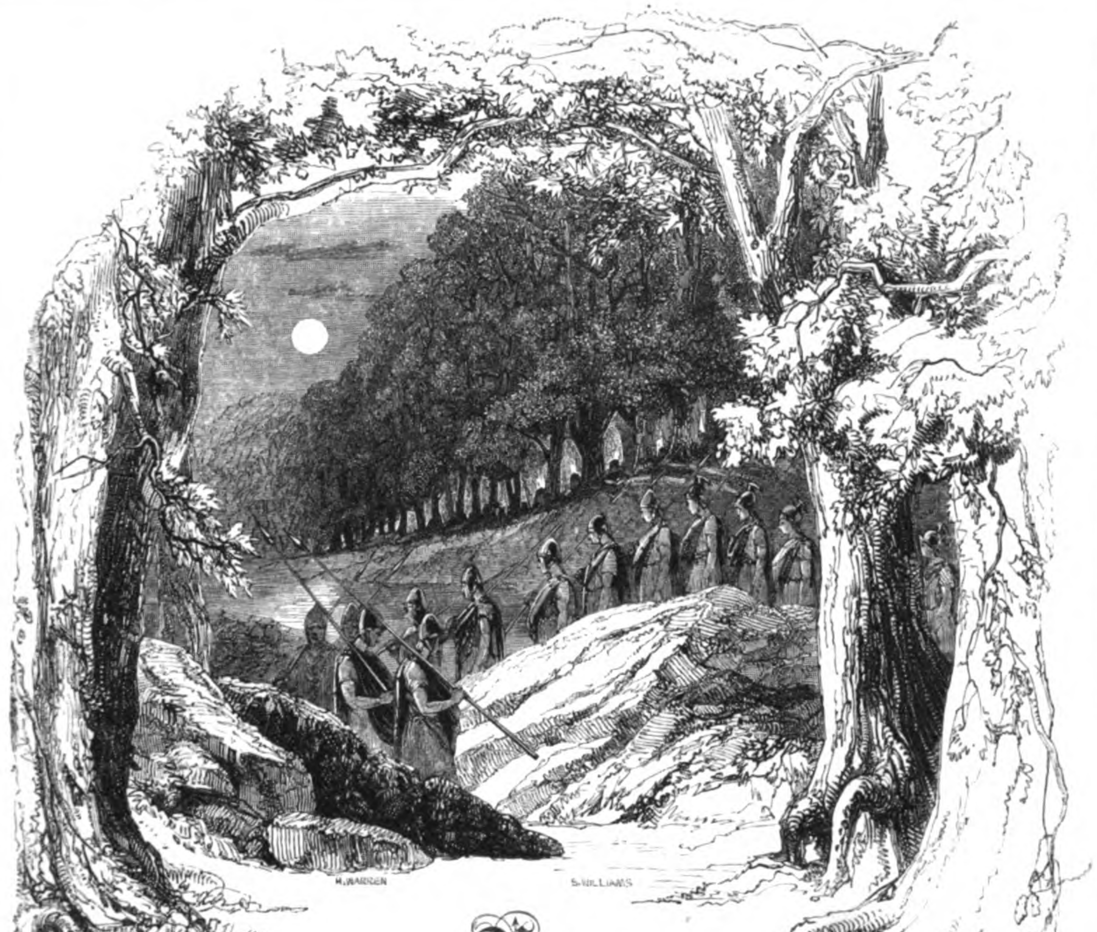
As for the Hero of the opera, he quits the bustling scene with a calm philosophy worthy of a great man:—

> "Having now nothing further to do,
> I shall—extinguish my lantern."

When Diogenes had completed his unsuccessful search for an honest man, he used nearly the same words, and probably the spirit in which he concluded his investigation was not very different from that in which Figaro takes leave of our *dramatis personæ;* he must have been mightily puzzled to point out, among them all (himself included), a specimen of even average probity.

Madame Persiani's Rosina is a most exquisite personation. She has completely grasped the original conception of Beaumarchais; and the curiosity, the eagerness, the love, the sorrow, the indignation, and the rapture, of this *fille mal gardée,* are rendered with an artistic fidelity which redounds to the credit of the accomplished actress. Surely it is needless to say how the vocalist treats a part which, had it been expressly composed for her, could not have better displayed her purity of voice, accuracy of execution, and tenderness of expression.





Norma.

At the rising of the curtain the theatre represents an immense Druidical forest, the abode of gloom and terror. Towering above his compeers, arises the sacred oak of Irminsul, the Colossus of the forest, whose hundred branches, each assuming a wild and threatening attitude, convey the idea of an angry and implacable deity issuing his own fearful edicts of death and punishment It is easy to recognise in it the tree of savage and sanguinary scenes, which had grown on a soil watered with human blood, and been nurtured and fed from a soil partly composed of human atoms. The moon's flickering light and chequered shade are cast over the Druidical stone and the elevation on which the priestess stands to perform the solemn rites. It is night—slow and solemn music is heard. In the background, Gaulish troops are seen defiling, while a long procession of Druids, followed by their chief, Oroveso, who is escorted by the high-priests and assistants, crosses the stage. To these last is deputed the task of awaiting, on the summit of the neighbouring mountain, the auspicious moment when the pale light of the new moon shall shed her first silver beams on the horizon.

"Shine forth, oh, avenging moon!" they exclaim, and, following the footsteps of Oroveso, they are lost in the recesses of the forest. Scarcely have their voices died away, when two individuals appear, whose large folding mantles and classic costume proclaim the children of Rome. The one is Pollio, the Gaulish proconsul, and the other Flavius, his confidant and friend.

"Why," inquires Flavius, "have we ventured hither? Has not Norma herself assured you of the inevitable destruction that would attend us, if discovered within these sacred precincts?"

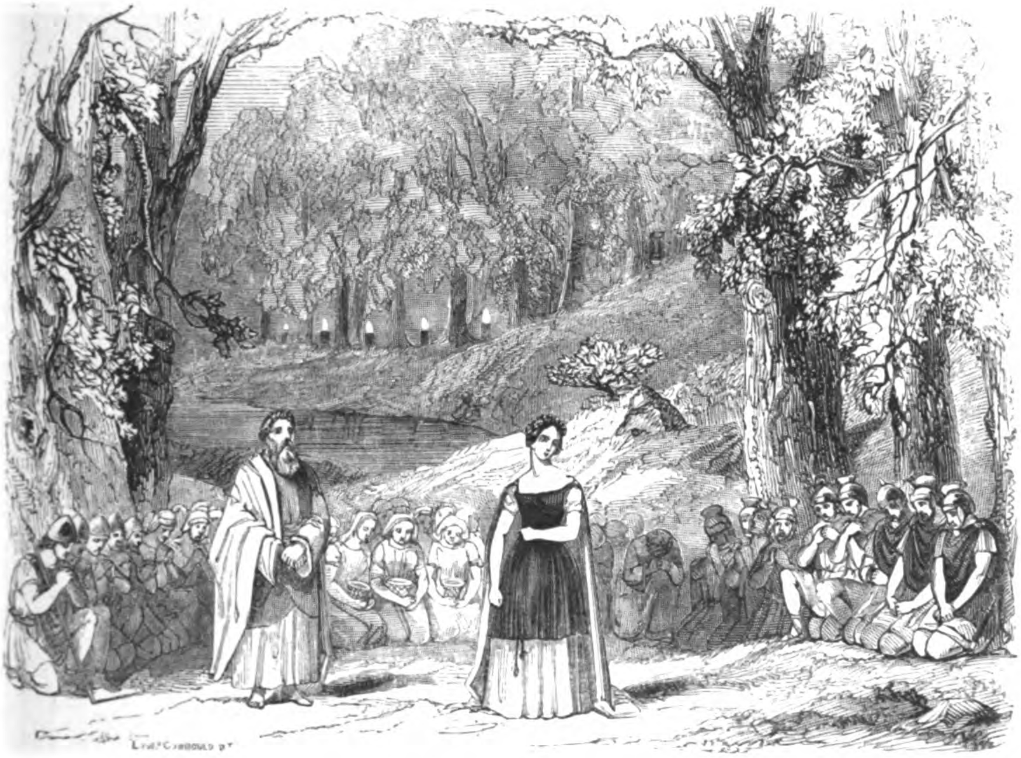
"Norma!" responded Pollio, shuddering: "Ah! for mercy's sake pronounce not that name; its very recollection rends my soul!"

"How!" exclaims Flavius, "is it not the appellation of one you dearly love—of the mother of your children?"

"Flavius, my friend, reproach me as you will for my falsehood—my perjury, to the daughter of Oroveso; but hear the full confession of an overcharged heart. The passion I once felt for Norma is at an end—I love her no longer!"

"And you have transferred your fickle love to another!" exclaimed the astonished Flavius.

Alas! it was but too true. The faithless Pollio had become fascinated by the charms of the youthful priestess Adelgisa, who, he had every reason to believe, returned his passion. All this he confessed, mingled with much self-reproach, to his wondering friend. He had now entered these forbidden groves, in the hope of once again beholding and conversing with Adelgisa; but at this instant the loud sounds from the brazen gong announced that the silvery light of the new moon had just burst upon the blue vault of heaven, while the voices of the priests, rushing in crowds towards the stone of sacrifice, warned himself and his companion to make a hasty departure from the sacred grove, which is rapidly filled by eager and expectant parties of Druids, some of whom, clad in their long white garments, place themselves behind the altar; at each side stand the priests, bards, sacrificers, warriors, &c. and in the midst of all is Oroveso. The pale straggling moonbeams already shed their silvery light over the tall dark trees, and the wild fantastic groups, collected beneath their outspreading branches, eagerly anticipating the decree about to issue from the oracle of their deity, salute this mystical light by a chaunt breathing hopes of speedy vengeance, blood, and victory. But in an instant all is hushed. Norma approaches, surrounded by her priestesses. And here let the imagination dwell on the perfect beauty of such an impersonation of this fine creation of a poet's fancy, as represented by Giuletta Grisi, who, looking indeed the proud, inspired priestess of Irminsul, walks with an air of high majesty to the altar, dressed in the tasteful costume required, her brows bound with oak-leaves, and carrying the golden sickle in her hand. The pale classic features, the deep expressive eyes, the intellectual brow, and commanding figure, with the exquisitely turned arms and shoulders, conspire to render Grisi's first appearance as "Norma" the signal for one loud and simultaneous round of



enthusiastic applause. Indeed, this part may be considered her greatest triumph; and those who have not been fortunate enough to witness the truth of our assertion cannot be said to have had an opportunity of estimating the wonderful capabilities of this incomparable actress as well as songstress. All here are united. Madame Grisi, as "Norma," most admirably employs her voice, her energy, her beauty, continued rage, sublime violence, threats and tears, love and anger,—all are mingled with such artistical skill as to produce a whole unequalled in any histrionic picture afforded by any female tragedian.

At length her voice breaks the dead stillness that prevails.

"Who here," she utters, in clear, calm tones, "who here dares presumptuously to seek to penetrate the secrets of destiny, and presage the downfal of Rome?"

"Oh! my daughter," replies Oroveso, "too long have our sacred groves and temples been polluted by the presence of the Latin eagles. Should not the sword of Brennus quit its scabbard? Say, is not the hour of just vengeance arrived?"

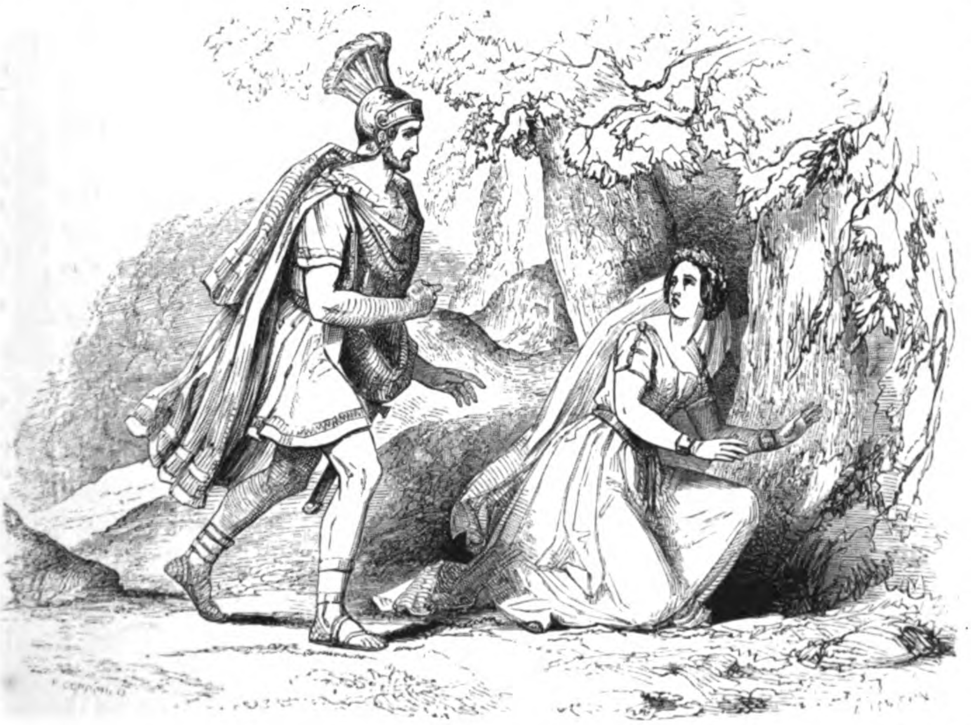
"No," replies the priestess, with commanding majesty; "not yet has the day come. The Roman javelins are far too strong for the hatchets of the Sicumbri. My eyes behold the future—the veil is withdrawn from my vision, and I see that the city of the Cæsars must perish, but not by your hand: it will fall by its own vices, worn out by its own excesses. Await the appointed hour, and seek not to accelerate the decrees of mighty Fate. In the name of the Deity by which I am inspired, I command peace; and thus I sever the sacred mistletoe, as a symbol you dare not disobey."

Thus speaking, and raising her beautiful arm, with a movement of unapproachable majesty, she cut off a branch of the mysterious plant, which the youthful priestesses received with deep reverence in their sacred vases.

The prayer concluded, Norma commands all to retire, assuring them she will not delay one instant to announce to them the hour appointed for the extermination of their enemies, so soon as the voice of their deity shall have spoken the awful decree. The obedient multitudes pledge themselves to obey her in all things, and by a solemn vow bind themselves to take deep and sanguinary vengeance on all their foes, more especially on the proconsul Pollio—alas! on Pollio, him whom, of all others, Norma is most called upon to give up to universal execration, yet whom she protects with all her might, even against her own judgment, her countrymen, and her gods. And now the sacred inclosure is cleared of the busy throng, which, but a short time since, filled its groves; all of the eager, animated groups have gone, and one pale form alone is seen, prostrated before the steps of the high altar. Is it Norma who thus lingers near the oracle? Ah! no. More fragile, delicate, and girl-like, is the slight form which, like a snow-wreath, clings to the altar of Irminsul, imploring pardon for and protection against the deep, unholy flame which lights up such a conflict in her breast. It is the young priestess Adelgisa, the object of Pollio's second vows, and who, while conscious of the guilt, the sacrilege, the impossibility, of listening to them, yet haunts this spot, for here they first met, and here has been the scene of all their subsequent interviews.

"Hear me, great Spirit," prays the weeping maiden, "aid me to forget this impious stranger, who would step between me and my sacred duties."

"Adelgisa," murmurs a voice well known and quickly recognised, "what joy to find you here, and alone!"



"Ah! begone, I charge you," exclaims the distracted priestess; "I must not—I dare not, listen to you; my god forbids it."

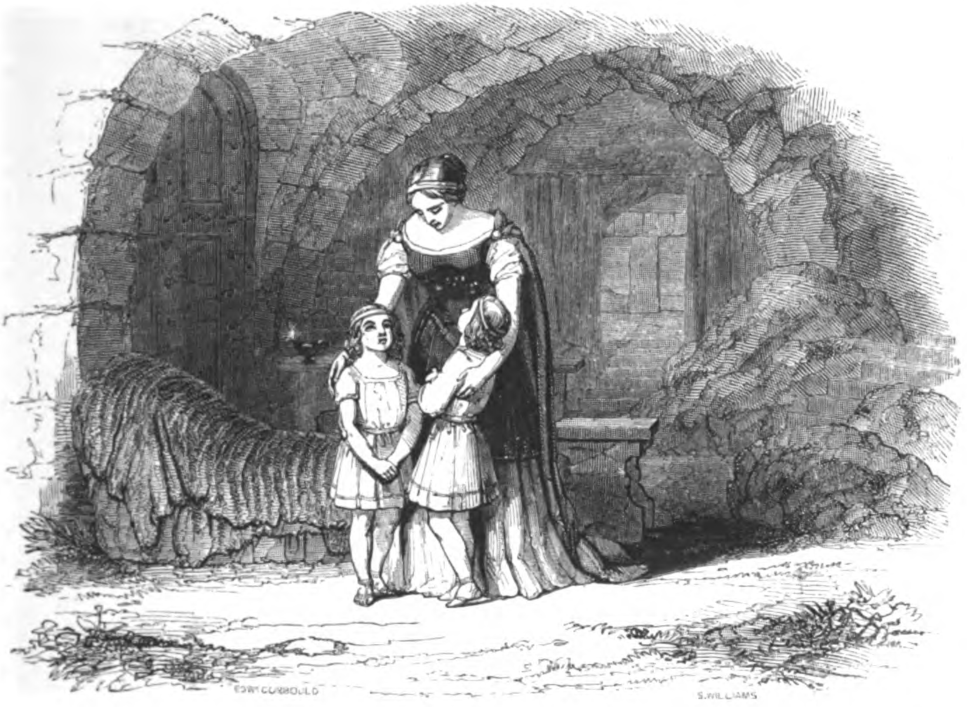
"Cease, then, to worship so jealous, so sanguinary a deity. Come with me to Rome, beloved Adelgisa, where love is a divinity, and is openly worshipped, where we may enjoy happiness with each other, and whither the commands of my emperor compel me to go."

"And are you about to leave our country?" demanded the dismayed Adelgisa.

"I am: to-morrow's sun sees me far from these shores; but if you love me, you will not let me depart alone."

The unhappy priestess in vain called to her aid the recollection of the vows she had uttered when she entered upon the service of the temple, the religion she had been brought up to revere, her family, her high birth, her country,—all to be disgraced and trampled under foot by her meditated flight. Alas! vanquished virtue fled from the unequal strife, and Pollio, becoming more and more impassioned and persuasive in proportion as his victim became more passive and yielding, wrung from her at last a faint and reluctant assent to meet him the following night, at the same hour, beneath the large oak of Irminsul, then to fly with him for ever from these ancient forests, beneath whose shades she had grown in silence and mystery, like one of the chaste flowerets that bloomed, unseen and unknown, at the foot of their stately stems.

And now the scene changes to the habitation of Norma, and the priestess, agitated and perturbed, enters her cavern dwelling. Eagerly she embraces the two pledges of her love for Pollio, and whom she had reared thus far in utter concealment and safety from all prying eyes. At once happy and miserable in the title of parent, she contemplates her children with mixed sensations of pleasure and pain. For them she feels a mother's tenderest love, while, for their father, a rising conviction of his unworthiness inspired her with feelings of indignant love and outraged affection, which was in some measure reflected upon his innocent babes, and made them for the time objects of mingled hatred and deep affection. That Pollio meditated some deep design she felt convinced: she had heard of his recall to Rome, and dreaded his abandoning her, with her offspring, to all the horrors of her situation. Unable to bear the cruel images thus conjured up, she determined to seek Pollio, and terminate at once a suspense more dreadful than the most frightful certainty. When about to quit her hut, she was met by Adelgisa, who, pale, trembling, and bathed in tears, threw herself at her feet, imploring, with deep sobs, pardon for the heavy, bitter sin she had contemplated, of quitting the sacred forests of Irminsul,—of having wickedly, sacrilegiously forfeited her vows, and bestowed upon a mere mortal the entire love and affections vowed to the great Irminsul alone. As the weeping culprit raised her eyes towards the countenance of the judge before whom she thus poured out her sorrows and her sins, a ray of hope darted into her desolate soul, as she caught the look of pity and commiseration with which the hitherto stern and inflexible priestess was beholding her. Alas! Norma's own heart and saddened feelings rendered her but too well able to sympathise with the love-stricken girl before her; and, thus encouraged, Adelgisa rapidly details the rise and progress of her love, each word betraying both the purity and depth of her passion. Norma generously laid aside her own woes while consoling the sorrowful Adelgisa, whom she raised from the ground, kindly



pardoned for her past lapse from duty, and promised to absolve from her vows, that her love might no longer be a crime. Still, a vague and undefinable presentiment of ill stole over her as she listened to the young priestess's recital. Its strong resemblance in many particulars to the commencement of her own love for Pollio made her shudder involuntarily. Yet this individual spoken of by Adelgisa, and by her described as so grand, so noble, majestic, and love-inspiring,—who could he be? Alas! HER memory could furnish but *one* name, and madness was in the very thought that it should be that one.

"But," demanded Norma impetuously, "know you not the name of him to whom you have surrendered your love?"

"Alas!" sighed the fearful girl, "your question but increases my guilt. I have dared to love one of my country's direst foes: he who has my heart belongs not to our land, but is a child of Rome."

"A Roman?—unhappy girl! But proceed. Who or what rank holds he?"

"Behold him!" shrieked Adelgisa, pointing with her finger to the proconsul, who at that moment appeared on the threshold, speechless with confusion and dismay at finding the two rivals together.

"This! this!" exclaimed Norma. "Say not so. Poor, unfortunate girl! Oh! look once more, and tell me you are mistaken; but kill me not by asserting that 'tis Pollio you love, and to whom you would fain unite your destiny!"

Overwhelmed and crushed beneath the frightful revelation, Norma seemed incapable of rightly understanding what was passing around her; and it required Adelgisa's oft-repeated confirmation of the wretched tale ere she could bring herself to trust the evidence of her senses.

"Oh! misery! woe! woe! unhappy being!" uttered the priestess, in a voice so deep, so unearthly, as to strike terror to the guilty soul of Pollio. He would have left the spot, but Norma caught him by the arm, exclaiming,—

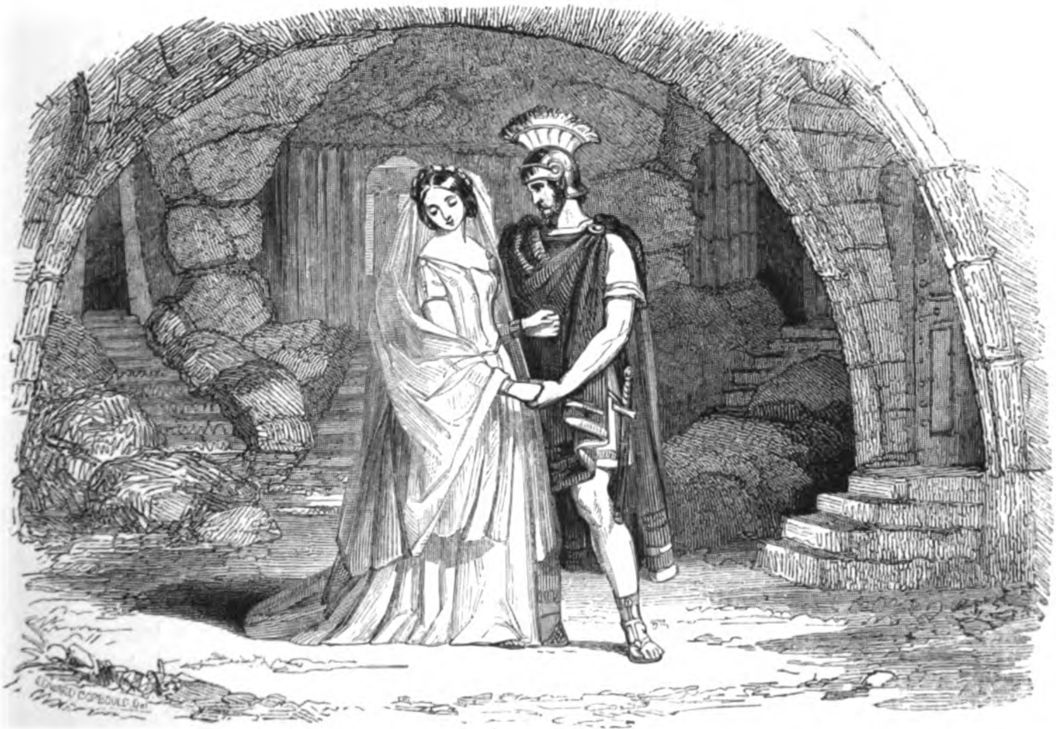
"Lover, without faith or truth; parent, devoid of natural feeling for your offspring, think not thus to escape me; there is no place so secure but my vengeful arm shall reach thee. Knowest thou not, too, that my rival is in my power? And would'st thou dare?"

"I dare do all things!"

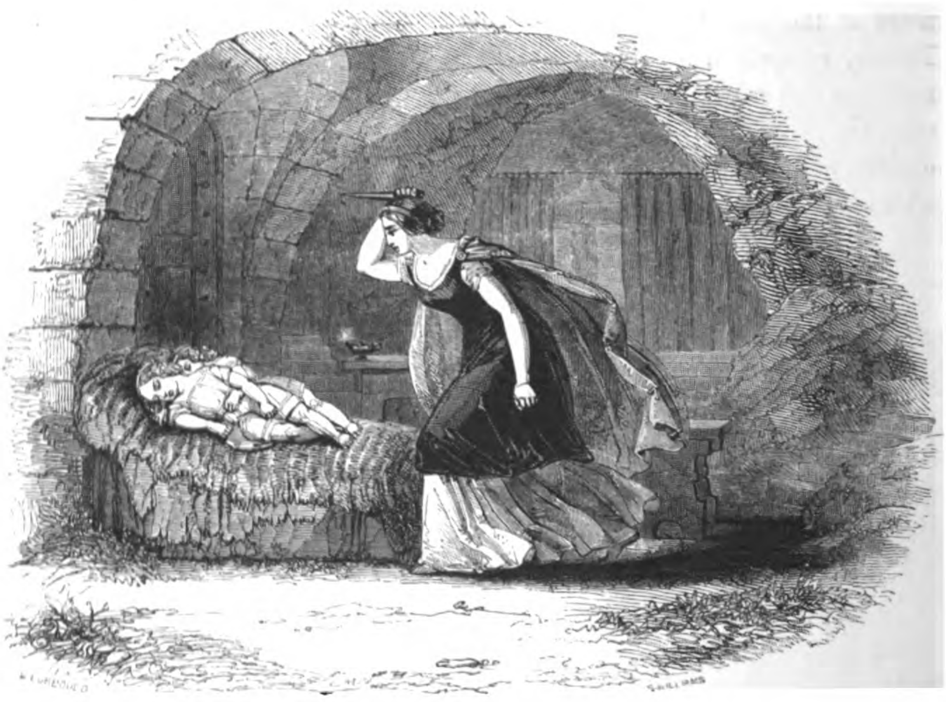
At these words, Pollio, breaking from her grasp, sought to encircle the weeping Adelgisa with his arm, and to lead her away; but the unhappy maiden, repulsing him, exclaimed, with determination,—

"Begone! husband of another; sooner shall the arm of death snatch me from my misery than thy false treacherous clasp." Then, sinking at the feet of Norma, she murmured, "Yes, yes, I will struggle with my feelings till I have mastered and subdued them. Let ME die, if my death can bring back the husband of your love, and the father of your children."

Towards the conclusion of the beautiful trio which occurs here, the brazen notes of the sacred gong are heard summoning the Druids to the temple. Norma, compelled, by virtue of her office, to be present at all religious meetings and ceremonies, with one hand raises the half-fainting Adelgisa, and, with the other, without uttering a single word, but with a lip curled in bitter disdain, and eyes flashing fire, points with a haughty air to the door through which the proconsul disappears, shuddering with rage.



The Second Act introduces us to the interior of Norma's dwelling. It is night; and in one corner of the chamber, on a small couch taken from the Roman camp, repose the two infant sons of the priestess, sleeping calmly. Norma enters, pale, thoughtful, and with that intellectual look which denotes a mind strung to the performance of some high task. Like Psyche, she carries in her hand a lamp and poignard; but she, alas! has no secret to discover. The cold hard truth is all before her, and the future even more desolate and hopeless than the present. She glides towards her infants' bed; they sleep, and will not shrink from the hand about to take their innocent lives. Yet, with a sickening soul, the miserable mother tries to reason herself into a belief of the expediency and necessity of the direful deed she contemplates.



"Unhappy babes!" she exclaims, "you must needs die; nought else is left you."

Grisi gives this fearful picture of distracted maternal love with a force and pathos wholly unapproachable by any modern *artiste*. The struggle between the feelings of the mother and the fury of the betrayed mistress is exquisitely expressed by the alternation of emotions with which Grisi extends the dagger, as though about to plunge it into the bosoms of the sleeping creatures of her fondest love. Her arm seems nerved for the blow; yet, ere it can descend, the mother—the woman—prevails. One more look of fond, doating, maternal affection, and the stern, inflexible prophetess is lost in the tender, weeping parent.

"What! harm these dear pledges of an ill-starred love?" she cries; "these treasures of my lonely days and gloomy nights. Never, never! But if they are *my* children, are they not likewise the offspring of the false, the perjured Pollio, and may they not, like him, one day plant misery in the heart so freely given? Yes, for his false sake, traitor that he is, they shall die. 'Tis he who places this false weapon in my hand, and the recollection of his perfidy gives me strength to use it. On his head be their innocent blood; and may remorse disturb his happiness even in the arms of a rival!"

With these words, the vengeful Norma again bent over her sleeping children, and extended her hand to strike; but, seized with horror, the dagger dropped from her slackening fingers, and, uttering loud cries, she fled in search of Adelgisa.

"Hear me!" exclaimed she, in a broken and disconsolate voice; "but now you were prostrate at my feet, supplicating my mercy and assistance: 'tis now my turn to crave your generous assistance, and thus low on my knees do I beseech you to grant my request."

"I swear to do so, by the God we mutually worship!" said Adelgisa, while a cold shudder of apprehended evil stole over her.

"I am about to die," exclaimed the wretched Norma; "these scenes, polluted by my guilty presence, can only be purified by my death, and on that I have resolved; but I cannot resolve to drag my innocent children into the vortex which will shortly engulph their unfortunate mother. 'Tis for them I would plead to you,—to your care I commend them; be to them as a second mother; convey them in safety to one I dare not name; and may he prove to you a truer and more faithful husband than to me. Bear to him my forgiveness, and these my last and dying wishes."

"*He my* husband? I wed the man who could forsake Norma? Never! Preserve your life for your dear infants, and let your days be devoted to them. Heaven will release me from the rash and impious promise I but now made."

In vain did Norma urge and plead; the noble-minded Adelgisa refused to accept of, or permit, the sacrifice of her rival, but sought, by every consoling argument and persuasive motive, to draw her back to life, and invest the future with charms.

"Let not hope desert you," cried she, animated with a sudden burst of noble devotion; "the affection of Pollio did but wander for a time; already, doubtless, he repents his fickleness and folly: for me, I hasten to the Roman camp, there to throw myself at the feet of the ingrate."

"You would then solicit his love, since I am forgotten?"

"Ah! no," replied the generous girl; "my love was but a dream, which is past and gone, as though it had never been. My eyes are now opened, and I love no longer."

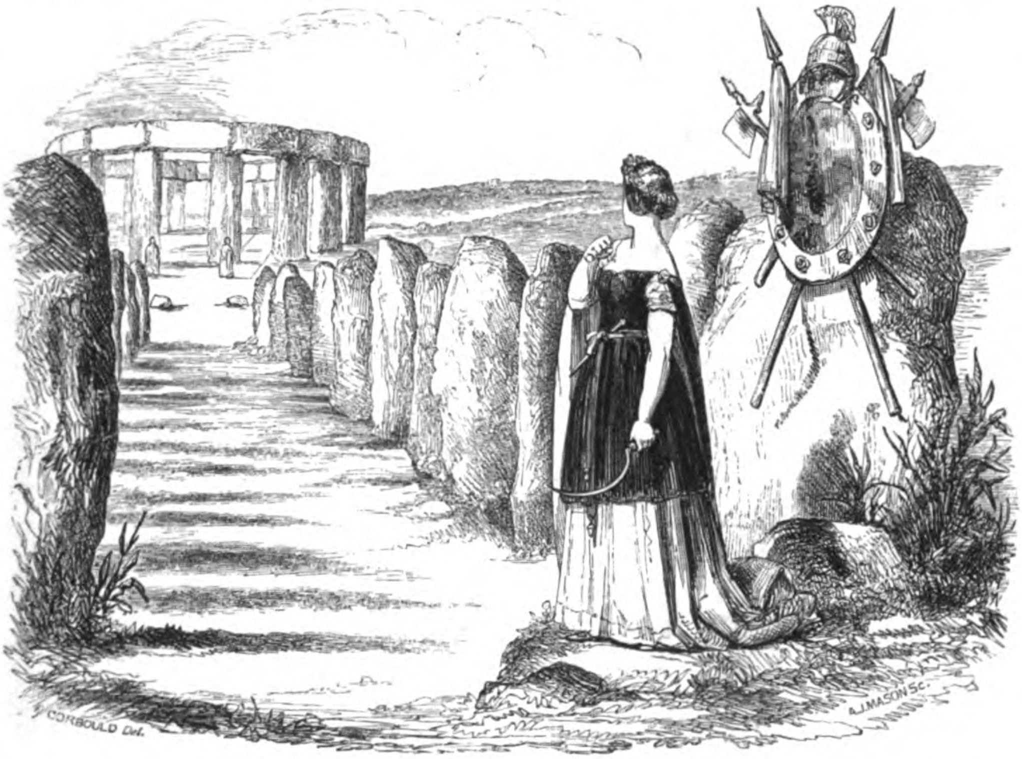
"Then wherefore goest thou to the camp?"

"To bring back thy husband, or return to die with thee."

"Generous girl! you have conquered," exclaimed Norma, pressing her in her arms. "Go, and may your noble purpose be accomplished!"

Once again the scene changes, and represents the temple of Irminsul. To this fearful spot Norma, whose stormy passions had been calmed by the gentle whisperings of hope, suggested by the affectionate Adelgisa, had come to await the anxiously looked-for return of the young priestess. As easily excited by hope as by fear, she already saw Pollio won back by the pleadings of revived affection, hastening to renew his vows of love, and to assure the future safety and happiness of herself and children, and, with this ecstatic thought, the smile again played around those compressed lips, and the frown disappeared from the high majestic forehead; but the sudden appearance of her faithful confident, Clotilda, soon dissipated these visions of delight, and plunged her anew into the deepest despair. Clotilda came but to announce the utter failure of Adelgisa's pious purpose; her tears and prayers had been alike powerless to move the heart of Pollio. Excited by her beauty, and determined abjuration of his love, he had vowed to carry her off even from the altar's foot.

"Traitor! perjured man! I am still all-powerful here, and can prevent your sacrilegious design. Let him die, since he will have it so;" and, rushing precipitately towards the iron buckler, she struck thrice. Its loud responding sounds quickly brought together a crowd of priests, bards, Druids, and warriors, anxious and eager to know the cause of this hasty summons. Waving her hand majestically, to still the angry murmurs of this human sea, Norma, with calm, firm head, ascended the sacred altar of divination.


CORBOULD Del.
A.J.MASON Sc.

"Wherefore, my daughter, hast thou summoned us?" inquired Oroveso. "Why sounds the buckler of Irminsul? What does our God command his servants to perform?"

"War! bloodshed! utter extermination of our enemies! to strike and spare not!" cried Norma, in a voice of thunder. "Let the battle-cry be raised, and the war-songs be sung! War! war! your God commands it. Gaul is rich in warriors; they are numerous as the trees of the forests; let their swords be dyed to the hilt in Roman blood! May the Latin eagle fall to the earth, crushed, torn, and shattered! and may the followers of the great Irminsul offer its blood-stained fragments in triumph on his altar!

Go! your God at length speaks his commands; he bids you go forth and slay, and spare not! Obey, and victory is promised you."

"But," exclaimed Oroveso, "the sacrifice is not complete; we have as yet no victim to offer up."

"Never has the altar of our God waited for human blood," responded Norma, with immovable calmness; "a victim will be sent at the right moment."

Loud cries interrupted the further directions of the Pythoness. An individual had been surprised in the sacred inclosure set apart for the young novices of the temple, and the crowd were dragging him, amid cries, threats, and execrations, before their priestess. The beating heart of the outwardly calm sibyl told her but too well who had thus dared his fate.

"Vengeance, thou art mine!" exclaims the haughty Norma, as Pollio was brought before her.

"Rash mortal," cried Oroveso, placing his sword at the stranger's breast, "what daring motive has instigated thee thus to intrude into our most sacred precincts?"

"Strike, but question me not," is all the answer vouchsafed.

"Stand aside!" exclaims Norma. "No other hand than mine must strike the blow!" And, seizing the dagger of Oroveso, she rushed towards the proconsul, but at the moment when she should have dealt the fatal blow, a sudden hesitation seized her.

"Why this pause?" inquired the aged priest.

"My father," rejoined Norma, "I would first interrogate him as to his motives in coming hither. Let all retire, that I may question him alone."

So soon as the dispersion of the crowd left them secure from observation, Norma proposed to Pollio to save his life, and give him safe conduct to his camp, if he would solemnly engage to renounce his pursuit of Adelgisa, and abandon all thoughts of carrying her off; but to this act of cowardice and treachery, as Pollio viewed it, towards the new object of his affections, he refused to listen.

"Unhappy man! then are you utterly lost. Alas! you little reckon upon the extent to which my just revenge may carry me," exclaimed the infuriated Norma, whose love, thus scorned and defied, drove her almost to madness. "You have yet to learn that this hand, now raised against thy life, but a short time since was outstretched against our innocent babes! If I should forget that I am a parent, and end their sufferings and misery with my own ——"

"Ah! no, be merciful, and slay me—me only; let mine be the only blood that shall flow," interrupted Pollio, shuddering. But she heeded him not. Her threats increase in fury. Adelgisa, denounced by Norma herself, as having lured the false-hearted proconsul within the limits of their mysterious groves, shall perish in the blazing pile appointed to punish priestesses who swerved from vows solemn as those which bound the votaresses of the temple. This last threat overpowered all the firmness and resolution of the guilty proconsul, who, sinking on his knees, besought the angry priestess to allow her just wrath to descend on his head alone, but in pity to spare the innocent.

"At length you see and feel my power," exclaimed Norma, smiling with calm contempt; "but the hour for pity has passed away. Through the bosom of her thou lovest and preferrest to me, will I reach thy heart, and teach thee to feel and understand the deep agony of mine. Ministers, priests, appear! Norma commands your presence. Behold," continues the daughter of Oroveso, as the crowd rush in and line the stage, in eager expectation of what they were about to hear, "behold, I deliver a fresh victim to your just anger. A perjured priestess has broken her vows, betrayed her country, and outraged the gods of her forefathers."

"Who is the guilty woman?" demanded a hundred angry voices; "tell us without delay, that just retribution may wash out the stain she has cast upon our sacred religion."

Norma was about to name her unfortunate rival, when, after a moment's indecision, she cast one long look of concentrated love, pity, and regret, on Pollio, and then, advancing firmly and majestically before the priests, uttered distinctly the words:—

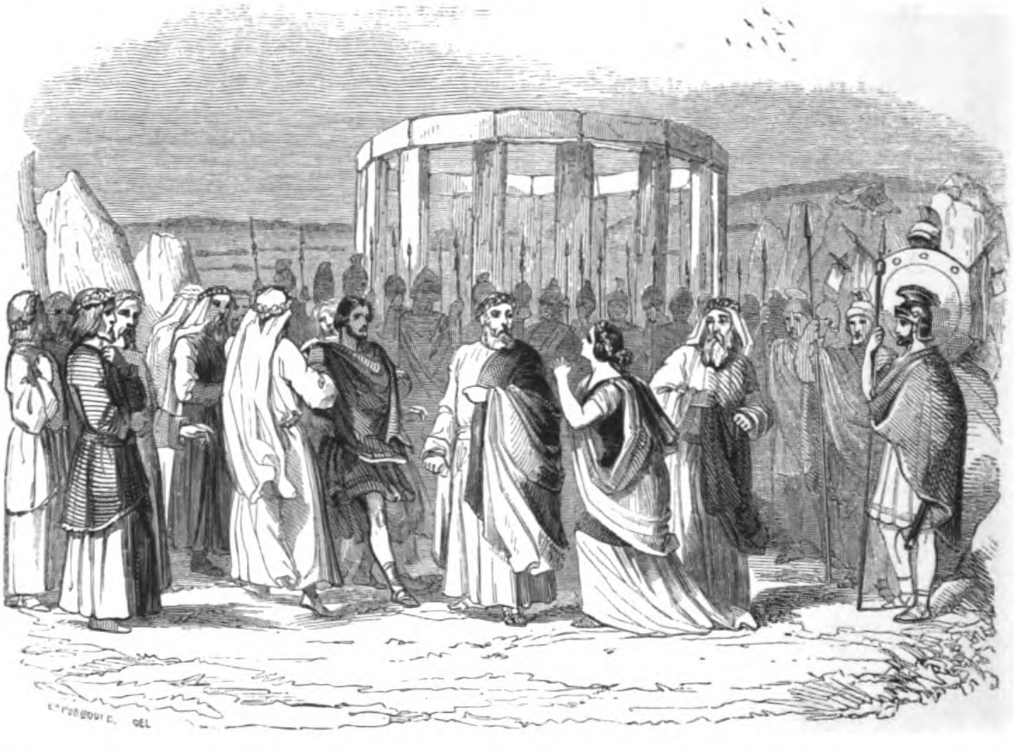
"'TIS NORMA! Let the pile be prepared!"

Oroveso, struck with horror at this fatal and unlooked-for revelation, held his clasped hands in mute agony towards heaven. One universal cry of consternation was heard from every lip.

"Norma! 'Tis false! She would deceive us. We believe it not."

"I speak the words of truth," replies Norma, "and I go to my merited punishment. And you, O cruel Pollio, know at last the faithful, enduring love you have spurned—the heart you have broken."

Pollio, touched with the heroic devotion of her who had sacrificed all for him, and now freely gave up her existence rather than resign him to another, awoke to deep, though too late sense of all his injustice and ingratitude. Humbly did he seek for pardon where he had so deeply erred; this obtained, he welcomed death as shared with her whom he again recognised as sole mistress of his heart. Norma, in a low tone, commended her hapless babes to the care of her wretched parent, who, in ceaseless woe, bedewed his white beard with his thick-falling tears; his pardon for the misery she had brought upon him she humbly prayed, and then bent one long look of fond love on the faithless proconsul, till the sacrificing priests, covering her in the black veil (which signified her having ceased to be reckoned among the living things of the earth), bore her away to her punishment, the curtain slowly descending on the mournful groups assembled around the sad scene.



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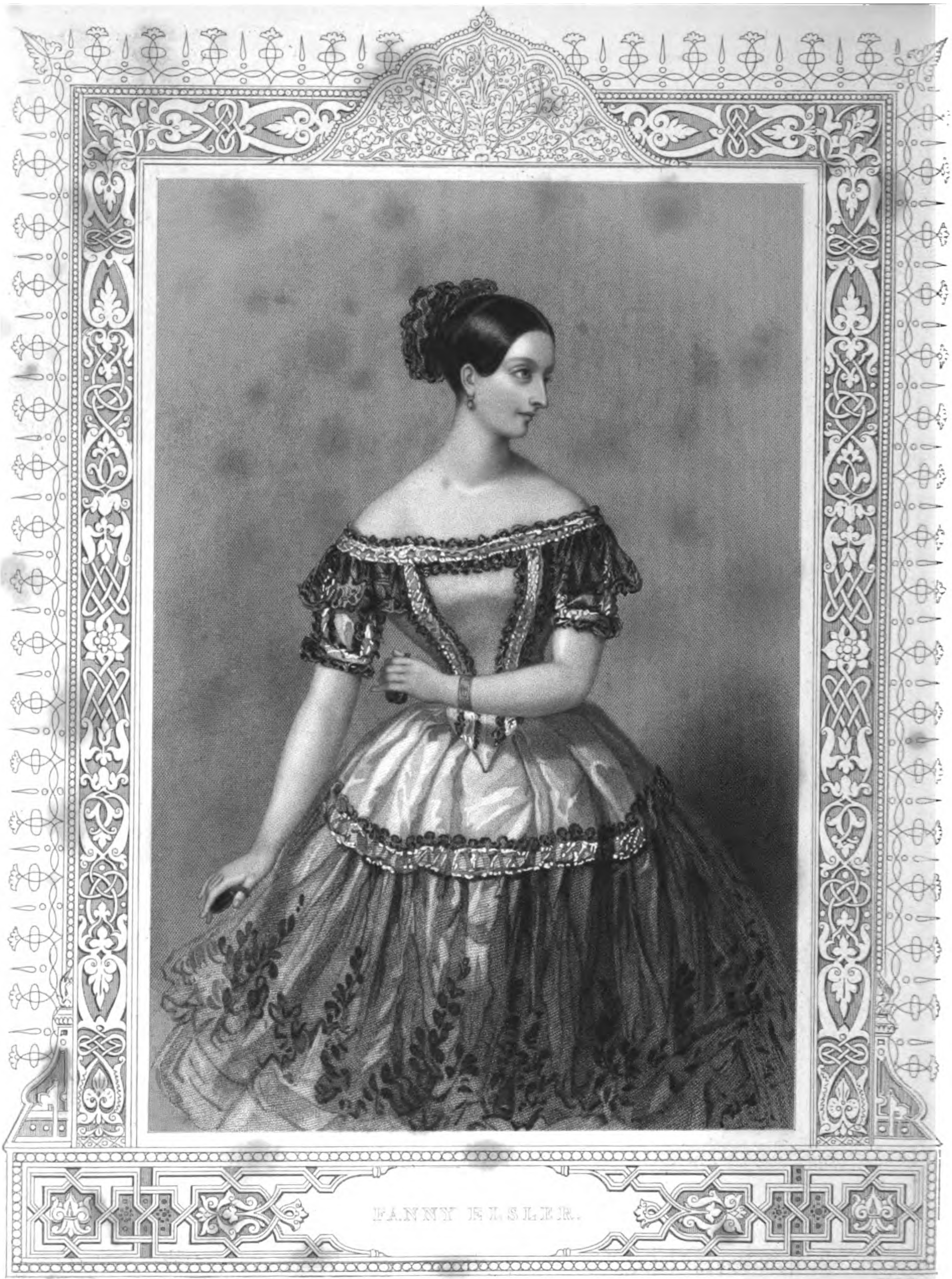

FANNY ELSLER.

Edwin D. Smith

W. H. Mote

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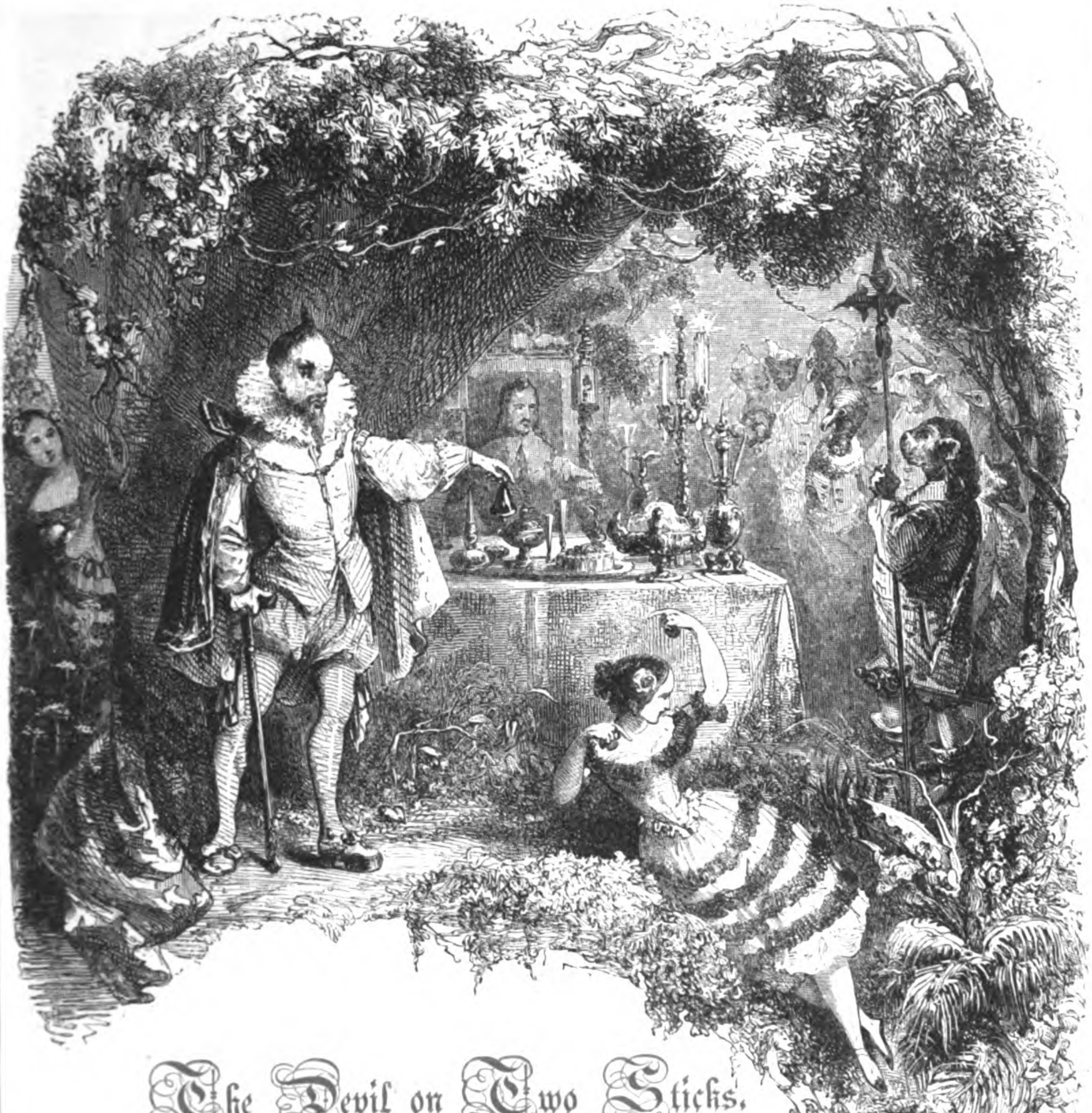


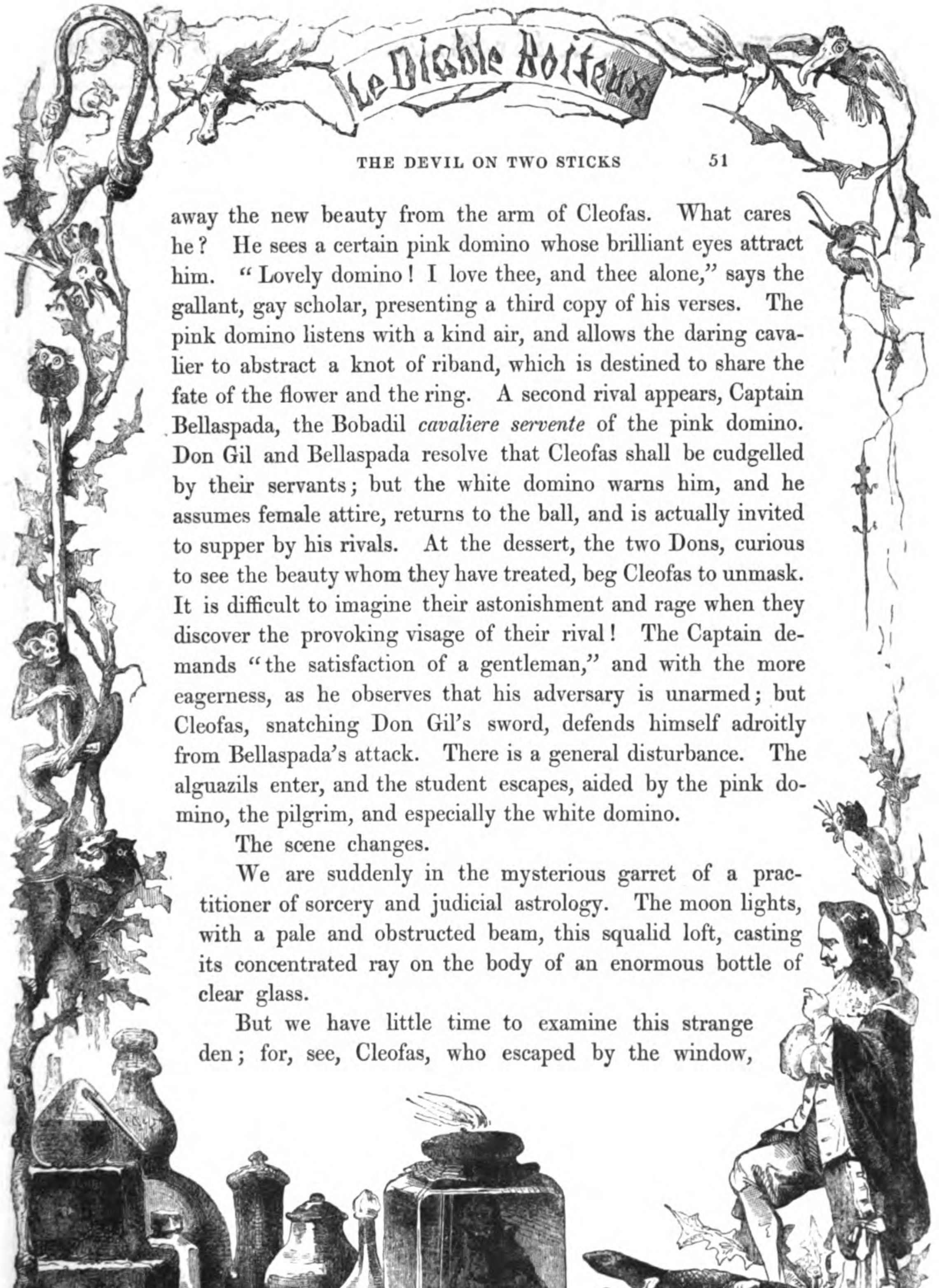
The Devil on Two Sticks.

"THE DEVIL ON TWO STICKS," so familiar to all as forming the subject of Le Sage's clever romance, has likewise supplied abundant materials for a ballet of first-rate celebrity, the programme of which was from the pen of a young writer named Edmond Burot de Gurgy, who unhappily died in the flower of his age. The pantomimic action of the ballet was arranged by M. Coralli.

But stay—to speak worthily of "The Devil on Two Sticks," one should first speak of FANNY ELLSLER, whose ballet *par excellence* it is.

La Fanny is tall, beautifully formed, with limbs that strongly resemble those of the hunting Diana, combining strength with the most delicate and graceful style; her small and classically shaped head is placed on her shoulders in a singularly elegant manner; the pure fairness of her skin requires no artificial whiteness; while her eyes beam with a species of playful malice, well suited to the half-ironical expression at times visible in the corners of her finely curved lips; her rich, glossy hair, of bright chesnut hue, is usually braided over a forehead formed to wear, with equal grace and dignity, the diadem of a queen or the floral wreath of a nymph; and, though strictly feminine in her appearance, none can so well or so advantageously assume the costume of the opposite sex.

And now let the curtain rise. The stage represents the *foyer* of the theatre at Madrid, resplendent with columns, gilding, crystals, and glittering in full magnificence. Don Cleofas, a scholar of Alcala, has come to the ball to seek adventure—young, gay, dashing, and bold to an excess. Hardly has he been a quarter of an hour at the ball when he begins a very interesting flirtation with a white domino, "nothing loth." Our scholar has already sworn to the lovely mask that he adores her, and has placed stealthily in her hand a declaration in verse of most ardent love, a few copies of which he keeps in his pocket, to be made use of "according to circumstances." The white domino gives him a ring in exchange, and disappears. Cleofas is dashing after her, when he is suddenly stopped by a soft white hand; he looks, and, behold! a tall and exquisitely formed pilgrim is before him. The fickle student makes a second and as ardent a declaration of love, produces and presents another copy of amatory verses, and retains a flower which the pilgrim has not the courage to dispute with him. But the Signor Don Gil, a jealous lover, surprises the couple, and angrily snatches

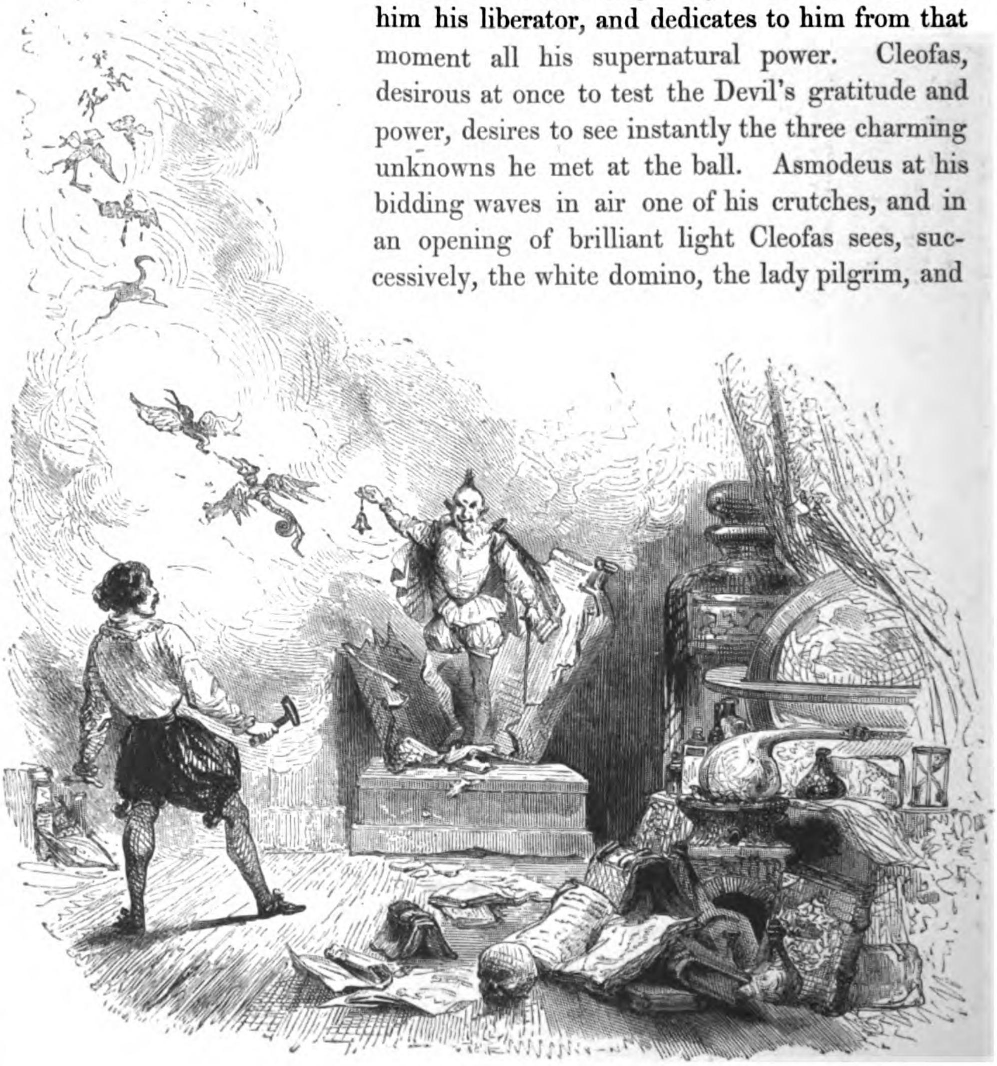


away the new beauty from the arm of Cleofas. What cares he? He sees a certain pink domino whose brilliant eyes attract him. "Lovely domino! I love thee, and thee alone," says the gallant, gay scholar, presenting a third copy of his verses. The pink domino listens with a kind air, and allows the daring cavalier to abstract a knot of riband, which is destined to share the fate of the flower and the ring. A second rival appears, Captain Bellaspada, the Bobadil *cavaliere servente* of the pink domino. Don Gil and Bellaspada resolve that Cleofas shall be cudgelled by their servants; but the white domino warns him, and he assumes female attire, returns to the ball, and is actually invited to supper by his rivals. At the dessert, the two Dons, curious to see the beauty whom they have treated, beg Cleofas to unmask. It is difficult to imagine their astonishment and rage when they discover the provoking visage of their rival! The Captain demands "the satisfaction of a gentleman," and with the more eagerness, as he observes that his adversary is unarmed; but Cleofas, snatching Don Gil's sword, defends himself adroitly from Bellaspada's attack. There is a general disturbance. The alguazils enter, and the student escapes, aided by the pink domino, the pilgrim, and especially the white domino.

The scene changes.

We are suddenly in the mysterious garret of a practitioner of sorcery and judicial astrology. The moon lights, with a pale and obstructed beam, this squalid loft, casting its concentrated ray on the body of an enormous bottle of clear glass.

But we have little time to examine this strange den; for, see, Cleofas, who escaped by the window, and has been clambering over the roofs of the houses, falls in before us. As soon as he has recovered the shock, he commences an undaunted scrutiny. He hears a groan, apparently proceeding from the monster bottle. With a hammer he smashes it into atoms. A thick black vapour first escapes, which gradually disappearing, there is seen a deformed dwarf, with one leg longer than the other, with a cloven foot, and one hand leaning on crutches, whilst with the other he sounds a small silver bell. 'Tis Asmodeus! "The Devil on Two Sticks," who, by the alchymist's power and charms, had been confined in the bottle for twenty years. Cleofas recoils. Asmodeus, however, speedily reassures him, calls him his liberator, and dedicates to him from that moment all his supernatural power. Cleofas, desirous at once to test the Devil's gratitude and power, desires to see instantly the three charming unknowns he met at the ball. Asmodeus at his bidding waves in air one of his crutches, and in an opening of brilliant light Cleofas sees, successively, the white domino, the lady pilgrim, and



the pink domino. Again, by another wave of the crutch, the masks and dominos of the three females fall off, and the student sees them in their usual attire. One is Paquita, a simple *manola;* the other, Doña Florinda, a dancer much in vogue at Madrid; and the third is la Señora Dorotea, a young and rich widow.

"They are all three coming here to consult the conjuror," says the Devil. "Put on the robe of the accursed sorcerer, and receive them in his place."

No sooner said than done.

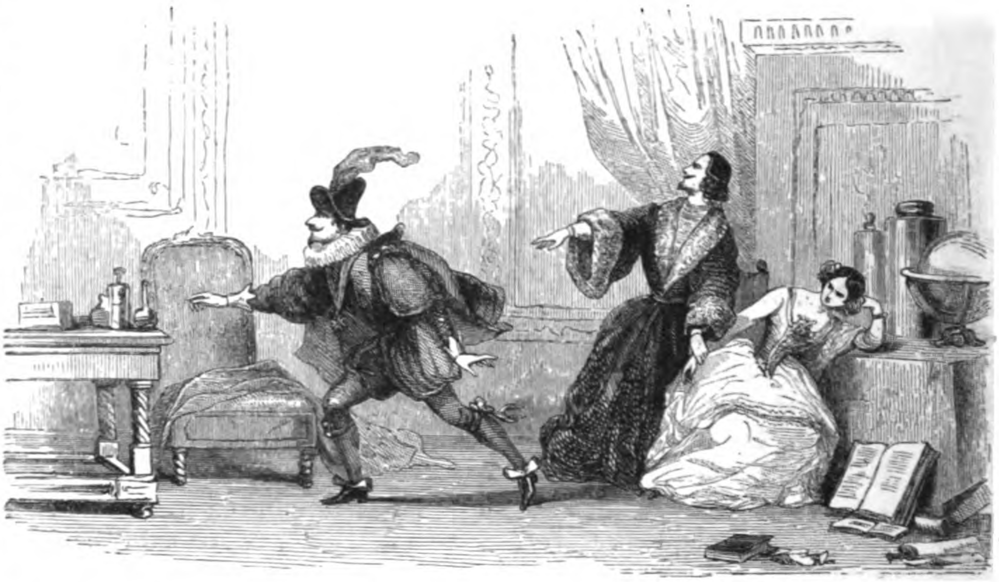
Paquita first enters. The young girl desires to learn whether the cavalier who courted her at the ball really loves her, and, as she cannot write or read, she gives the pretended necromancer the student's note. He blushes at her ignorance. Her conquest is but little gratifying to his vanity; and thus, in his anxiety at once to get rid of her, he tells her her fickle swain has already forsaken her for another, and, in proof, returns her the ring, which he says he has procured by his magic art. The *manola,* convinced that she is forsaken, leaves him in despair; but just as she is going out, Asmodeus, like a good-natured devil, bids her not to despond, and, when alone with Cleofas, the worthy demon reproaches him for rejecting the pure and disinterested love of a young maiden.

Doña Dorotea appears, accompanied by her brother, the Captain Bellaspada, and another of our acquaintances, Signor Don Gil. Dorotea says that she is suffering under a visitation of languor, for which she cannot account. Cleofas assumes an air of much profundity, and declares to the widow that her only cure is—a husband! Don Gil approves the prescription, which he flatters himself that he can turn to his profit, for he has long been a suitor of the fair widow; but Cleofas, taking her on one side, advises her not to love or marry any one but the young unknown who took from her the knot of riband at the ball, and who is, he adds, to complete his success, a personage of the highest rank. The widow makes objections, is incredulous, hesitates, and the counterfeit magician then shews her the knot of riband which he had from her on the previous evening. Dorotea no longer doubts the truth of the sorcerer, and becomes assured and delighted.

Don Gil falls at the widow's feet, intreating her to take him as the prescription, *i.e. the* husband.

But Doña Florinda arrives, and finds cause for quarrel in seeing her old swain at the feet of Dorotea, who assumes great indignation, and goes out, attended by the Captain and Don Gil.

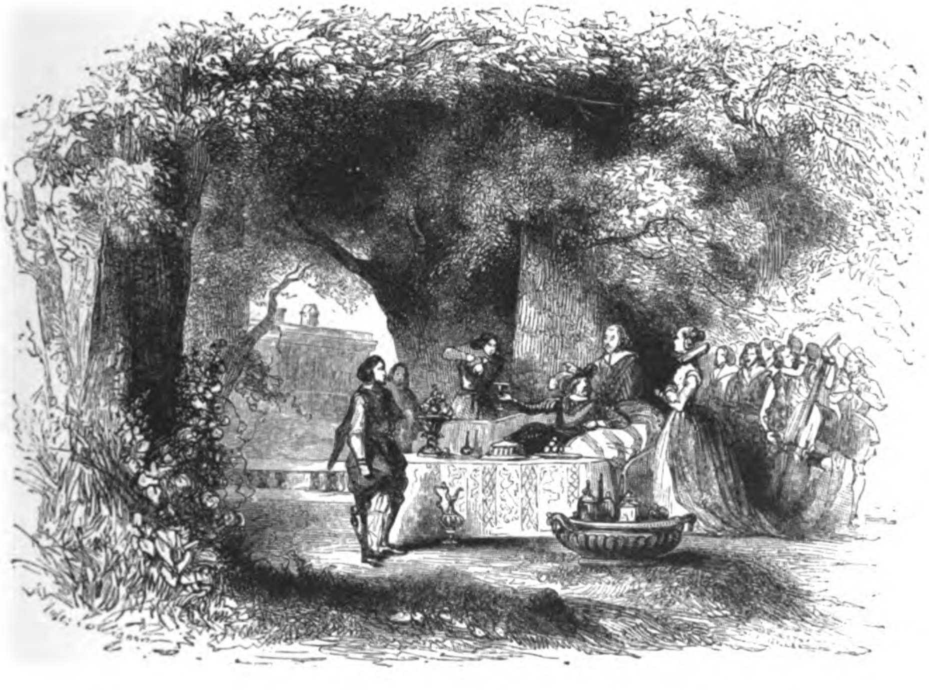
Cleofas is now alone with Florinda, and, disclosing to her who he really is, renews his protestations of love, to which the *danseuse* does not appear insensible, but seriously inclines to listen to all the student urges so amorously; but the Marplot, Don Gil, returns, and interrupts the *tête-à-tête*. Florinda, to conceal her annoyance, pretends to faint, and Cleofas, under the pretext of giving her salts to smell, sends his rival to fetch first this flask, then that bottle, then another, and during this stage-play comes to a perfect understanding with the Doña. At last the lady opens her eyes, consents to pardon Don Gil, and, taking his arm, makes her exit with a gesture full of intelligence to the student. Cleofas is overjoyed; summons Asmodeus, and overwhelms him with thanks for his services.



"But," he inquires, "how is all this to end? Can I hope to succeed with the widow and the *danseuse?* for as to the *manola*, I do not bestow a thought on her. I shall have powerful rivals to contend against, for I am but a simple student. I should have gold, palaces, wealth."

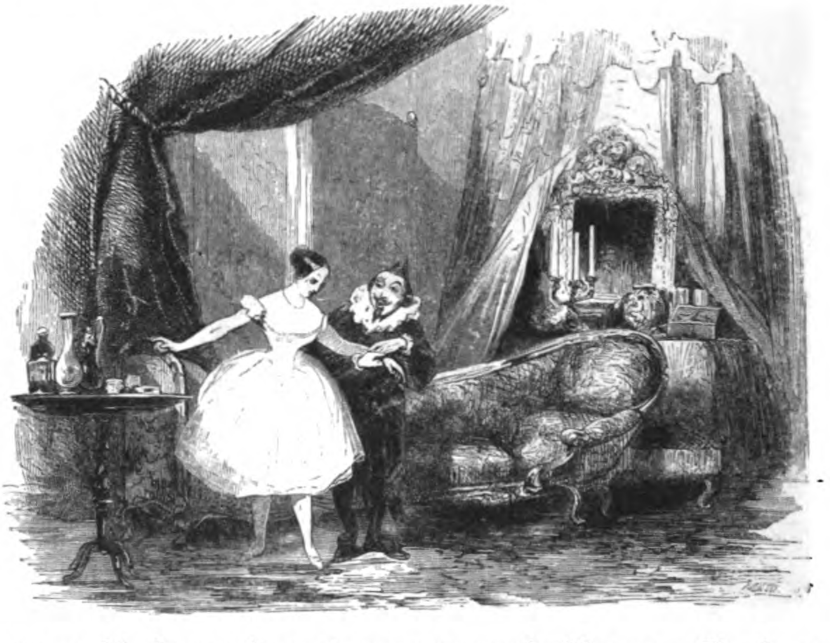
"Is that all?" says the Devil. "Oh, that's but a trifle, which I will at once arrange." And with a motion of his crutch he changes the sombre laboratory of the alchymist into a delicious abode, replete with every charm of art and nature.

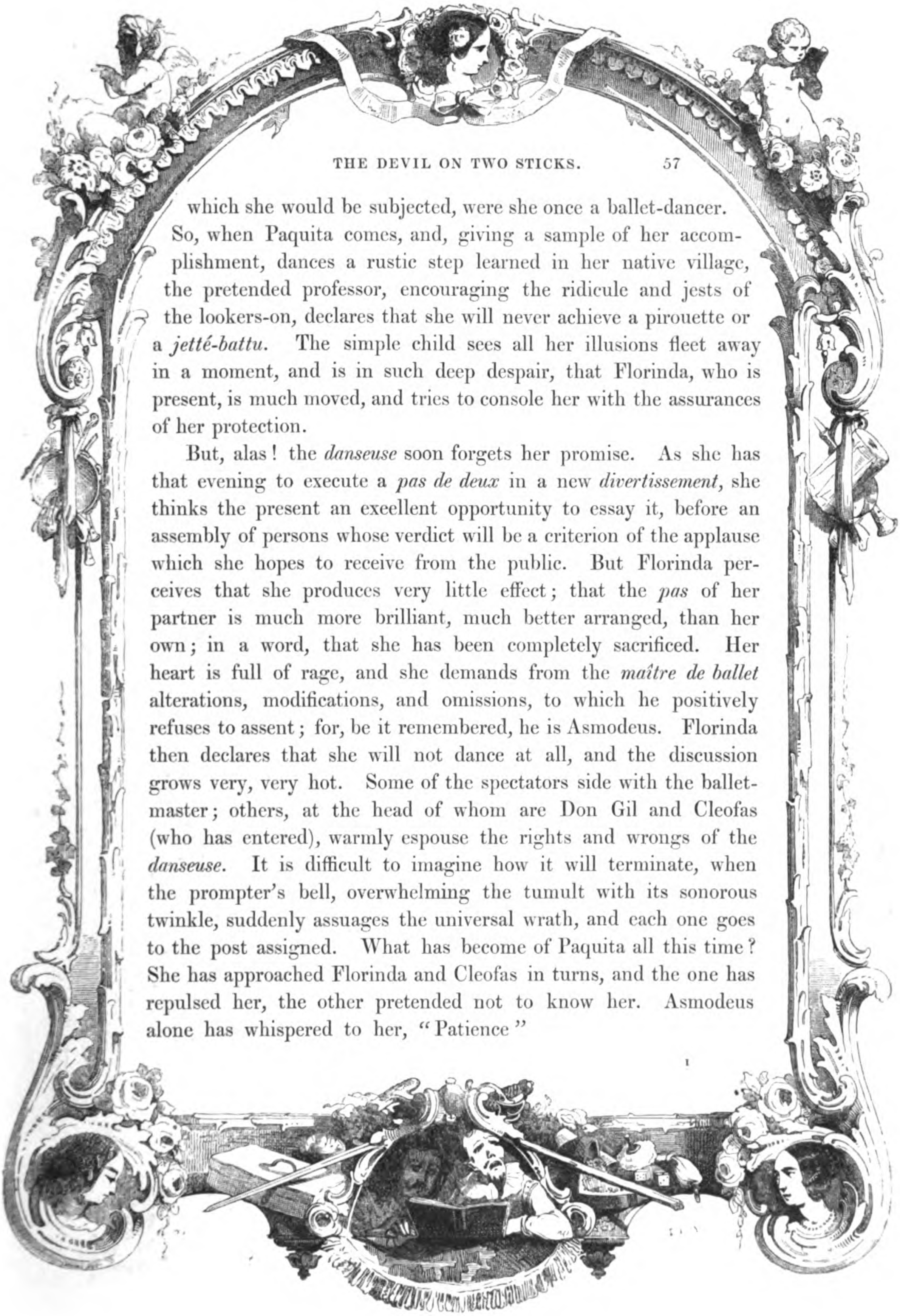
A Moorish Alcazar is seen, intersected by terraces, in which are catalpas, roses, myrtles, pomegranates, orange-trees, and all that is most brilliant and full of perfume amongst the trees, shrubs, and flowers of Spain. The marble columns, the porcelain walls, the gilded fountains, the cedar-wood doors, the alabaster vases, the trellises, the flowers, the ceilings,—all is adjusted and perfected in a few moments. And from all sides enter a crowd of liveried lacqueys, blazing in the fullest finery of service.



A table, groaning under the weight of plate, with fruits, wines, meats, which seem savoury and appetising, springs suddenly from the bowels of the earth. Don Cleofas, no longer surprised at any thing, sits down very quietly, and begins to eat. During his repast a band of nymphs flit around him in all the mazes of the dance, to most melodious music. It cannot be denied that Asmodeus is a first-rate purveyor.

At the commencement of the SECOND ACT, the stage represents the *foyer* of the Opera at Madrid. The ballet-master is teaching his pupils, and we may see here something like a scene at the Inquisition; for we learn by the evident contortions and pain what the pupils undergo who are in training as sylphides or wilis in expectancy. An incident occurs: two daring fellows will force their way into the sanctuary. Of course, they are Cleofas and his attendant Devil. Yet, in spite of their efforts, the two intruders are thrust out of the saloon. But who can expect to hear "the last of it" with the Devil? Shut the door in his face, and he pops through the key-hole. This doth Asmodeus, who, in a twinkling, dismisses the dancing-master, and assumes his dress and countenance, unperceived by any. The demon (who is really a good fellow) has his reasons for so doing. Paquita, his *protegée*, is coming to request admission into the *corps de ballet*. The poor girl thinks that she may then approach Asmodeus, who takes her, as she thinks, for a dancer. But that is not what Asmodeus chooses, who well knows the perils, difficulties, and temptations, to





which she would be subjected, were she once a ballet-dancer. So, when Paquita comes, and, giving a sample of her accomplishment, dances a rustic step learned in her native village, the pretended professor, encouraging the ridicule and jests of the lookers-on, declares that she will never achieve a pirouette or a *jetté-battu*. The simple child sees all her illusions fleet away in a moment, and is in such deep despair, that Florinda, who is present, is much moved, and tries to console her with the assurances of her protection.

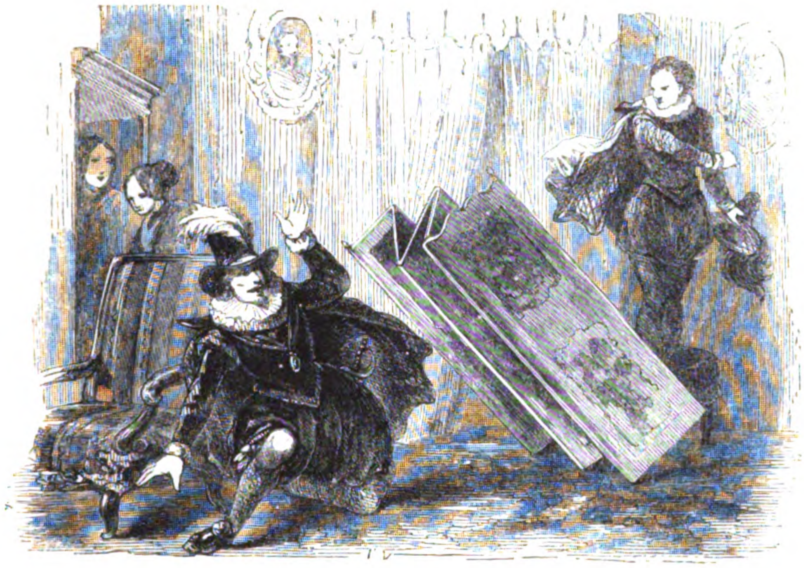
But, alas! the *danseuse* soon forgets her promise. As she has that evening to execute a *pas de deux* in a new *divertissement,* she thinks the present an excellent opportunity to essay it, before an assembly of persons whose verdict will be a criterion of the applause which she hopes to receive from the public. But Florinda perceives that she produces very little effect; that the *pas* of her partner is much more brilliant, much better arranged, than her own; in a word, that she has been completely sacrificed. Her heart is full of rage, and she demands from the *maître de ballet* alterations, modifications, and omissions, to which he positively refuses to assent; for, be it remembered, he is Asmodeus. Florinda then declares that she will not dance at all, and the discussion grows very, very hot. Some of the spectators side with the ballet-master; others, at the head of whom are Don Gil and Cleofas (who has entered), warmly espouse the rights and wrongs of the *danseuse*. It is difficult to imagine how it will terminate, when the prompter's bell, overwhelming the tumult with its sonorous twinkle, suddenly assuages the universal wrath, and each one goes to the post assigned. What has become of Paquita all this time? She has approached Florinda and Cleofas in turns, and the one has repulsed her, the other pretended not to know her. Asmodeus alone has whispered to her, "Patience"

Le Diable Boiteux

The following *tableau* represents the Opera seen from behind, at the moment when the performance begins. The curtain rises, disclosing a house crowded with spectators, and splendidly lighted. The *corps de ballet* are on, with their backs turned to the public, and execute a dance, after which we have the new *pas de deux*. Florinda was not mistaken in anticipating a failure, for, in spite of her efforts, her powerful bounds, she cannot get a hand of applause; whilst her rival is overwhelmed with approbation. Florinda affects to have sprained her ancle, and falls. The performance stops, the prompter "rings down" the curtain, and the *danseuse* is carried into her dressing-room, where Cleofas and the foul fiend are hidden. Florinda is led in by the *figurantes*, and laid on a sofa. She is greatly enraged with herself and all the world, and desires to be left alone. Cleofas chooses this moment to shew himself. At his unexpected presence, the *danseuse* seems amazed, and pretends to be angry; but the student has but little trouble to obtain his pardon. The conversation takes a very tender turn, when Florinda's maid comes in to announce the ballet-master. Cleofas has only just time to conceal himself behind a convenient screen.

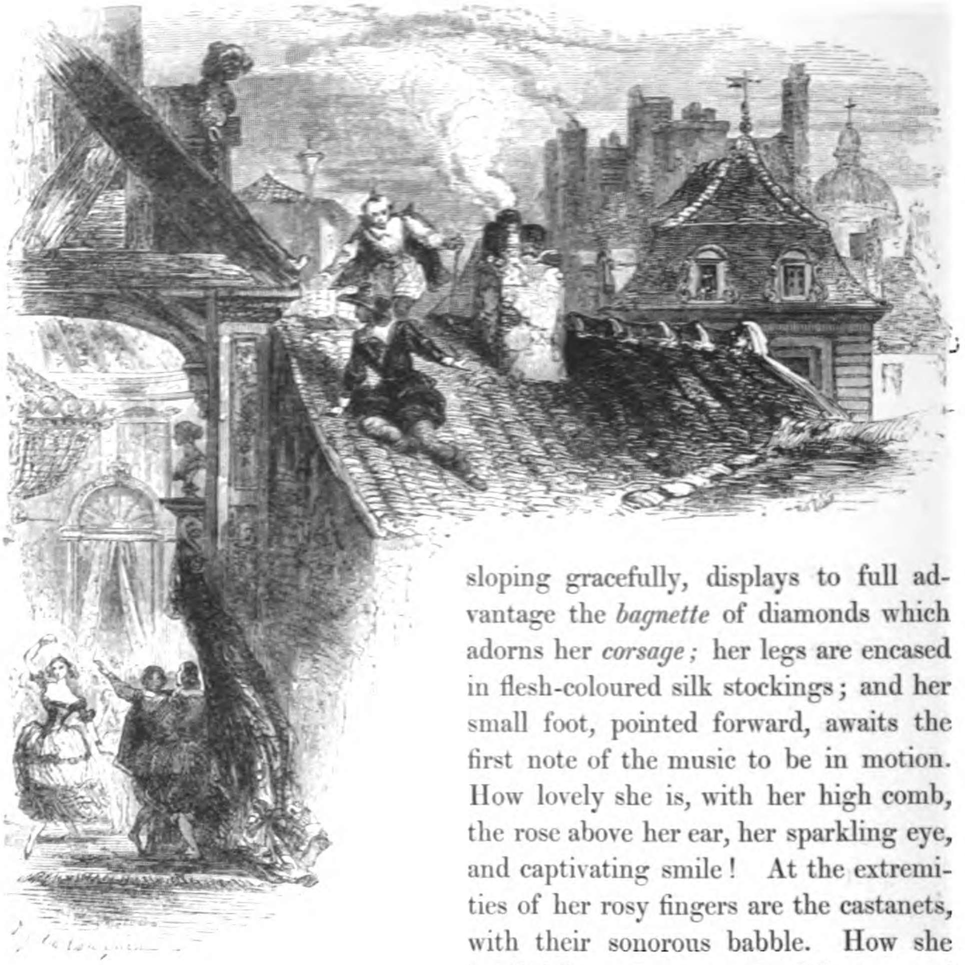
Florinda receives the impertinent *chorégraphe* with severe reproaches, and accuses him of having compromised her by arranging the *pas de deux* as he had done; but the poor man shews himself so sorry, that she ultimately seals his pardon with a kiss. This favour outrageously excites the jealousy of Cleofas. Another knock. It is Don Gil, with the medical attendant of the theatre, who prescribes, and retires. Don Gil, who thinks he is now alone with Florinda, falls on his knees, and gives full

scope to his amatory declaration; so much so, that Cleofas, losing patience, throws down the screen, and appears before his stupified rival.



Do not suppose, gentle reader, that the *danseuse* is for one moment embarrassed; on the contrary, she enjoys the surprise and anger of the two, and, in spite of the denials of Cleofas, she persuades Don Gil that the student is the lover of her attendant. The old hidalgo calls his valet to chastise the intruder as he deserves; but, fortunately, the "Devil on Two Sticks" favours the escape of Cleofas, who departs somewhat enlightened as to the purity and worth of an Opera dancer's affections.

That he may be entirely disabused on that score, Asmodeus determines to take him the same evening to Florinda's house. The beautiful *danseuse* gives a splendid supper, to which she has invited all her adorers, which swells a list of tolerable amount. To crown the fête, Florinda is entreated to dance. She comes forward in a *basquine* of pink satin, with large flounces of black lace; her skirt, which is very full at the bottom, fits her most accurately; and her slender waist,



sloping gracefully, displays to full advantage the *bagnette* of diamonds which adorns her *corsage;* her legs are encased in flesh-coloured silk stockings; and her small foot, pointed forward, awaits the first note of the music to be in motion. How lovely she is, with her high comb, the rose above her ear, her sparkling eye, and captivating smile! At the extremities of her rosy fingers are the castanets, with their sonorous babble. How she bends! how she moves! What grace! what fire! what expression! Her arms twine about her inclining head, her body is bent back, her white shoulders almost touch the ground. Nothing can be more enchanting, more artistic. Roseta, Diez, Pola, and the best dancers of Madrid, Seville, Cadiz, Grenada, the *gitanas* of the Albaycin, cannot approach Ellsler in the cachuca.

But why does she stop so suddenly? Why so pale? What has occurred? Whilst she had surrendered herself to the mad delight of this intoxicating dance, and while the groups of delighted guests around her are manifesting the excess of admiration, Asmodeus has lifted off the roof, and shewn to Cleofas that the chagrins of an actress are not of very long duration. The student, desperately enraged, flings from the roof to Florinda's feet the rose she had given him at the ball.

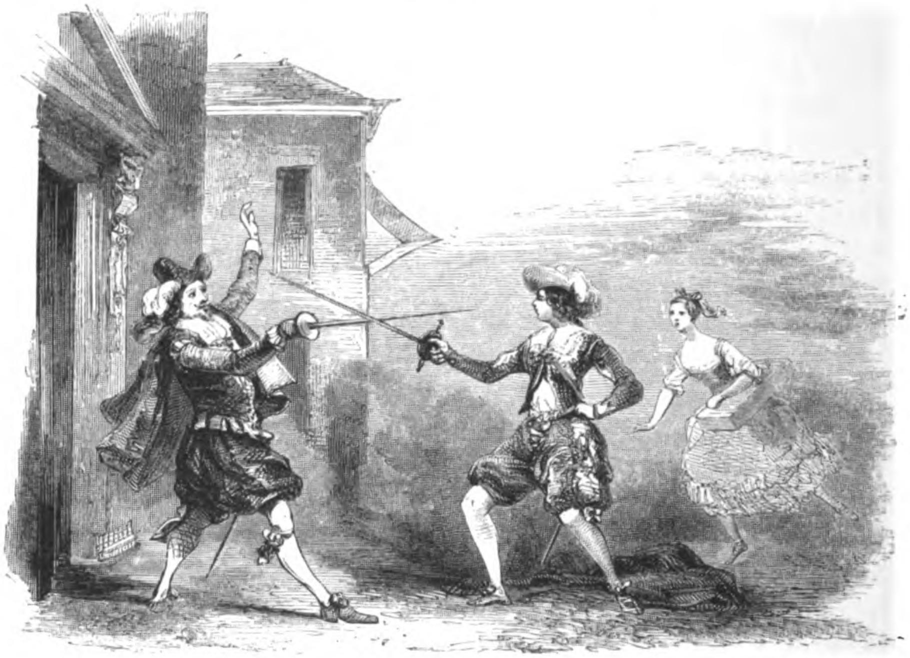
THE THIRD ACT leads us to a square in Madrid, before the house of Doña Dorotea. Cleofas, surrounded by musicians, is serenading under her windows. The widow soon appears, and the cavalier learns by her gestures that the compliment is fully appreciated by the fair dame. But at this very moment that accursed Don Gil comes in.

"Oh! oh!" he says, "this is the way things are going on, is it? I'll go and tell Bellaspada."

Next enters Florinda's maid, bringing to Cleofas a billet from her mistress, which the student tears up without condescending to look at it, and sends the *femme de chambre* away abruptly. Whilst Cleofas is paying the musicians, enter Don Gil and the widow's brother. The latter demands an explanation, and Cleofas says (what is not the truth) that he is a great lord, a man of immense wealth, and that he aspires to the honour of becoming his (the valiant captain's) brother-in-law. Bellaspada does not think these are grounds for cutting Cleofas's throat; on the contrary, he approves of his intentions, without regarding the signals made by Don Gil, and he leaves the young man with a promise that he will speak to his sister Dorotea in his favour. The Devil, who sees Cleofas so vastly delighted, tries to make him understand that Bellaspada and his sister only care for his presumed rank and wealth, and would despise him if they thought him poor; but the student will not believe a word of it. Asmodeus, to try a last resource, brings in Paquita. The *manola* pleads her cause with tears, and her grief is so deep, so touching, that Cleofas is softened in spite of himself. A struggle begins in his heart. Pure love may triumph; when, as ill-luck will have it, a lacquey comes to the scholar with an invitation from the widow to call at her house. In his joy, Cleofas quite forgets the poor girl, and, impatient to see Dorotea, he pushes aside the very Devil himself, who tries to detain him, and who, wounded by his ingratitude, declares he will abandon him to his fate. At the very moment when he is about to enter the widow's house, Cleofas feels a hand upon his arm, and hears a voice exclaim,—

"Stay, cavalier! You are in love with Doña Dorotea—so am I; if so please ye, we will measure weapons."

The person who so expresses himself is a young officer, whom Cleofas does not know (how could he?) but whose moustache is formidable. It is Doña Florinda in person. She behaves herself so gallantly, that Cleofas has no excuse for not fighting. The two adversaries cross swords, and by the fierceness of the combat one must soon be disarmed, when Paquita, who has seen them, rushes between them, and compels them to delay the battle, to the great annoyance of Florinda, who cannot hinder Cleofas from going to Dorothea. The *danseuse* and Paquita remain together, and relate their mutual history. They are united (as women) by a common desire for vengeance, and, forgetting their rivalry, they form against the widow an alliance offensive and defensive, and Asmodeus generously presents them his aid and assistance. He speedily introduces the *manola*, under the disguise of a milliner, and Florinda, still in her military costume, into the boudoir of Dorothea, who is at her toilette. The little officer hides *her*self behind a piece of furniture, while the *grisette* shews her finery to the widow, who desires the young shopkeeper to leave her patterns. Florinda throws herself at Dorothea's feet, and vows that she is most desperately enamoured! At this moment Cleofas, urged by the Devil, appears just as Dorothea, half willingly and half coyly, has granted a kiss to the Cherubino in uniform, and allowed him to snatch a riband from her waist.



The student restrains his anger, and sits down to play; but the luck is against him, and he loses all his money. Dorothea then proposes to the company to go to a fair which commences on that day. The offer is eagerly accepted, and the party proceed to the fair.

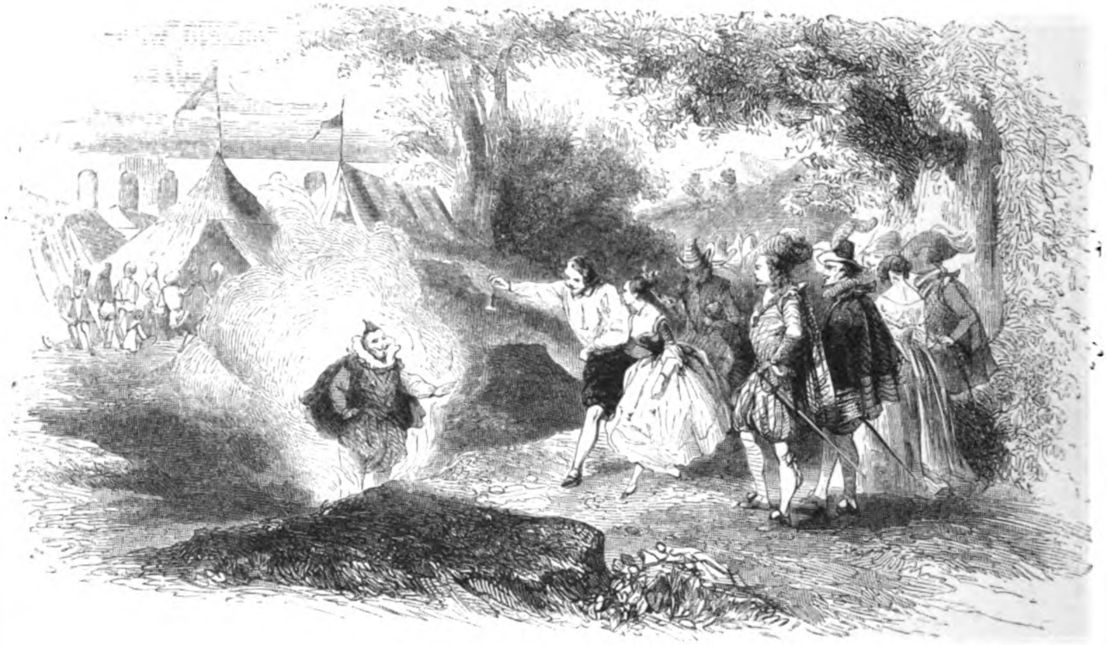
The scene represents a landscape on the banks of the Manzanares, with the bridge of Toledo spanning its sparkling waters. It is one of the Spanish fêtes of which a saint is always made the pretext, and on this occasion it is St. Anthony who stands godfather to the rejoicing. There are the *calèches* drawn by lean horses wounded in the last bull-fight, carts with large wheels, and the oxen unyoked beside them, looking with their large and quiet eyes at the busy spectacle before them, mules fantastically apparelled, covered with bows, bells, plumes, and tufts of coloured wool, of a thousand various dyes. There are the *majos,* accompanied by their *majas* in their satin shoes, black velvet boddices, Valentians as dark as Arabs, in cloaks and *alpargasas,* selling the *orchata de chufas,* and the iced *abada,* in small casks made of cork; the *manolas,* with their hair arranged in the form of small baskets, and with the embroidered mantillas over their shoulders. There, too, are the *muchachos,* carrying a light in a small cup for those who wish to smoke their cigars; the *gitanos,* wearing a blue dress, covered with white stars, and flounced with enormous tucks, holding by the hand some urchin, quite naked, and as yellow as a leaf of dried tobacco. Here, too, mingle the *maregates,* with their wide-brimmed hats, their vests of leather drawn in by a tight girdle, looking like the freebooters of the sixteenth century after laying aside their cuirasses; and here, too, are those masses, animated, wandering, crowding, moving about in all directions, that mixture of spangles and rags, which forms a Spanish crowd.

The *tambour de basque* is heard, castanets click—click in our ears, the guitar tinkles, the melodists shout out their *alzas, olas,* and *ayes,* and are heard from time to time over every other noise. They dance the *zapateado* here,—there 'tis the *mancheagas.* The Biscayens execute the *tartzico,* the Andalusians the *jalco* and *las boleras;* each province strives to display its local music and peculiar dance.

Jealousy can find a spark under the ashes of extinct love, and

Cleofas, watching the widow on the arm of Don Gil, feels a revival of his passion, and swells her train. Florinda, still *en militaire,* is also at the *Fiesta del' Santillo,* accompanied by Paquita, who, in order to repair the rebuff which she experienced in the dancing-school, executes a national *pas* with extreme grace and elegance. The applause is unanimous, yet Cleofas is still foolishly infatuated with the widow for whom he expends his last pistole in presents and gewgaws, which, when his purse is empty, he buys on credit. Asmodeus, disguised as a gipsy, comes in, and tells fortunes. He predicts to Paquita the happiness which she desires, pulls off Florinda's moustaches, and denounces Cleofas as a penniless impostor. The swindled toy and ornament-sellers rush after him in wrath; and Don Cleofas would willingly throw himself into the Manzanares. Bellaspada draws his sister's arm beneath his own, and discreetly retires. But Florinda remains, and puts into Paquita's hands a purse of gold; for, touched by the simple and pure affection of the poor maiden, the actress at once renounces all thoughts of Cleofas. The student and Paquita are united.

Asmodeus again extends his friendship to the now better-minded Cleofas, and presents him with a magic bell, which will at any time summon the kindly fiend. He disappears, and the ballet might end, now that Cleofas has a double fortune in a pretty wife and a good devil; but a ballet must end with an "effect:" so Cleofas tries the effect of the bell. Its potency proved, the curtain falls.



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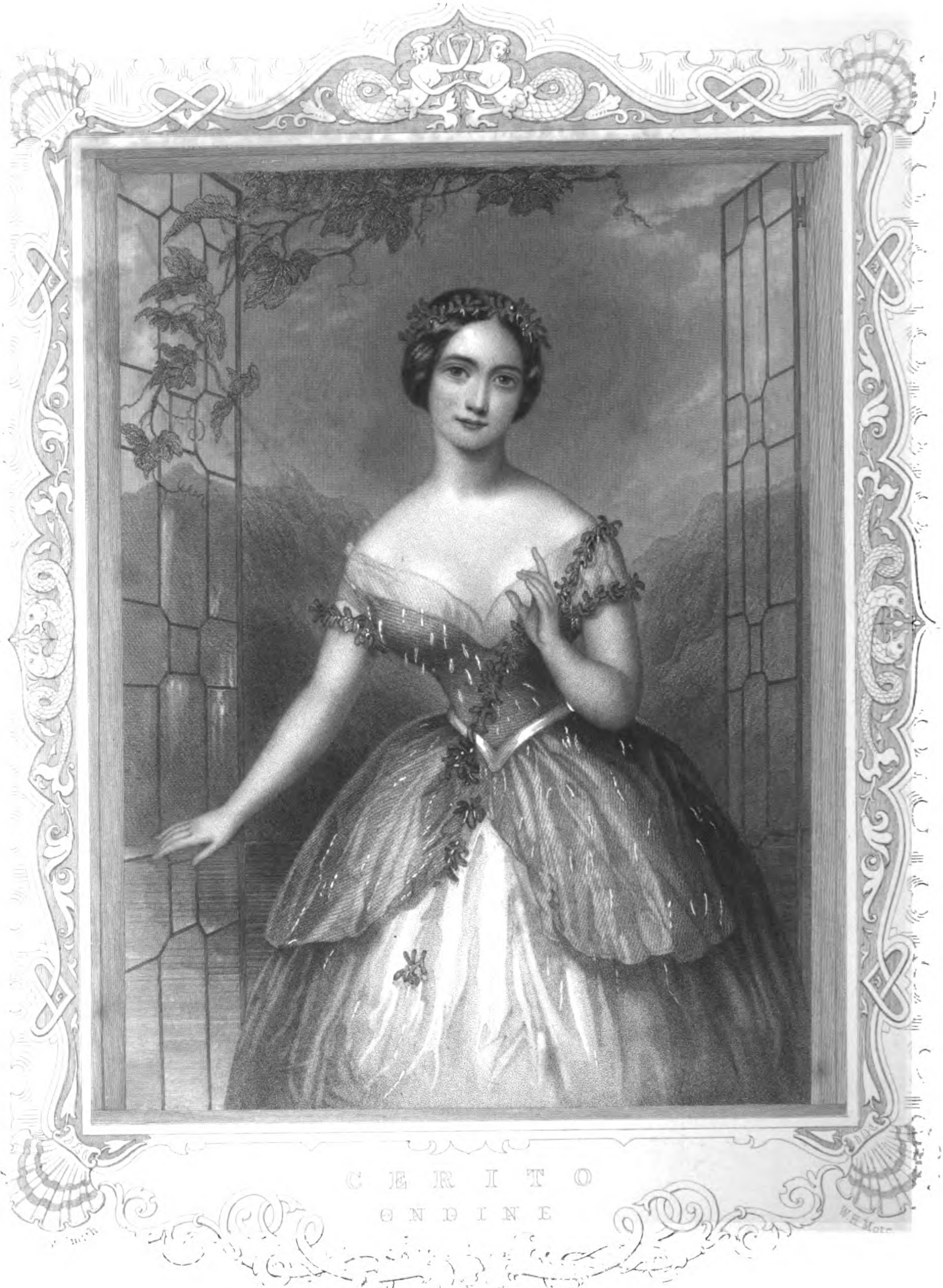
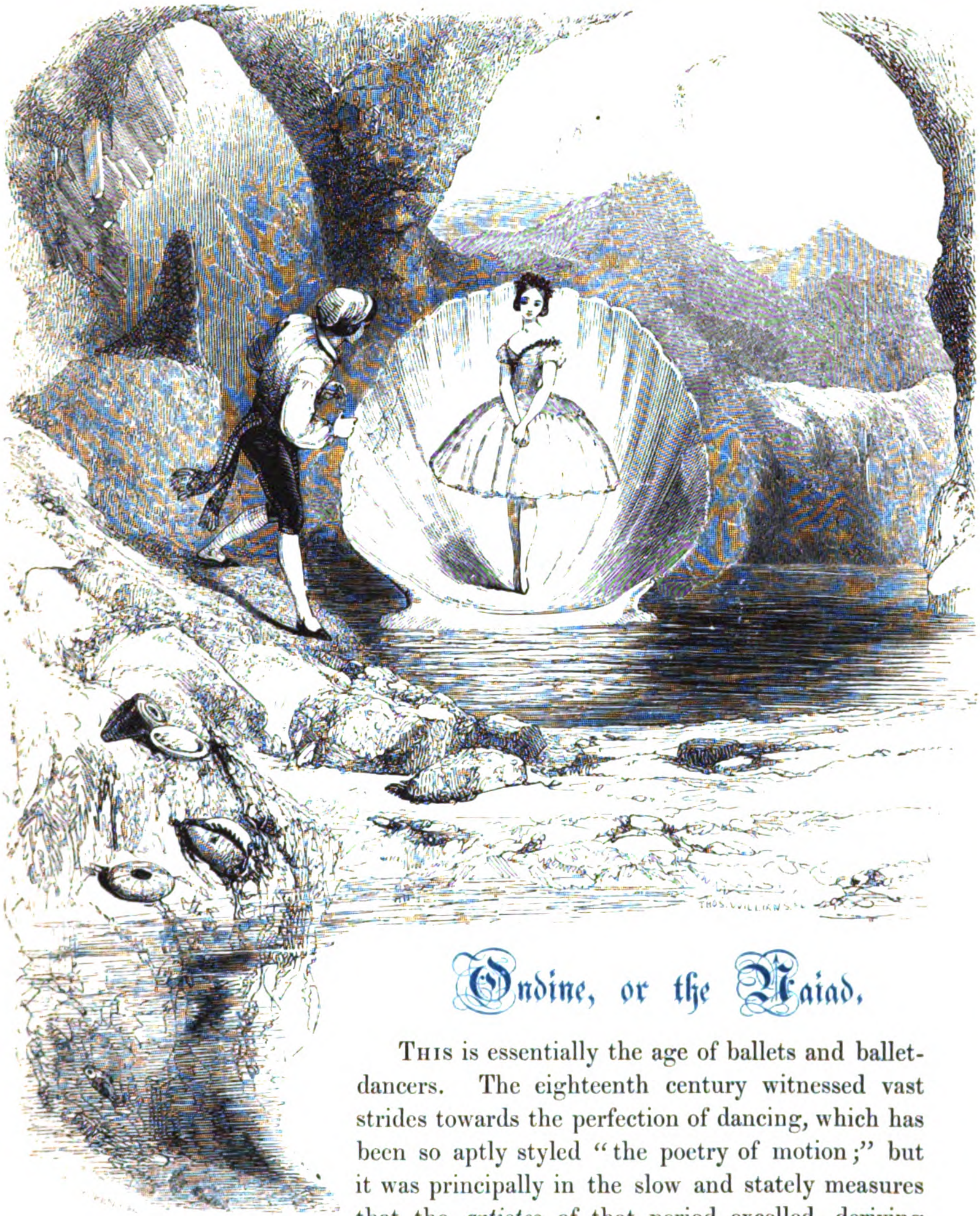


CERITO

ONDINE


THOS. WILLIAMS SC.

Ondine, or the Naiad.

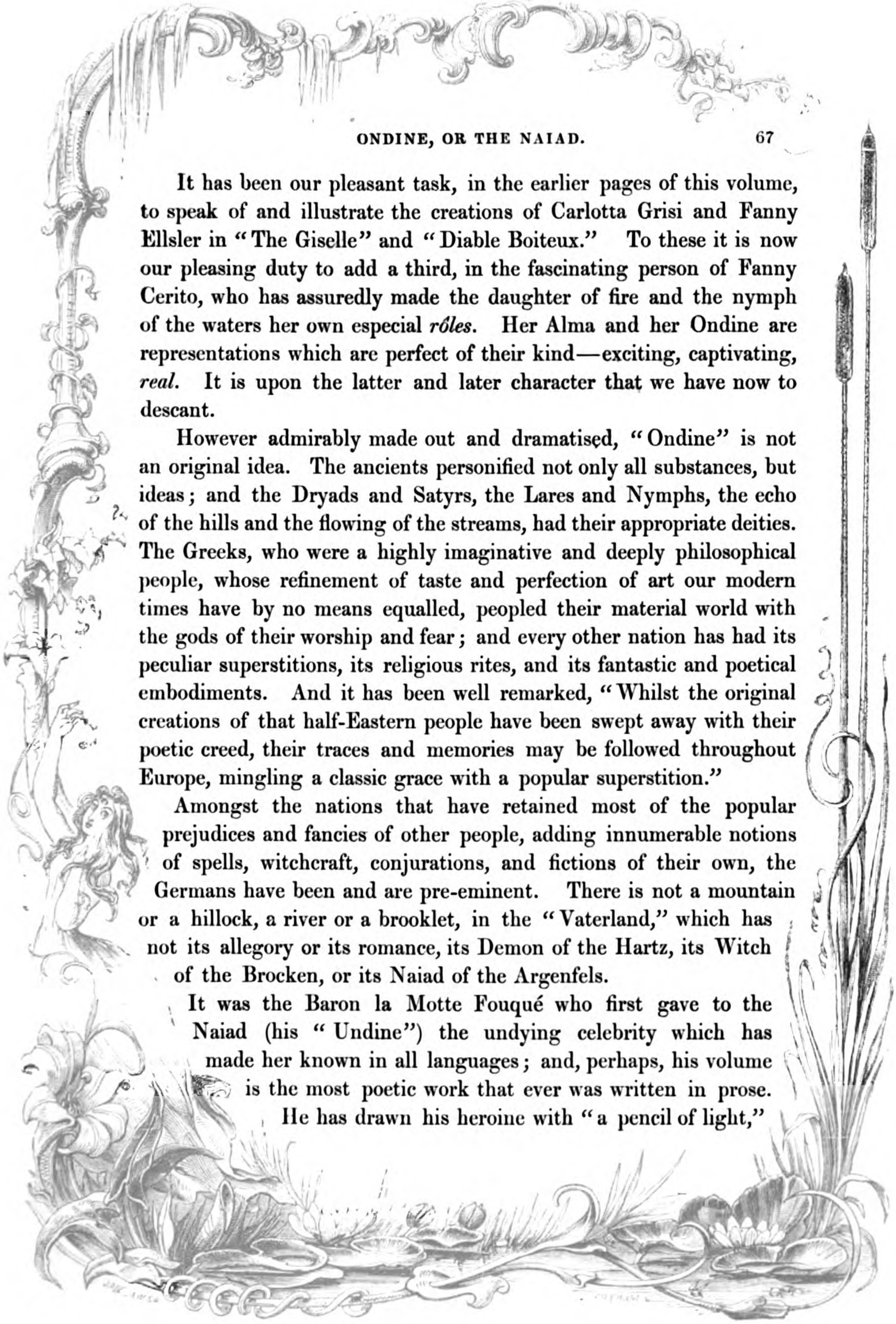
This is essentially the age of ballets and ballet-dancers. The eighteenth century witnessed vast strides towards the perfection of dancing, which has been so aptly styled "the poetry of motion;" but it was principally in the slow and stately measures that the *artistes* of that period excelled, deriving their origin and encouragement from France, the land of dance *par excellence*, and from Louis XIV. (*le Grand Monarque*) himself, who, an admirable and indefatigable *danseur*, deigned, night after night, in the *salons* of the Tuileries, or the *appartemens* of Versailles, to appear in full costume of embroidered and jewelled vestments, powdered wig, and high-heeled shoes, and to dance some dignified and demure minuet with Madame de Montespan, or la Duchesse de Ventadour, or a precise cotillon with Mademoiselle de Chemerault, or la Marquise d'Harcourt.

In those days, men and women danced themselves in and out of favour, just as Sir Christopher Hatton found goodly favour in the sight of our own Queen Bess, inasmuch as he turned his toes out with mathematical precision; and it was his accuracy in the "first position" in the dance that acquired for him his stability in the "second position" in the cabinet and councils of that Despot in Petticoats.

Dancing at the French court assuredly set the fashion on the stage; and it was only when the stage was daring enough to acquire the pre-eminence that the court abandoned it as a nightly recreation of royalty.

When bag-wigs and swords, pink heels and *jabots de Malines*, went out of fashion, so did formal court-dancing; and with the variation of costume from "grave to gay," from stiffness to ease, came the change in the style of dancing, from the slow and stilted to the vivacious and easy, and the impulses of nature prevailed over the imitations of art. Then the prim conceits of Damon and Phyllis faded into disrepute and forgetfulness before Zephyrs and Floras, Psyches and Bayadères.

The strain of popular music, too, has become lighter, and as Paesiello, Martini, Jomelli, Bach, &c., have been displaced by Rossini, Auber, Bellini, Donizetti, &c. &c., so the *minuets de la cour* and *cotillons à la pavane* have been superseded by *saltarelles, tarantelles, valses de fascination,* and *pas de l'ombre.* Whilst, in bygone days, dances were "of the earth, earthy," they are now produced from the other elements, and the air has given us its "Sylphide," the fire its "Alma," and the water its "Ondine."



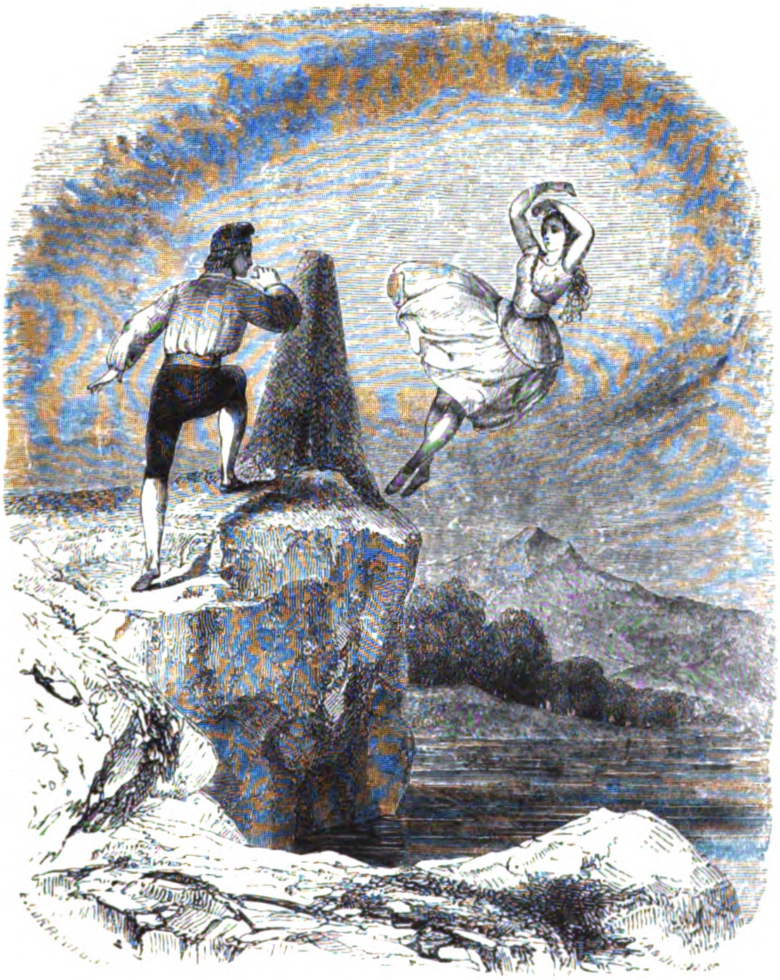
It has been our pleasant task, in the earlier pages of this volume, to speak of and illustrate the creations of Carlotta Grisi and Fanny Ellsler in "The Giselle" and "Diable Boiteux." To these it is now our pleasing duty to add a third, in the fascinating person of Fanny Cerito, who has assuredly made the daughter of fire and the nymph of the waters her own especial *rôles*. Her Alma and her Ondine are representations which are perfect of their kind—exciting, captivating, *real*. It is upon the latter and later character that we have now to descant.

However admirably made out and dramatised, "Ondine" is not an original idea. The ancients personified not only all substances, but ideas; and the Dryads and Satyrs, the Lares and Nymphs, the echo of the hills and the flowing of the streams, had their appropriate deities. The Greeks, who were a highly imaginative and deeply philosophical people, whose refinement of taste and perfection of art our modern times have by no means equalled, peopled their material world with the gods of their worship and fear; and every other nation has had its peculiar superstitions, its religious rites, and its fantastic and poetical embodiments. And it has been well remarked, "Whilst the original creations of that half-Eastern people have been swept away with their poetic creed, their traces and memories may be followed throughout Europe, mingling a classic grace with a popular superstition."

Amongst the nations that have retained most of the popular prejudices and fancies of other people, adding innumerable notions of spells, witchcraft, conjurations, and fictions of their own, the Germans have been and are pre-eminent. There is not a mountain or a hillock, a river or a brooklet, in the "Vaterland," which has not its allegory or its romance, its Demon of the Hartz, its Witch of the Brocken, or its Naiad of the Argenfels.

It was the Baron la Motte Fouqué who first gave to the Naiad (his "Undine") the undying celebrity which has made her known in all languages; and, perhaps, his volume is the most poetic work that ever was written in prose. He has drawn his heroine with "a pencil of light," making her as sportive and as fantastic, as sparkling and as varied, as the element she dwells in,—from which she springs in love and joy, and to which she resolves, in dimness and in tears, when her love is unreturned and her devotion forgotten.

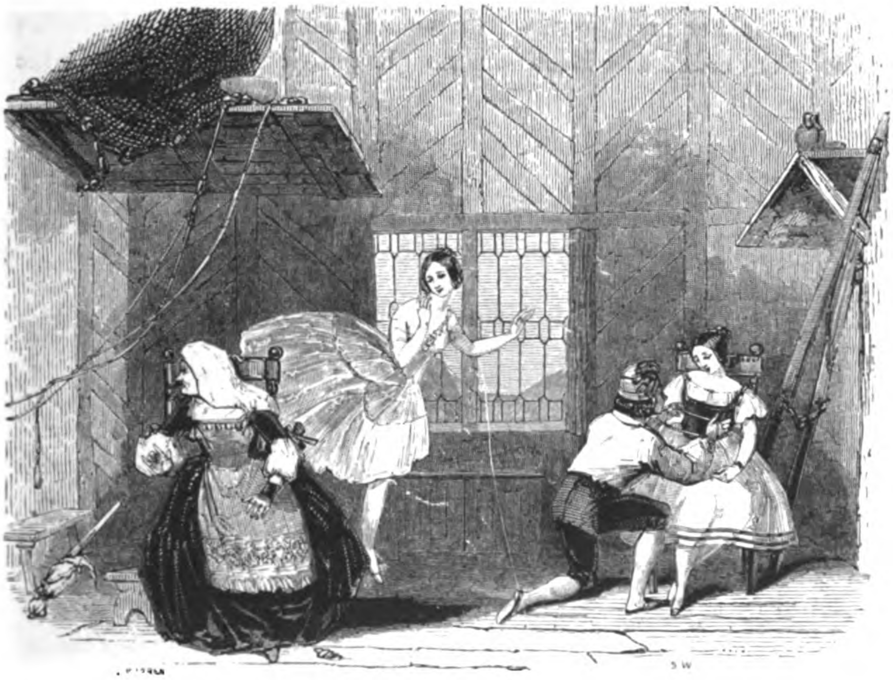
Assuming the legend of this child of the wave as the groundwork of the story, M. Perrot has left the German waters for the Sicilian shore, and, converting Fouqué's "Undine" into "Ondine," he has produced a ballet whose excellence and popularity are alike complete. According to the "canons" for writing ballets, "Ondine" is divided into six tableaux, and the first is called "La Coquille, or the Shell." When the curtain rises, we find the peasants and fishermen of a village on the coast of Sicily assembled in picturesque groups on the sea-shore, consulting and making preparations for the festival of the Madonna, which is close at hand, and the observances of which it is necessary to celebrate with all the superstition which ever blends in the revelry of the Italian peasantry. Matteo, a fisherman, is there with his young and lovely bride, and invites his friends to his espousals, which are fixed for the following day. The bride, Giannina, coy and blushing, receives the congratulations of her friends, and, in anticipation of the coming happy time, the whole *corps de ballet* dance a *ballabile,* remarkable for its picturesque effects and graceful situations. The dance ends, and they all depart, except Matteo, who resolves to have a cast in the waters to try for a fish for his supper, or to "furnish forth the marriage-feast." He throws his net vigorously, and, as he draws it in again, a shell rises slowly from the waters, in which he sees a lovely and entrancing figure, more charming than his fancy had ever imagined, although his dreams have been visited by a form, a face, eyes, lips, which have disturbed his sleep, and caused him reveries even in his waking hours. Here, before his eyes, is the being, the ethereal vision, become palpable, which has haunted his slumbers and perplexed his fancy. The Naiad has been smitten by the young and graceful fisherman, and, accustomed to follow every caprice, has resolved to woo him to her arms, regardless of his mortality, and only caring for his love;—to obtain which she puts forth every attraction. Matteo, who really loves Giannina, resists the smiles of the enamoured Ondine, and turns away to seek his mother and his bride in the cottage; but the wayward nymph of the waters will not be resisted. She fastens her looks on the youth, and the spell of those blue eyes is irresistible; and, in a *pas d'entraînement* of surpassing grace and finish, Ondine fascinates the young fisherman, who follows her as does the bird the eye of basilisk. Step by step she leads, and he follows along the shore and up the rocks, until, reaching



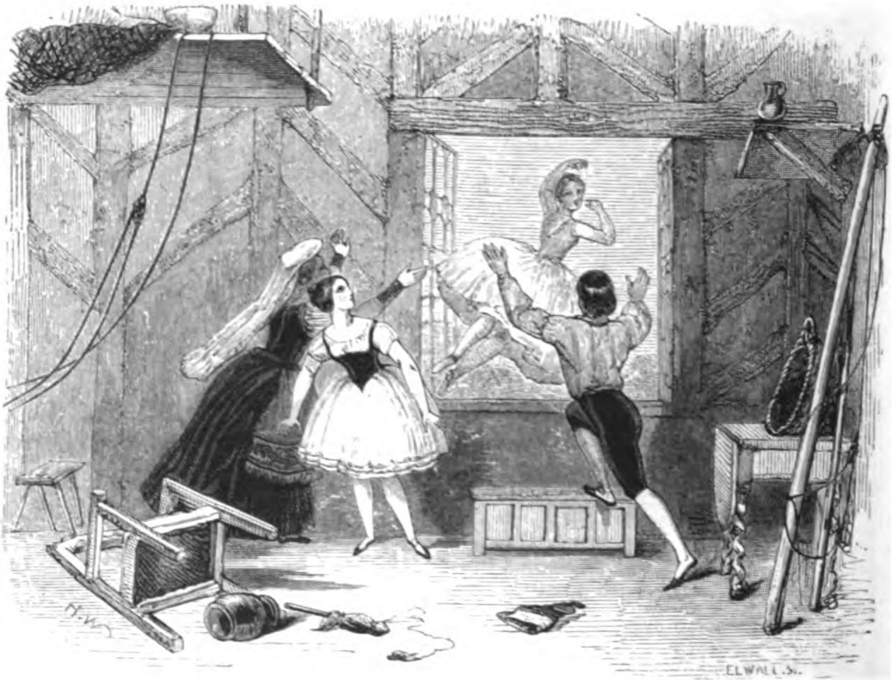
the highest point of a pinnacle, she sinks slowly, gracefully, lovingly, into the sparkling waters, with enamoured look and outstretched arms, inviting the thralled Matteo to follow. He is about to do so, when some peasants enter, who cling to and save him. Their coming so opportunely preserves him, whilst it dissolves the "so potent" spell, and, grateful for his rescue from the delusion, he falls on his knee, and breathes a prayer of thankfulness for his escape.

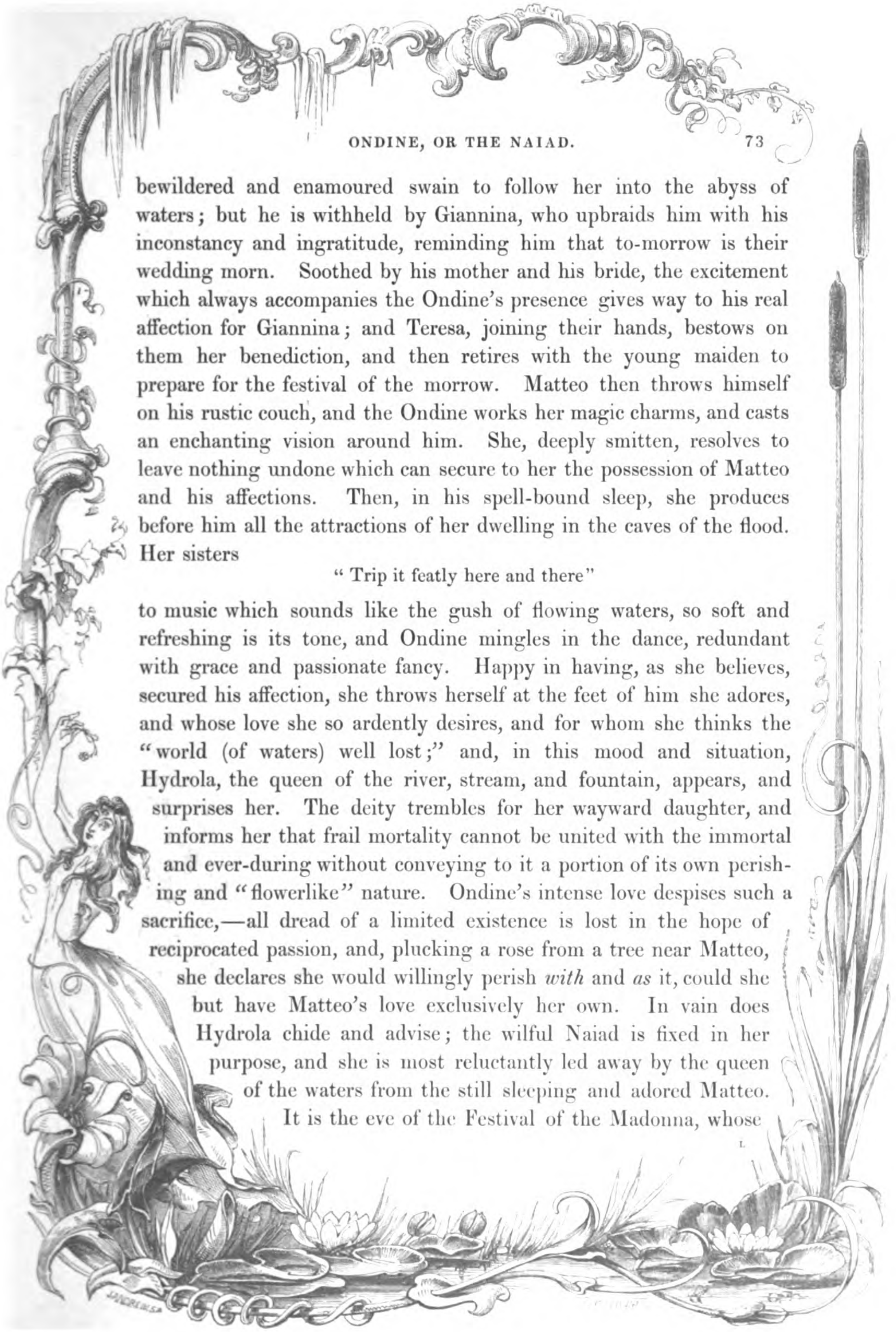
Nothing can surpass the poetry of this scene, whether we consider the idea, effect, or the skill of the *artistes*. Matteo (admirably played by Perrot) delineates the progress of his fascination—his spell enthralment—with the evident anxiety, but entire disability, to shake off the spell that surrounds him, and at each moment binds him the more inextricably; and, wrapt in the full wonder and ecstasy of his infatuation, he has no sensation of fear, no thought of danger. His *entraînement* is complete. The sprite of the waters is evidently deeply enamoured; but there is, besides, an evident display of, and delight in, her power of enchantment beyond the attraction of her unearthly loveliness. She knows the fulness of her charms, but she also evinces the delight of possessing and exercising influences more than mortal; and there is hardly a *situation* more effective on the stage than the moment when the Naiad (to whom the power of floating in the air is given equally with that of gliding upon, through, or beneath the waters)—having gained the pinnacle of the precipice up which she has tempted Matteo to follow her, after the pause of a moment, during which her countenance and figure express the utmost endearment, mingled with the confidence of success and triumph—sinks gently from the rocky point, and is gradually enveloped in the transparent waves, which enclasp her in their bosom as a fond mother welcomes back a loved and truant child! Had the ballet consisted of this scene only it must have been popular.

We are now introduced to Matteo's cottage, where his mother, Teresa, and his betrothed, the orphan Giannina, are anxiously expecting the young fisherman home. At length he enters, deeply musing—meditating alike on the loveliness he has seen and the escape he has had, and sending longing, lingering remembrances after the embodied vision that enthrals him. Giannina approaches him, full of tenderness and assiduity, and, by her affection, removes his melancholy, of which both she and his mother earnestly seek to know the cause. He resolves to disclose to them his secret, and narrates his recent adventure with the child of the flood. His mother treats it as a dream, and persuades him to think no more of it, and Teresa sits down to her spindle and wheel, whilst Giannina, taking up a skein of silk, gives it to Matteo to hold whilst she unwinds it. They are all fully occupied, Matteo being on his knee, with his looks intently and lovingly fixed on Giannina, when the casement suddenly bursts open, as if by the wind, and the capricious offspring of the limpid waters, which wash the base of the cottage, springs with one bound into the apartment, and flits around like a bird upon the wing. Giannina alone has perceived her arrival and her presence, whilst her lover and his mother are alarmed at the trouble and wildness of her aspect, and



believe that she is under some mental delusion. After a time the form of the fitful Ondine fades away, and, Giannina's composure being restored, she and her companions resume their avocations. The Naiad becomes annoyed at their happiness, and vents her caprices on the mother and bride by snapping the silken skein which Giannina winds, and by striking the spindle suddenly from Teresa's grasp, rejoicing at their annoyances, and happy in her mischiefs. Then she becomes visible to Matteo, and lavishes on him all the attraction and spell of her superhuman loveliness. Maddened by this display of regard from a creature of mystic origin and magic power, he follows, and tries to retain her, but in vain. She eludes his grasp, but, as she evades him, still tempts him on, and, excited and intoxicated, he is about to yield to her enchantment, when she is discovered and pursued by Giannina. The betrothed attempts to seize her—has her all but in her grasp, but, with a bound like an antelope, she dashes out of the casement window into the glittering current, beckoning the





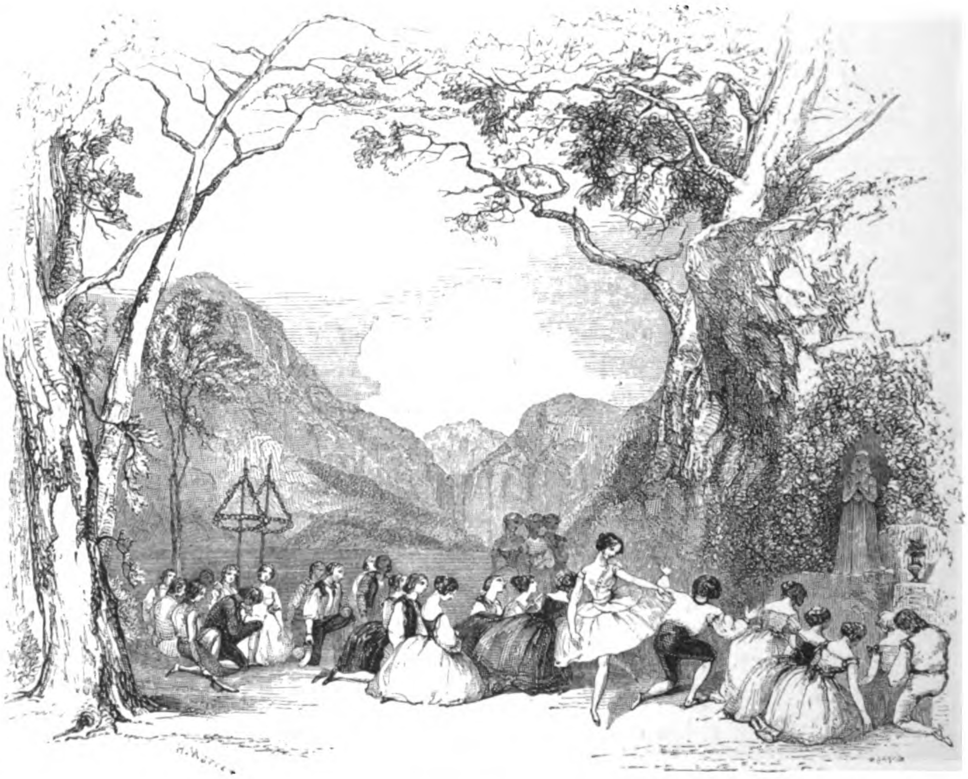
bewildered and enamoured swain to follow her into the abyss of waters; but he is withheld by Giannina, who upbraids him with his inconstancy and ingratitude, reminding him that to-morrow is their wedding morn. Soothed by his mother and his bride, the excitement which always accompanies the Ondine's presence gives way to his real affection for Giannina; and Teresa, joining their hands, bestows on them her benediction, and then retires with the young maiden to prepare for the festival of the morrow. Matteo then throws himself on his rustic couch, and the Ondine works her magic charms, and casts an enchanting vision around him. She, deeply smitten, resolves to leave nothing undone which can secure to her the possession of Matteo and his affections. Then, in his spell-bound sleep, she produces before him all the attractions of her dwelling in the caves of the flood. Her sisters

"Trip it featly here and there"

to music which sounds like the gush of flowing waters, so soft and refreshing is its tone, and Ondine mingles in the dance, redundant with grace and passionate fancy. Happy in having, as she believes, secured his affection, she throws herself at the feet of him she adores, and whose love she so ardently desires, and for whom she thinks the "world (of waters) well lost;" and, in this mood and situation, Hydrola, the queen of the river, stream, and fountain, appears, and surprises her. The deity trembles for her wayward daughter, and informs her that frail mortality cannot be united with the immortal and ever-during without conveying to it a portion of its own perishing and "flowerlike" nature. Ondine's intense love despises such a sacrifice,—all dread of a limited existence is lost in the hope of reciprocated passion, and, plucking a rose from a tree near Matteo, she declares she would willingly perish *with* and *as* it, could she but have Matteo's love exclusively her own. In vain does Hydrola chide and advise; the wilful Naiad is fixed in her purpose, and she is most reluctantly led away by the queen of the waters from the still sleeping and adored Matteo.

It is the eve of the Festival of the Madonna, whose statue is in a shrine, and at whose feet the assembled peasants deposit their gifts and offer their prayers. They then join in a characteristic and most joyous tarantella, which is suddenly arrested by the sound of the convent-bell, at whose signal for vespers all the assembled crowd suddenly cease from their mirth and motion, and, sinking on their knees, join in the evening prayer to the Holy Mother. The grouping in this tableau is admirably managed, having been arranged as to costume and position from the well-known picture by Leopold Robert; and this tableau is to this ballet what the prayer in the market-scene is to the opera of "Masaniello."

Whilst Matteo, Giannina, and the assemblage, are at their devotions, the restless Ondine rises from a fountain beside the shrine, and attracts Matteo's attention, who springs from his knees, and hastily follows her through all the turns and windings which she makes and takes amidst the labyrinth which is formed by the prostrate peasantry. But the wilful Naiad eludes him, and Giannina, who has observed her lover's agitation and wandering, arrests his further progress, and leads him back to resume his devotions at Our Lady's



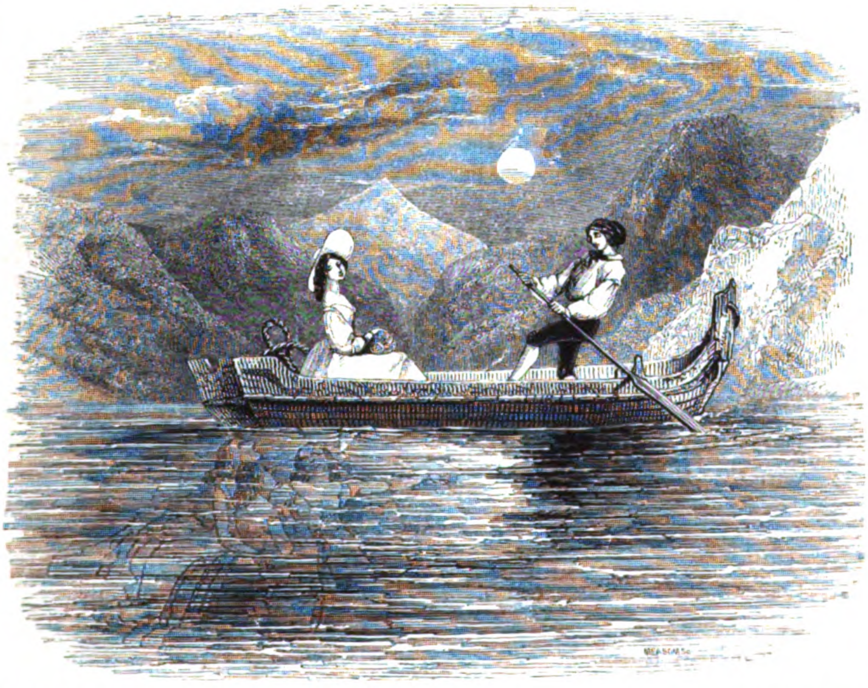
shrine. He gazes on the face of the Madonna, and suddenly the image of the Virgin disappears, and for a moment the capricious, wanton being of the unstable element appears in the niche. It is but for an instant, for, whilst Matteo turns to Giannina, to direct her attention to it, the Ondine, like

> "A flash of lightning in the collied night,"

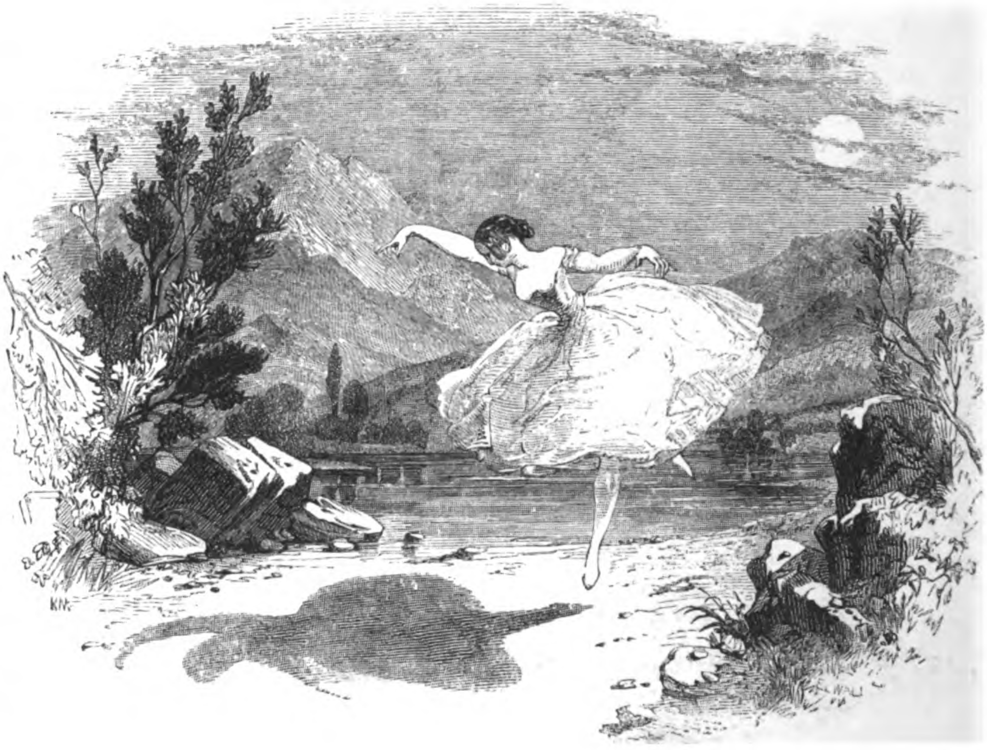
has disappeared.

The prayer has ended, and the dance is instantly resumed and kept up until the moon rises, and then the peasants retire, leaving only Matteo and Giannina. They then make preparations for departure; the maiden, by taking up her cloak and hat, and Matteo, by going to unmoor his boat, to row "the lady of his love" home.

The Ondines, the syrens of the "aged stream," then, from their transparent homes, tempt Giannina, and the girl, seduced by their fascination, bends towards them, and, reaching her hand to them, is drawn into the waters, and borne along under the waves by the



Ondines to the palace of Hydrola. As Giannina sinks into the wave, the Ondine rises from it, who, having stolen the form of Giannina, leaps exultingly on the bank of the stream. As she advances, she observes her shadow on the moonlit earth, and, gazing on it, she first thinks it to be her rival, who pursues her; but soon she finds it is one token of her mortality, and then returns, in her assumed form, all the caprice, vivacity, and joyousness of her Naiad temperament; she bounds about and around, and hither and thither, in an ecstasy of childish delight and gushing exultation.



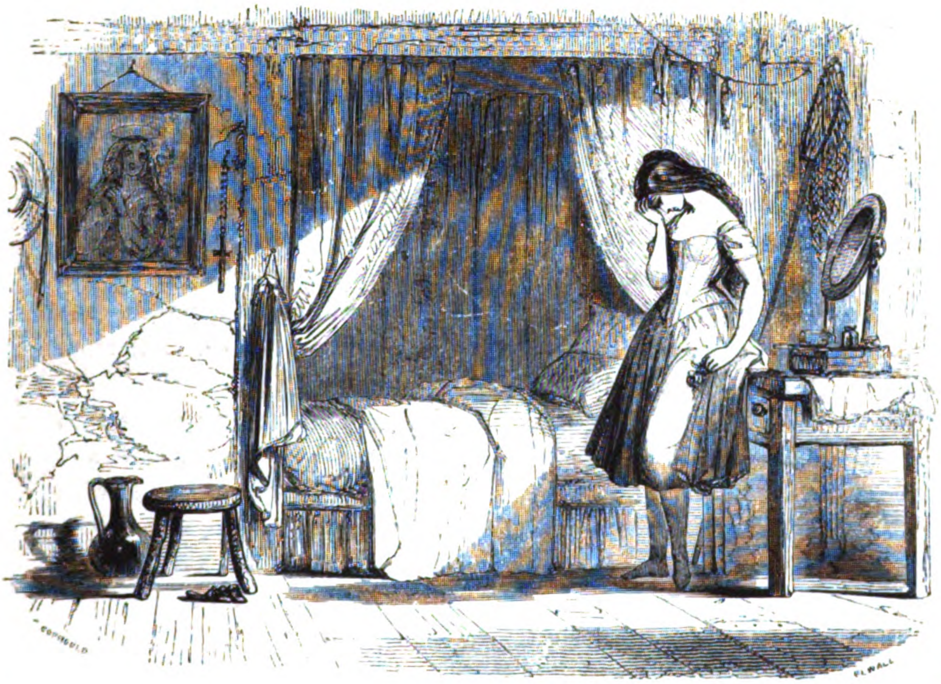
It is in this celebrated *"pas de l'ombre,"* in which stage effect singularly aids her exquisite personation, that Fanny Cerito excited and excites so great and deserved enthusiasm.

"The force of *dancing* can no farther go."

But all mortal things come to an end, and so does the *"pas de l'ombre"* of the mortalised animated Naiad Cerito, and Matteo comes with his boat.

She has assumed Giannina's cloak and cottage-hat, and seats herself in the bark with him she so madly loves, and he rows her across the stream as his bride; whilst the real Giannina is seen beneath the skiff, borne to the watery regions by the Ondines who have tempted her by their wiles.

The next tableau is called "La Rose Flétrié." We are in a bed-chamber, the apartment of the lost Giannina, now usurped by the fraudful Naiad, who lies on the couch of the abstracted bride, whilst the anxious and alarmed Hydrola is absorbed in grief, and standing by the bed of the sleeping nymph. Having paid a portion of the debt which Nature exacts from humanity, the Ondine awakes, and Hydrola, queen of the waters, disappears. The Ondine begins to feel the weight of mortality, and sinks under the enervation of its weakness. With mortal clay come mortal thoughts, and the Ondine kneels in prayer! Hydrola again appears, and renews her warning and her assertion, that the Ondine, like the plucked rose, has already begun to feel the progress of withering and decay. She



points to the shrinking flower; she counsels the languid maiden; and entreats her, before it is too late, to abandon her mortal attachment, whose endurance must be so frail, so limited. The Ondine is immovable; she has the abiding love of a true woman, and, though mournful, yet resigned, though sinking, still constant, she bids Hydrola depart.

The queen has scarcely left her, when Matteo comes to her with his mother, and we have the expressive and characteristic "*pas de la rose flétrié*" between the two lovers. Ondine sinks at every moment, and yet with each feeling of increasing languor makes a fresh effort to smile upon Matteo. She pines and withers, and her youth and fondness cannot compensate to her exhausting frame for the surrender of its immortality. Her fond, though deceived lover, is deeply affected to see her wasting at every breath, and is struck with the sad conviction that the hand of death is upon her for whom (in his own belief) he has given up the affection of a divinity. She insists on proceeding to the marriage, and desires that the ceremony be gone through, even if the exertion shall cost the sacrifice of her brief existence. She will, at least, possess him for whom alone she has cared to live, and that is a consummation worth achieving and dying for.

The *finale* draws nigh, and the sixth and last tableau opens with the procession of the wedding-party, who move on with slow and silent steps. The Naiad is hardly able to support herself, and with great difficulty advances, leaning on the arm of Matteo, who carries rather than supports her. The gathered rose has withered quickly and surely, and with it the Ondine has drooped and wasted. The leaves of the flower have nearly all fallen, and the Naiad is all but breathing her latest sigh.

Then the Ondines, the sisters of her of river, lake, and fountain, headed by their queen, Hydrola, make one last effort to recover their expiring sister. Hydrola, who in her cave of waters has preserved Giannina, now leads her forward, and in her presence Matteo recovers his real love, and is relieved from the despair of believing her dying; whilst the wilful, energetic Naiad, rendering the mortality to Giannina which she had furtively adopted, and to which she was so nearly falling a sacrifice, resumes her immortal state, and is borne by her sisters and their sovereign in happy triumph to her Home of Waters!

This ballet has, perhaps, been one of the most successful that has ever appeared on the boards of the (English) Italian Opera,—and justly so, for it presents all the elements and combinations of success. There is a poetic idea admirably worked out, and, above all, that interest in the story which never flags for a moment, but increases with every scene, until the *finale*, which forms a beautiful picture, and all seem happy,—a termination particularly requisite to an English audience, and which is really necessary in ballet, for who likes or expects to *dance* to a *miserable* termination?

In "Ondine" and "Alma," Fanny Cerito has justly acquired the triumphs, for her peculiar and popular style of dancing, which have been assigned to her by the audiences of Her Majesty's Theatre in London; and to that capital has been confined the representation of those two ballets. Our French neighbours do not admire Cerito, and she has not attained celebrity in Paris, where Carlotta Grisi is idolised, Fanny Ellsler adored, and Marie Taglioni deified. Thus, on our English-Italian boards, have been invariably transplanted from the French capital the ballets there composed, and the characters thus created by these three distinguished *artistes*. We should, perhaps, except "La Esmeralda," which was produced in London this season (1844) expressly for Carlotta Grisi. We need hardly point to "La Giselle," "Le Tarantula," "La Bayadère," "La Sylphide," &c. &c. The dancing of Cerito, however, has been particularly "germane" to British audiences, and for her have been produced the two most original ballets that have ever given fame to the Italian Opera in the Haymarket,—"Alma" and "Ondine," which have been constantly performed, and, to judge by the applause that has greeted and followed them, have been

"Ever charming, ever new."

And, unquestionably, no *danseuse* has ever appeared on the English stage who has more completely captivated the fancy, and delighted the eyes, of the "lieges" than Cerito, who, *bondante* in her dancing, and *abondante* in her person, betrays in her manner her Spanish origin.

Short in stature, and round in frame, Cerito is an example of how grace will overcome the lack of personal elegance, how mental animation will convey vivacity and attraction to features which, in repose, are heavy and inexpressive. With a figure which would be too redundant, were it not for its extreme flexibility and *abandon*, Cerito is yet a charming *artiste*, who has honourably earned a high popularity, and deservedly retained it.

We should not dismiss our notice of this ballet without a reference to the music composed by Signor Pugni. It is singularly appropriate, quite descriptive, and adds a charm to the perfection of the ballet.

In the scene where the young fisherman, Matteo, is conveyed into the depths of the river, and the Ondines dance their mazy fascinations around him, the musical accompaniments which describe the rise and fall of the waves are eminently characteristic and beautiful: the very ripple of the flow, and the rushing sound of the ebb over the pebbly strand, are heard, and fully satisfy the ear; whilst the eye is filled and delighted with gorgeous scenery and exquisite dancing.

"Ondine" was first produced on the boards of Her Majesty's Theatre on the 22d of June, 1843. Its first representation was unquestionably successful; and it has deservedly maintained, if not increased, its popularity, on every subsequent representation, and will, no doubt, be performed in future seasons with undiminished *éclat*. It can never fail to be attractive so long as Cerito is the representative of her own creation of Ondine, or the Naiad.

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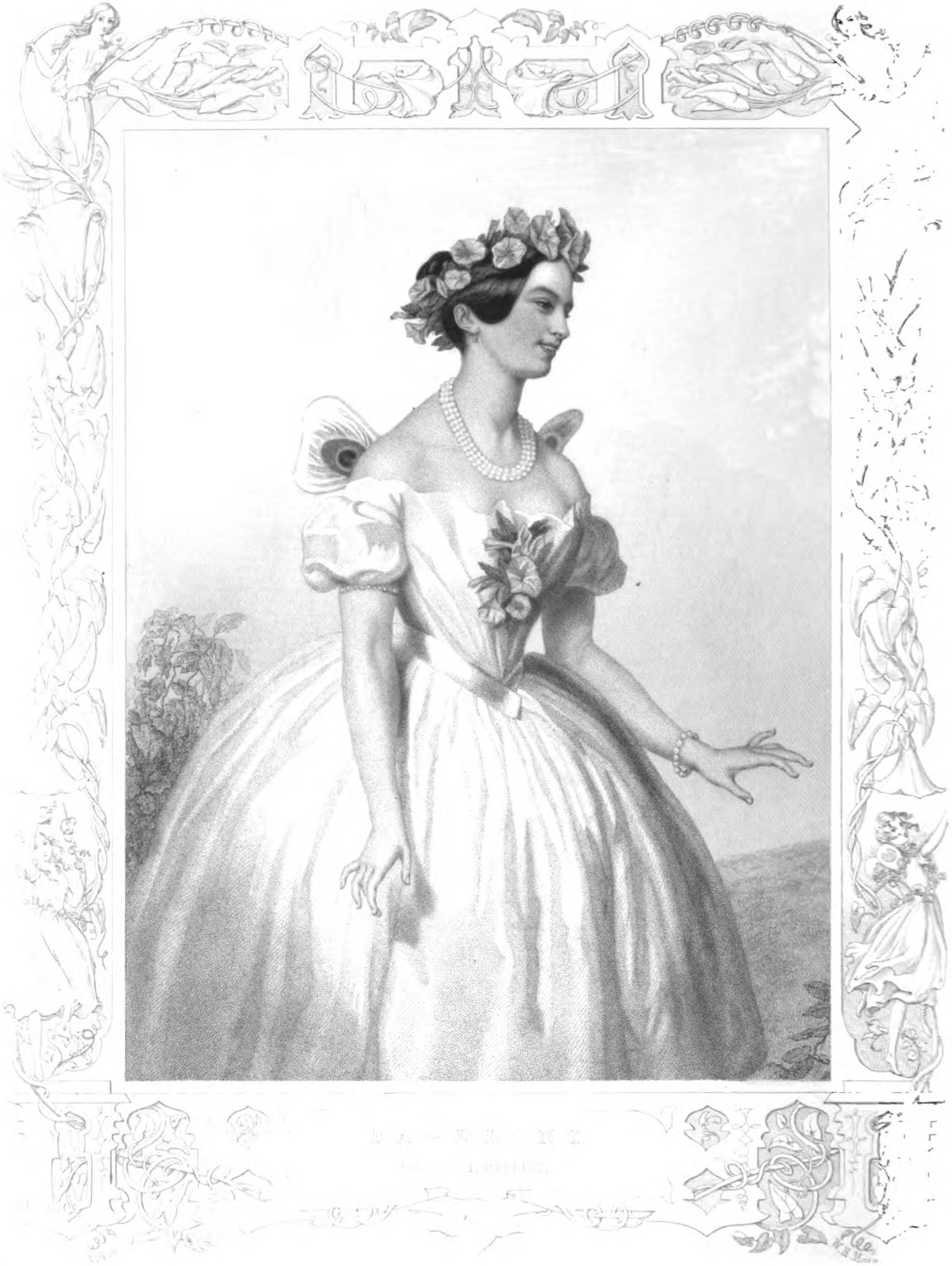
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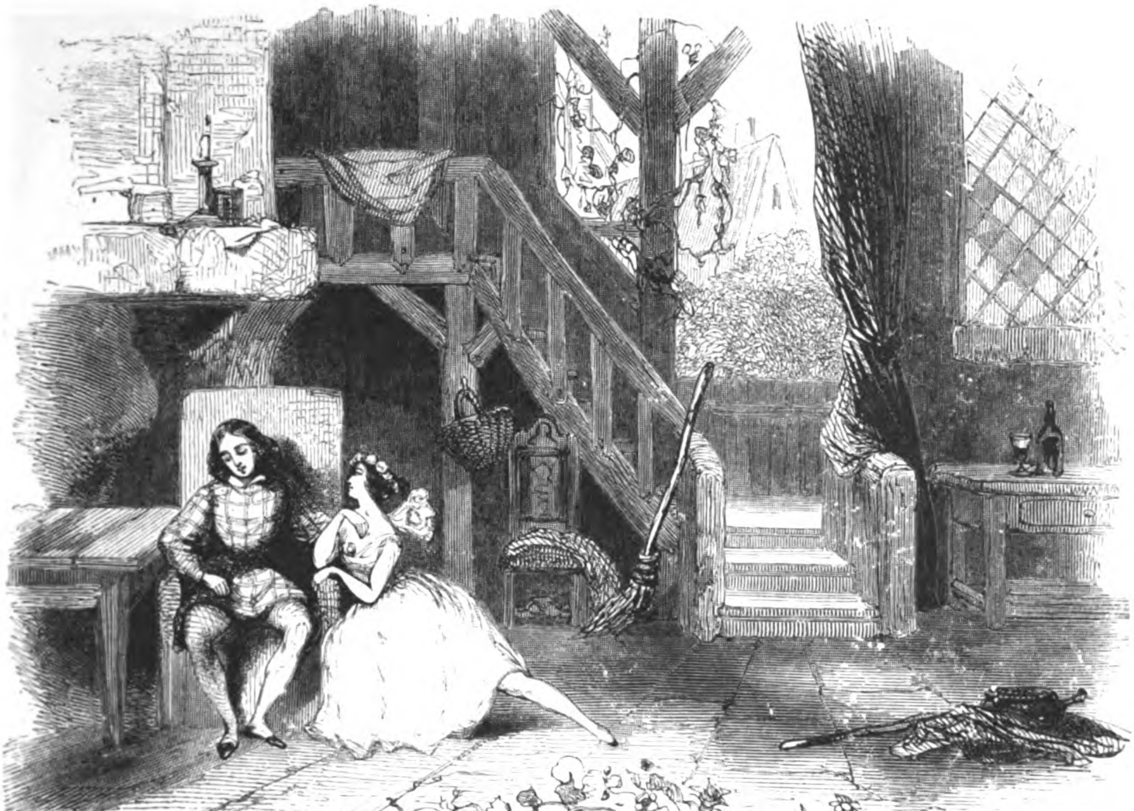


La Sylphide.

In a farmhouse of Scotland, at an hour so early that all under its roof are in silence and repose,—the faint streak of the earliest dawn has just shed its soft light through the dwelling. In the corner of a vast chimney, Gurn, a mountaineer, is sleeping heavily, like a wearied shepherd who has toiled all day. James, a Highlander of more poetic temperament, dreams pleasantly of a charming vision, which continually presents itself to his imagination. In his sleep he sees an aerial form, whose lovely eyes beam, whose rosy lips smile, sweetly upon him. This enchanting vision is the enamoured Sylph, the fay of the blooming fields, the sprite of the homely cabin.

This delicate form dances around the sleeping youth; and as she dances she murmurs—the infatuated creature!—

"The flowers which you find in your path I spread before you, chosen from the choicest; the pleasant dreams which lull and delight your slumbers, 'tis I who summon up and present before you. Dearest youth, why dost thou still sleep?

Say, wilt thou not love, if but a little, the gay sprite of the chimney-corner?"

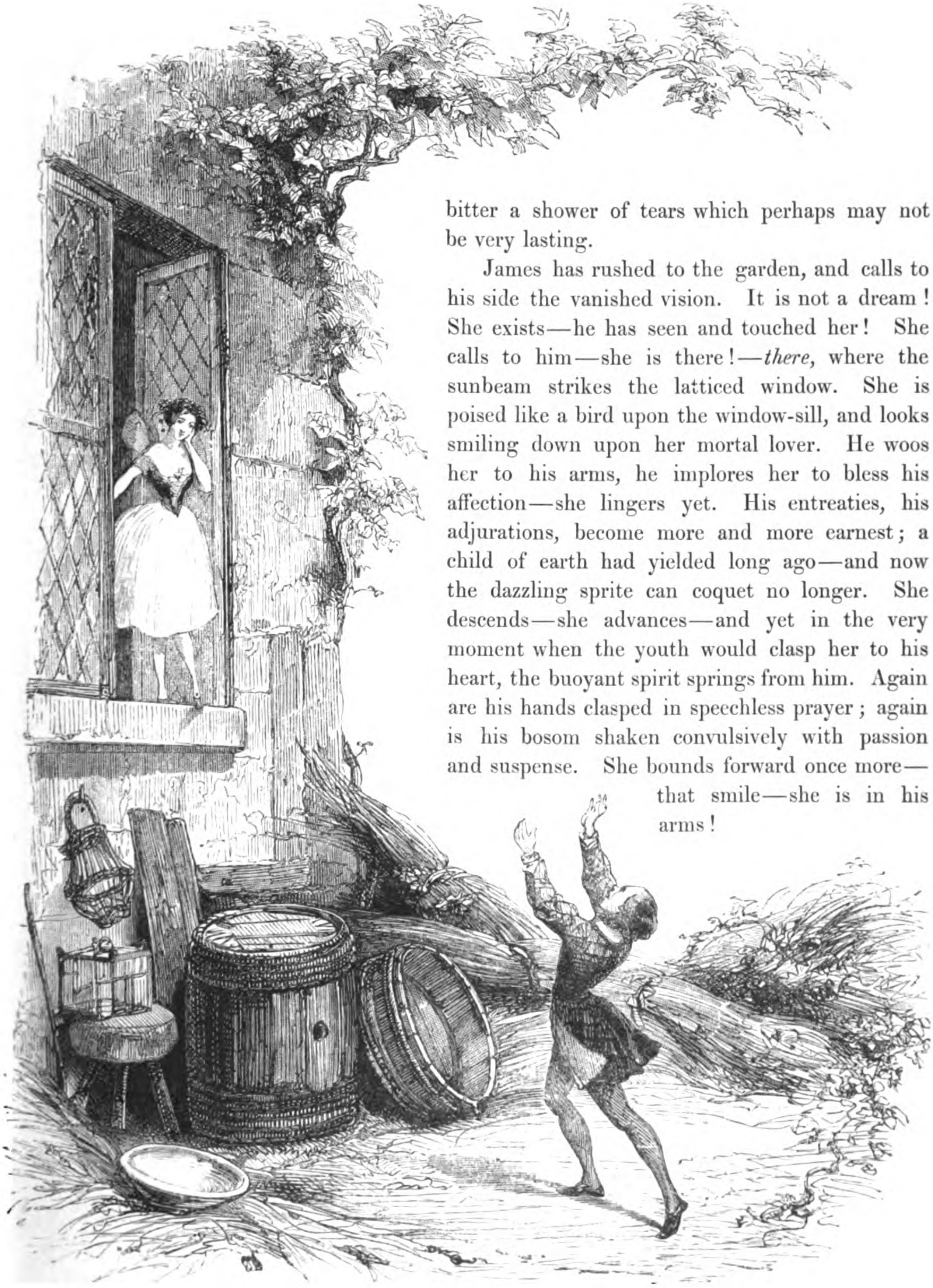
And this he dreams;—and then, at length, the Sylphide touches with her trembling lips the forehead of the youth she so madly loves. This kiss awakes him. But where now is the amorous shadow? By what unseen path has the delicious vision disappeared?

Now, all is life and motion in the farmhouse, and there is a gentle tap at the door—it is the betrothed of the youth, who, fresh in all the loveliness of maiden modesty, and coquettishly attired, has come to greet her cousin with a smile of congratulation. The day is, in truth, a great day for them both—James and the lovely Effie are to be married this morning. The relatives have all consented to the espousals; the young villagers are all dressed in their best attire; there is to be a dance and merrymaking, and the joy-inspiring pipe is heard in the glen, where the rejoicing has already begun.

But, Saint Andrew! why is Master Jamie "sae fu' o' care?" Nay, nay, not so silly, surely, as to fall in love with a face or form seen but in a dream! Yet, after this soft kiss, imagined in sleep, his forehead remains burning and thoughtful. Dance, youth, and be gay—dance, and shew your love for your cousin Effie—dance! For shame to think again of a dream! A real warm kiss from living, loving lips, is worth a million in a vision! And you may have it for the asking, accompanied by words of tenderness, and a hand which, warmly pressed in yours, is not the fancied palm of a fleeting vision. So says, or thinks, the young Scotchman to himself; and then he rouses himself, and turns to the blooming, laughing, real Effie, and he becomes gay, lively, amorous. Yes; but in the ring that is formed, the white robe is seen, the wafting of a jealous wing is heard, and the sad and reproachful look of the familiar sprite shines like a half-quenched flame; and James leaves Effie's hand, and pursues, with reckless speed, the goblin which beckons him. He sees nothing but the Sylphide.

She flies from the chamber, throwing one parting Parthian glance to see that she is followed. Too surely for Effie, whose bridegroom hastens after her viewless rival.

The folk at the bridal say, "Fie, Jamie's daft!" The betrothed maiden says, in a low tone, "He loves a vision!"—and poor Effie weeps—a girl's first love and first disappointment combine to render



bitter a shower of tears which perhaps may not be very lasting.

James has rushed to the garden, and calls to his side the vanished vision. It is not a dream! She exists—he has seen and touched her! She calls to him—she is there!—*there,* where the sunbeam strikes the latticed window. She is poised like a bird upon the window-sill, and looks smiling down upon her mortal lover. He woos her to his arms, he implores her to bless his affection—she lingers yet. His entreaties, his adjurations, become more and more earnest; a child of earth had yielded long ago—and now the dazzling sprite can coquet no longer. She descends—she advances—and yet in the very moment when the youth would clasp her to his heart, the buoyant spirit springs from him. Again are his hands clasped in speechless prayer; again is his bosom shaken convulsively with passion and suspense. She bounds forward once more—that smile—she is in his arms!

Such is the first real meeting between the Highland dreamer and his spirit love. And how exquisitely does the one, the only Sylph whom Europe can recognise, portray the bounding, the ecstatic joy of that hour! The stage becomes suddenly filled as it were with the presence of an aerial, an inspired, a loving creature, whose every step, every gesture, tells a new story of irrepressible delight. Where could Taglioni have studied so entrancing a character?—where originally caught the charming idea she has embodied hundreds of times, amid the raptured shouts of thousands of her idolaters? This is all we know about the matter.

One day, impelled by his fancy (the muse, by the way, whom he ever found most tractable), Charles Nodier, a French author of reputation, determined on a visit to the Highlands of "bonnie Scotland." No journey could have been devised more fitting to an imagination which, though elevated, was indolent and dreamy. From thence he returned to "*le plaisant pays de France*" with the tale of "The Mountain Sylph" (so well operatised by our John Barnett), and which the French *écrivain* called "Trilby." "Trilby" is the genius of home, the deity of the domestic hearth, the dream of early spring. It is also the dream of winter, at the murk and "cannie hour at eve," when the family huddles, chilled, but happy, round the "blazing ingle."

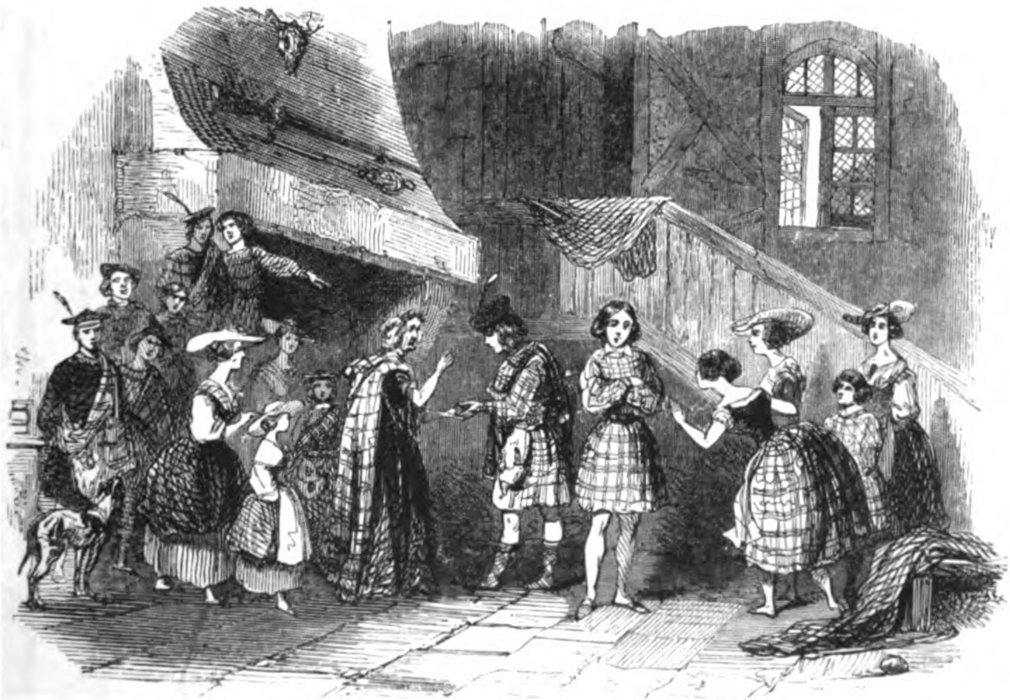
From "Trilby," the poetical fancy of Nodier, another artist (an unfortunate one, indeed, who died a sad death), Nourrit himself, the great tenor of France, composed the ballet of "The Sylphide;" and from Nourrit's ballet, Mademoiselle Taglioni created a *chef-d'œuvre*—the *chef-d'œuvre* of lightness, elegance, and grace. "Trilby" and "The Sylphide" owe their origin alike to the Scottish superstition, and each is affected by the same love, and pursues a similar course. "Trilby" represents the ballad; "The Sylphide" is the frame of the picture, of which Taglioni is the poetry, the imagery, the ideality. Nothing could be more delicious than the invention of the author, unless it be the personification by the *artiste*.

The charm of this little drama is, that fiction is so skilfully blended with truth, the ideal is so closely allied with real life: the heroine belongs equally to the daughters of the earth and the children of air.

But to the tale. The matrons and "gude-men" who have witnessed the strange flight of the bewildered youth, have made allowance for a supposed fit of distraction, and agreed that he *must* marry his pretty little cousin.

The scene changes back to the farm-house, and the same groups are again seen. James enters, and the first object that catches his eye is the tear-dimmed countenance of poor Effie, who gazes modestly, yet wistfully, upon the handsome youth who has made such havoc with her maiden heart. Mothers crowd round, and earnestly plead for her; but her most eloquent advocate is in those liquid eyes, which suddenly bring back to his memory a world of pleasant hours, of noon-tide endearments, of moonlight rambles. There she stands, her innocent bosom heaving with anxiety and sorrow. She reproaches him only with those mild glances; two or three kindly hands have pressed him forward; Effie's lips and his own are once more together.—To the bridal, ho!

But who is that ominous hag who has just been dragged from the chimney-corner, where hitherto she had lurked unseen? A witch! ay, the terror of the village. Yet to-day she seems more kindly disposed. She smiles, and not unkindly, on the plighted couple; nay, she volunteers to tell the fortunes of all present, who, not unapprehensively, crowd around.



One and another receive fortune at her hands; and by the smile of one and the frown of another, it would seem that the dreaded witch has dealt out predictions with the usual mixture of guess and probability which the skilful soothsayer of every age has known how to fuse into prophecy. The gentle Annette's eyes are sparkling—Ronald, though too devoted to the chase, will prove true and faithful. But the haughty Flora has a gloom upon her brow—her affianced Edward pays but a divided homage—she must share his heart with a southron damsel, whose blue eyes and fair hair have successfully coped with her darker charms. And now, pretty Effie, wilt thou commit thy rosy, dimpled hand to the iron grip of the witch? She has done so, and whispers her inquiry,—

"Does James love me still?"

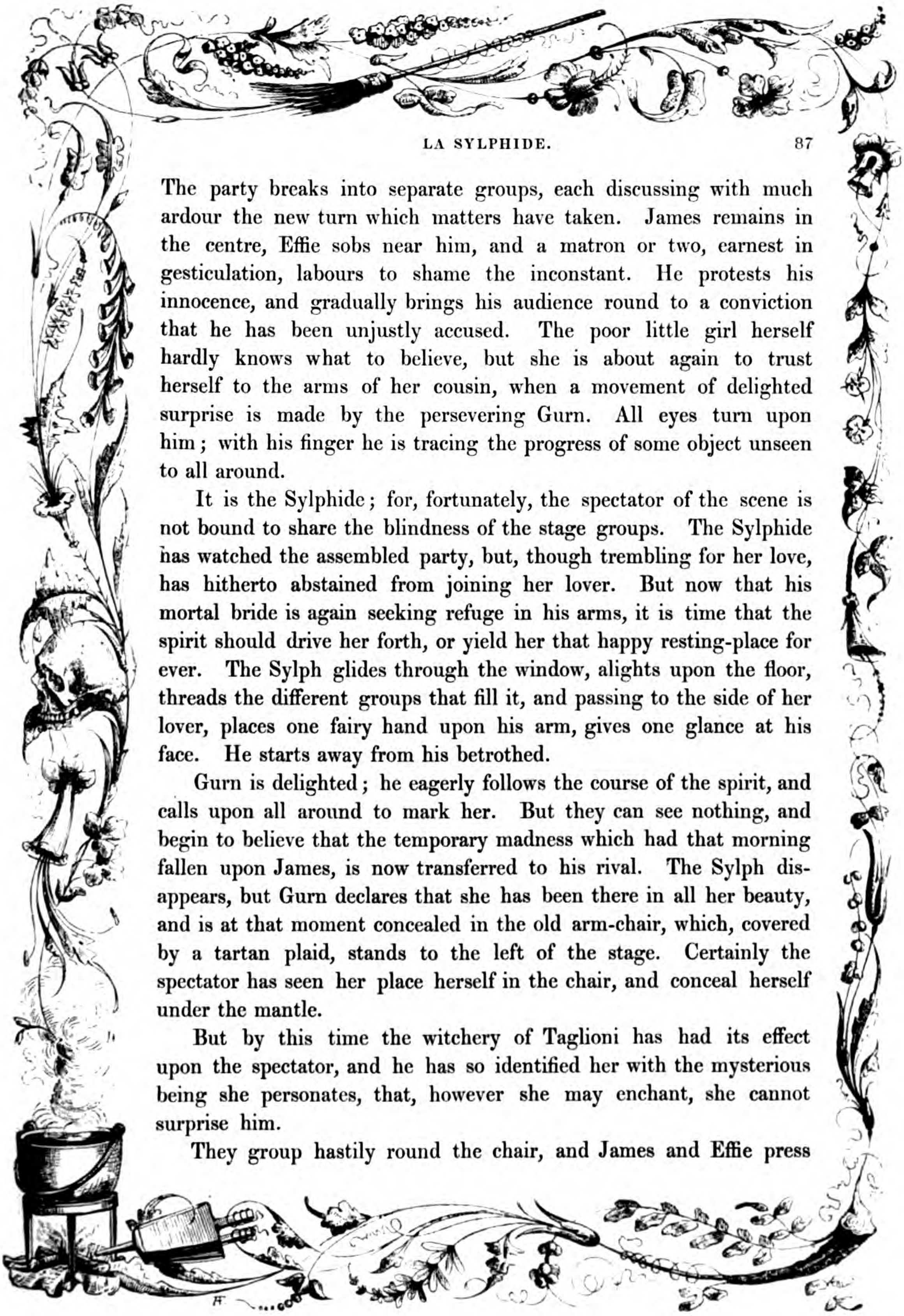
The witch's eyes gleam with a malignant lustre.

"Maiden, NO!"

The stricken girl droops her fair head, and again the tears gush forth. But James, who, for the instant, at least, has had his heart's memory, if not its love, aroused in favour of his long-favourite cousin, turns indignantly upon the fortune-teller, and would thrust her from the house. An ally appears to her aid, in the person of the sturdy mountaineer who was slumbering near his friend James while the latter was enjoying the delicious dream which brought him the fascinating Sylph. Gurn has also been the lover of Effie, although her avowed preference for his rival had induced the former to withdraw from the contest. But in all this perplexity, and especially in this last declaration by the witch, Gurn sees hope and comfort for him. He defends the fortune-teller; nay, he declares that he himself has the most boundless faith in her, and that he can bring indisputable evidence that James is a false lover. Jealousy has sharpened his wit and his senses, and he has been witness to the garden interview between the bridegroom and the mysterious spirit. He watched the enraptured pleading of the lover, the gradual yielding of the Sylph, and he especially dwells upon the fervent embrace and fiery kiss with which the compact between the mortal and the immortal had, in defiance of faith and honour, been mutually sealed.

Great is the indignation of all; even Effie herself has begun

"To turn her pity into rage."



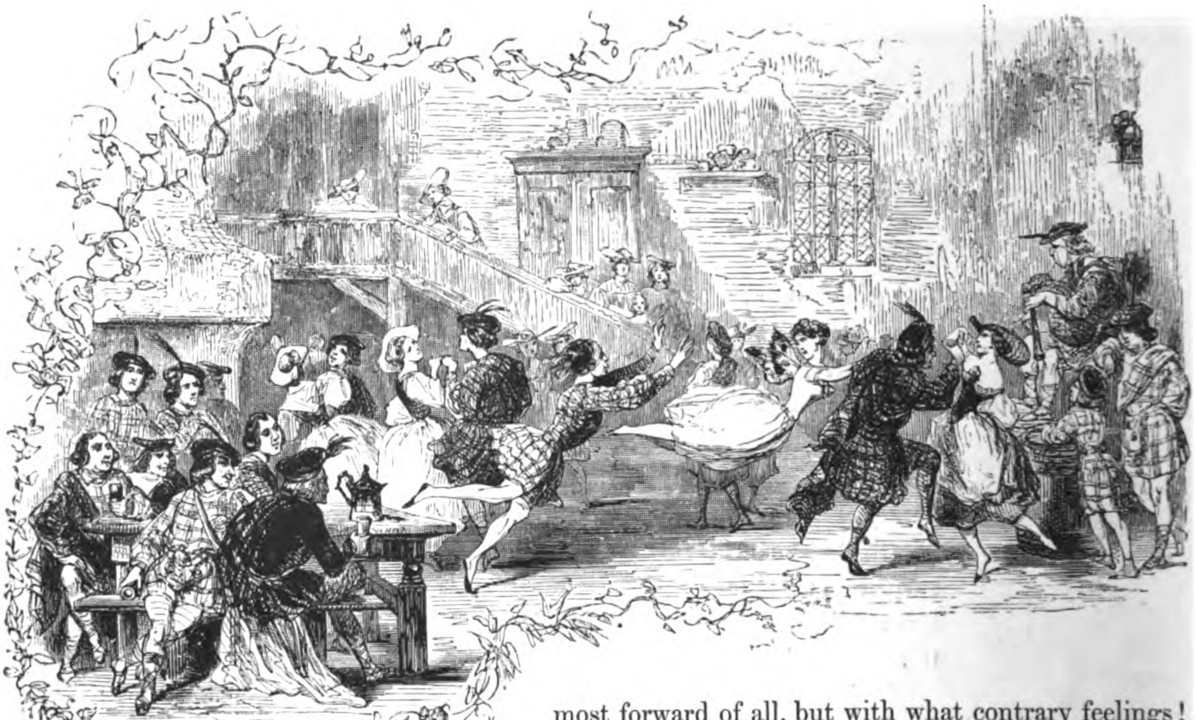
The party breaks into separate groups, each discussing with much ardour the new turn which matters have taken. James remains in the centre, Effie sobs near him, and a matron or two, earnest in gesticulation, labours to shame the inconstant. He protests his innocence, and gradually brings his audience round to a conviction that he has been unjustly accused. The poor little girl herself hardly knows what to believe, but she is about again to trust herself to the arms of her cousin, when a movement of delighted surprise is made by the persevering Gurn. All eyes turn upon him; with his finger he is tracing the progress of some object unseen to all around.

It is the Sylphide; for, fortunately, the spectator of the scene is not bound to share the blindness of the stage groups. The Sylphide has watched the assembled party, but, though trembling for her love, has hitherto abstained from joining her lover. But now that his mortal bride is again seeking refuge in his arms, it is time that the spirit should drive her forth, or yield her that happy resting-place for ever. The Sylph glides through the window, alights upon the floor, threads the different groups that fill it, and passing to the side of her lover, places one fairy hand upon his arm, gives one glance at his face. He starts away from his betrothed.

Gurn is delighted; he eagerly follows the course of the spirit, and calls upon all around to mark her. But they can see nothing, and begin to believe that the temporary madness which had that morning fallen upon James, is now transferred to his rival. The Sylph disappears, but Gurn declares that she has been there in all her beauty, and is at that moment concealed in the old arm-chair, which, covered by a tartan plaid, stands to the left of the stage. Certainly the spectator has seen her place herself in the chair, and conceal herself under the mantle.

But by this time the witchery of Taglioni has had its effect upon the spectator, and he has so identified her with the mysterious being she personates, that, however she may enchant, she cannot surprise him.

They group hastily round the chair, and James and Effie press

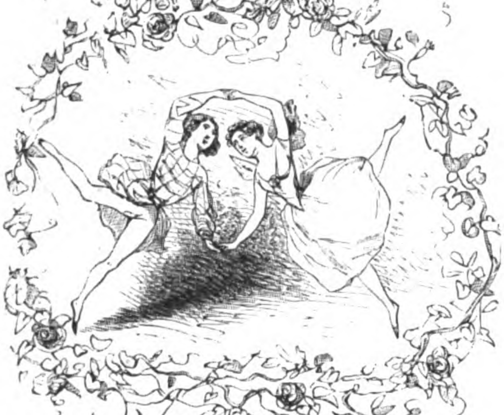


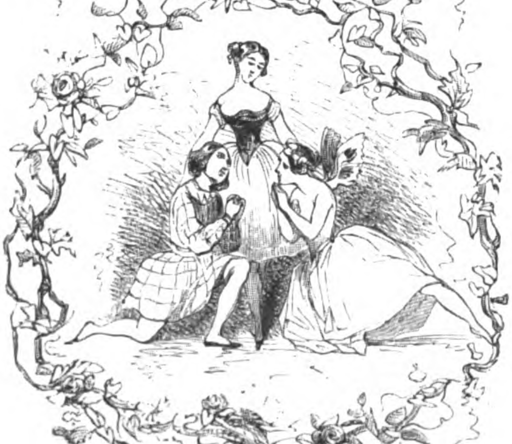
most forward of all, but with what contrary feelings! The triumphant Gurn tears away the plaid, and——

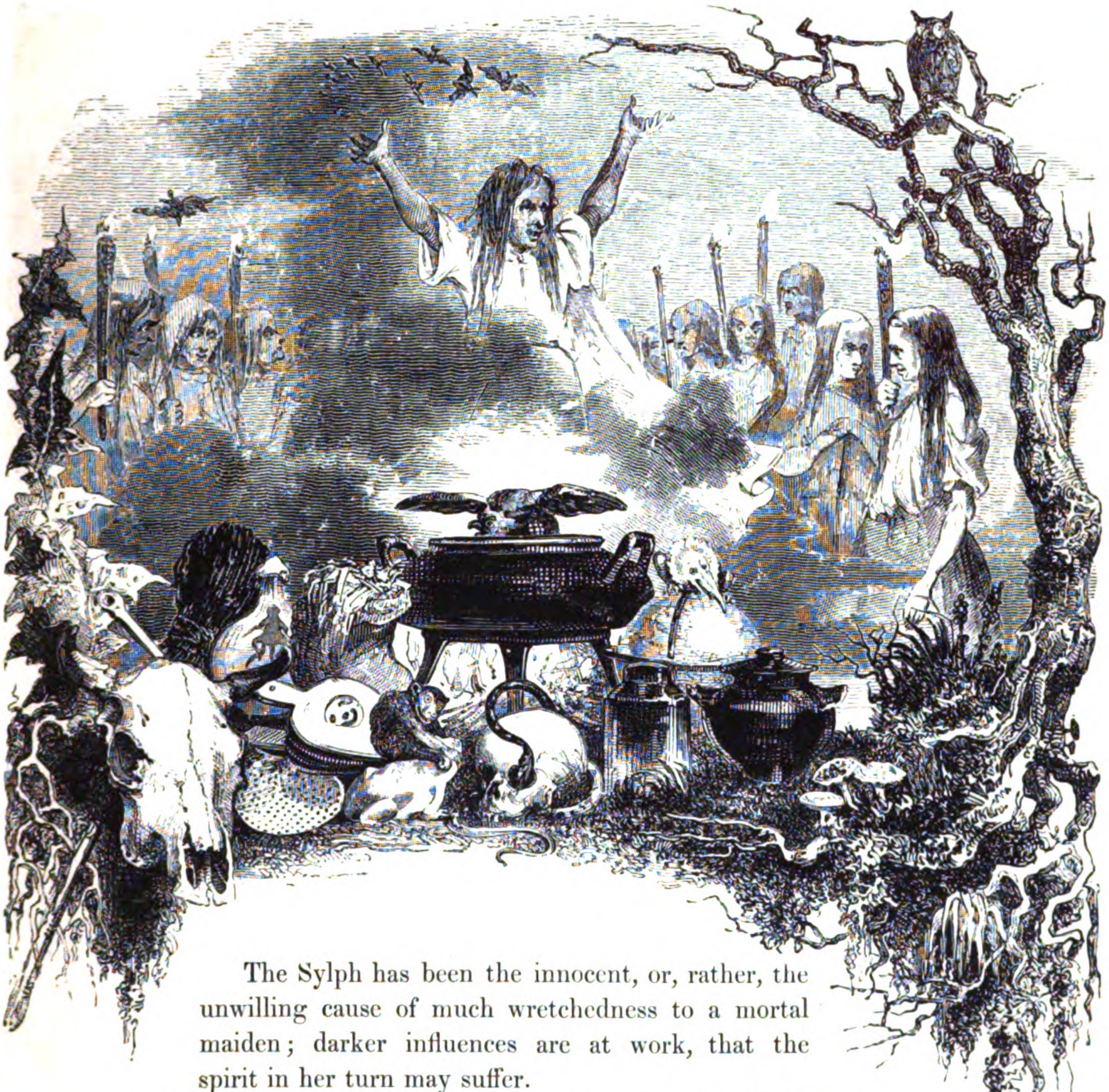
"But where is the Sylph? Has she melted in air?
He knows not, he sees not; but nothing is there."

Unfortunate Gurn is assailed with reproach and derision, and Effie is even more angry with him than are any of the others; for she deems he has been guilty of a falsehood in order to delay her happiness. She again clings to the arm of James, and all faces, but Gurn's, are now radiant with joy. The dance, so often and so rudely interrupted, is resumed. With the hand of his pretty bride clasped in his own, and her joyous eyes speaking love to his, the Highlander once more feels—ay, almost feels as Effie would desire. Her happiness will now soon be accomplished—the despairing visions which have but an instant past so painfully harassed her—thoughts of her lover sporting with an aerial being—nay, asking her own consent to their union, have passed away like dreams. Happy Effie!

Happy? The Sylph appears yet again,—and yet again, with one convulsive start, the bridegroom bounds after her through the open door.







The Sylph has been the innocent, or, rather, the unwilling cause of much wretchedness to a mortal maiden; darker influences are at work, that the spirit in her turn may suffer.

It is night—all Nature is in mourning; the night-bird prolongs its mournful note; the moon is covered with a red cloud. In the darkest spot in the forest, the sorceress is engaged in her foul incantations. She is not alone, but accompanied by all the old beldams of the unholy Sabbath. The horrid hags give themselves up to every excess of joy. For mischief is brewing—a plot against love and loveliness is hatching; therefore,

"What should they do?"
"Rejoice!—rejoice!"

Such are the festivals which the witches hold at certain epochs of the winter moons. There are screeches and savage laughter, the sounds of discordant voices, songs which seem unearthly, so hollow and appalling is their yell. These women, "withered and wild," are dressed in rags covered with ashes and smeared with blood. But, when the work of darkness is finished, the orb of day is seen to rise serenely in the sky, and these foul and filthy wretches,

"Secret, dark, and midnight hags,"—

melt away like white smoke, like sulphur consumed by fire, in the shadows of the woods and the fleecy clouds of heaven. By degrees, as the day arrives (the poet is speaking), the fogs of the lake expand into floating columns, from their net-work of vapour; and those which the vapour has not yet dissipated rest towards the west, like a sheet of gold spun by the fairies of the lake to decorate their fêtes. They are small moist clouds, in which the orange, jonquille, and light green mingle (according to the glances of the sun-ray or the caprice of the atmosphere) with azure, purple, and violet. All is blended in one undefinable and nameless hue. Then ariseth the majestic queen of the waters; she quits her enchanted grottoes, carpeted with marine flowers, bright and dazzling as the pearls and carbuncles of the ocean.

But before the morning has broken, an engine of the infernal regions has been framed for the destruction of the Sylph. That spangled scarf, apparently harmless, nay, beautiful, has been woven by the hags with fearful spells, and its glitter has been caught from unholy fires. It is intrusted to the accursed witch whose ill-omened presence at the bridal meeting had drawn upon her the wrath of the bridegroom. She never forgives—could the instrument of evil be intrusted to better hands? With a scowl of gloomy satisfaction she receives the scarf, and the glare of her terrible eye announces that in fancy she sees it enveloping, with iron clasp, the agonised form of the lovely being of air. And now the hags have vanished.

And amid their parting laughter the flapping of terrible wings is heard. An unseen form has been among them, and has ratified their fiendly work.

It is morning; and in one of the sweetest glades of the emerald forest James is discovered, alone. He bears in his hand a beautiful nest, which he has taken from one of the surrounding trees, and intends to offer as a present to his beloved one. She has flitted from him, but he wanders, possessed with a dubious yet cheering hope that at some moment she will spring upon his pathway. Perhaps she is perched at that moment upon the overhanging boughs; perhaps she is now smiling at his loneliness from behind the massy trunk of yon ivy-clad oak. Ah! he is not disappointed; her white drapery is floating in the distance—that green vista is terminated by her form. She sees him, and hastily tripping along the green sward, the Sylph is again by the side of her lover. Her smile again shoots its streams of radiance around his heart, and again the young Highlander is in his heaven of bliss. His gestures seem to reproach her guilty for leaving him, yet how can he reproach "a thing so fair?" She sports, springs, dances, around him; every pliant limb called into graceful agility, every lovely feature animated with passion. Entranced, enchained, he has but the ability to follow her with his ardent glances; he stands riveted to the spot.

Suddenly she ceases, and with a pretty gesture of impatient surprise she asks what it is that he holds so carefully concealed by the fold of his plaid? He awakes from his ecstatic trance, and as recollection returns he presents to his ethereal mistress the nest which he has taken for her. She is delighted that he has been mindful of her in her absence, but as she examines the tribute she looks grave.

"Ah!" she murmurs, "you have brought me a living gift—but this must not be."

"Rejected, dearest! and why?"

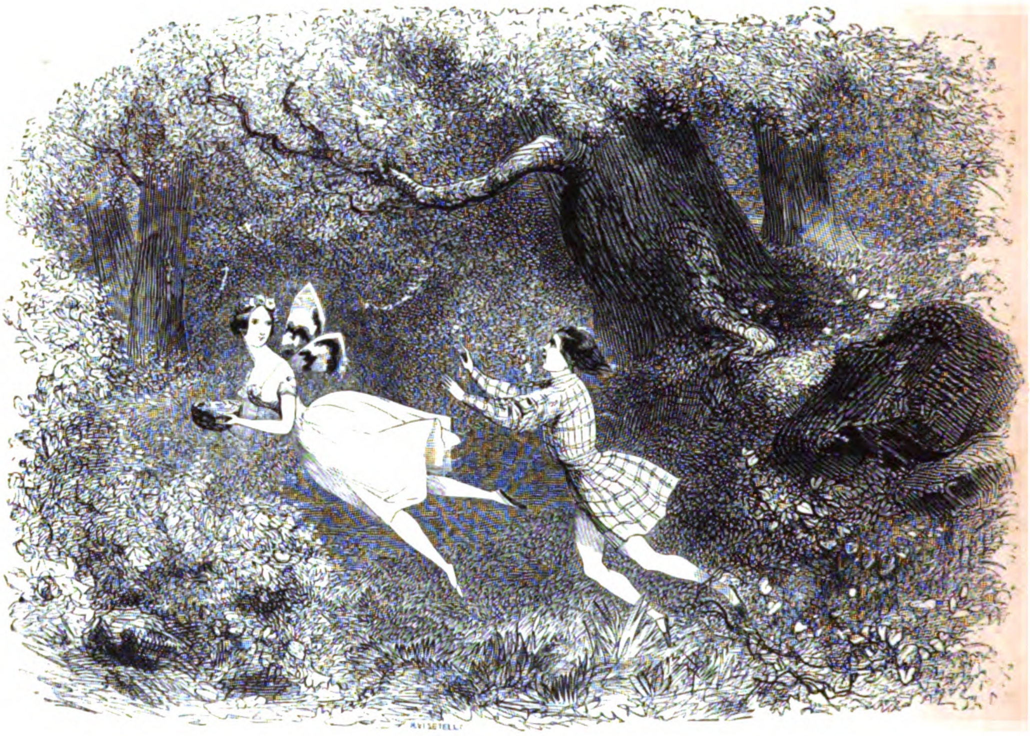
"No, no, not rejected. But the poor little prisoners—would you doom them to a life of captivity?"

"And what happier doom, love, could I seek for them than to be for ever captive to thee? Alas! would that I could be so doomed—how cheerfully would I embrace my destiny!"

But the loving, yet liberty-loving Sylph, cannot conceive the idea of restraint: she cannot—will not—bear that aught living should suffer bonds;—poor child of air, how near are thine own!

"I must restore them, dearest," she murmurs, "to their tree, or they will die."

And she flies away upon her errand of pity.



But she is soon with him again, and they wander, hand in hand, among the delicious scenery of the forest. And then she makes full confession of her love, and thus the enamoured youth replies:—

"Lead me as thy slave, thy guest, wandering sprite of the domestic hearth!—thou who hast filled my dreams with illusions so sweet, so delicious; or, at least, if I have no place in thy domains, mine aërial love! restore to me that hearth where again I may hear and see thee beside my homely fire. Return, return, to my hut, and if it must be so, I will not say I love thee; I will not breathe on thy robe, even though it be blown into my grasp by the currents of flame and air. I will call to thee in a whisper, so that none shall hear. All I desire is to know that thou art near me, and to breathe the air which hath touched the air thou breathest; which has passed over thy lips, and been breathed on by thee, and wafted over thine eyes."

And now the Sylph, radiant with joy, will introduce her lover to her band of sisters; those with whom she has so long sported amid the woods and by the lakes, but whose society she has lately neglected, lured from it by all-powerful Love. A mysterious sympathy exists between these beautiful intelligences, for she has hardly expressed her desire for the presence of her sisters, hardly skimmed thrice the emerald lawn, hardly waved her white arms as a summons, when a hundred forms, almost as lovely as herself, pour down in sparkling groups around her. They welcome their lately lost companion, friend, and queen, and with the liveliest curiosity glide around the mortal who accompanies her.

" He it is, then, who has ensnared our darling from us !"

And rose-chains are woven, and in an instant the lover is captured by the fairy bands, while his laughing mistress, enjoying his surprise, floats or trips about him. Anon she disappears, and the young Highlander, fearful that she is again about to desert him, springs from amid the throng of nymphs, and hastens after her. As he flies, a light hand is upon his shoulder; he turns—'tis she; and as she threads her playful way among the encircling nymphs, he presses closely upon her footsteps. She stops, and averts her face; he clasps her —— Whom ? Not his adored Sylph, but one of her companions. Can Love mistake ?

But again he spies her, and again he chases her retreating form; again he seizes a sister nymph, and his real idol is all the time smiling in the background. A third time he is thus sportively deluded, and with the same result. Wearied and disappointed, he is about to fling himself upon the turf, when the Sylph herself stands by his side. This time there is no deception; her hand is clasped in his, and his heart is again calmed. By the side of the Sylph he wanders away, the nymphs following them—the choicest guard of honour ever formed.

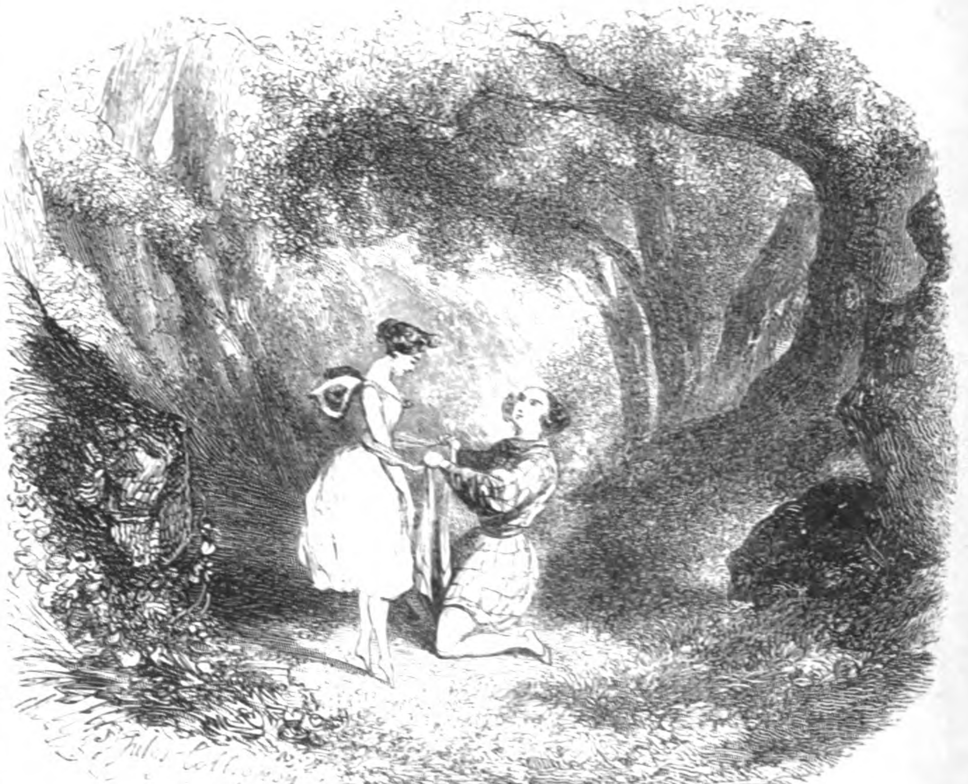
But the lover is disquieted, restless. He cannot forget that his mistress has often deserted him—he would have her ever with him.

What dark thoughts cross his brain! He would compel her constant presence. Love is intensely selfish; let lovers deny it if they please or dare.

The powers of darkness have ever their readiest allies in the hearts of mortals. Resolved to attain his purpose, the foolish youth seeks the accursed hag upon whom the day before his anathemas had been hurled. He has not far to stray; she crosses his path, and he accosts her. He asks her to forgive his insults of yesterday; she waves her hand on high, in token that one who has commerce with supernatural beings has no thought for the trivial anger of mortals. The Highlander informs her of his desire, and prays her aid. With a malignant smile—could he see it, he might be saved years of woe—she produces the spangled scarf.

"This, twined around her, secures her thine in life and in death."

The hag disappears: the snare is set, the twig is limed, and even now the poor bird is fluttering towards it. The Sylph again appears, and the foolhardy, the impetuous lover, invests the smiling creature with the fatal scarf.



In another moment, those sparkling wings drop to earth; the Sylph, uttering a faint cry, sinks lifeless. Her gently murmured "Farewell, for ever!" is scarcely heard, for it is drowned by a hoarse laugh of triumph from yon hag, who has entered to view the ruin.

Gentle, wailing music is heard, and the mourning children of the air enter and carry off their young queen, wrapped in her shroud; and then the gentle vision is dissolved "in light fleecy clouds, like those which the breath of dawn sends over the invisible wave, and which, in the distance, seem like plumes of white feathers taken from the nests of the large birds which dwell on the river's bank."

When the Sylphide has disappeared in the air, the reality appears. At a distance we hear the sound of bells, the joyful notes of the bagpipe, that is this: a bridal procession, and that somewhat agitated yet clinging form—it is one with which we are familiar. It is—yes!—the hearty, honest love of Gurn, has triumphed over the dreamy, fantastic, and changeful homage of his more refined rival. Gurn, triumphant, is leading to the altar of the village church young Effie, already consoled. Poor James! and yet who dares to pity thee? He must also pity the poet, the lover, the dreamer, all souls who are wrapt in visions of the ideal.

We might write long eulogies of Mademoiselle Taglioni, the Sylphide, for the two names are inseparable. The Sylphide must always be known as her most charming creation. Although it is fifteen years ago since first we saw it and her, yet this delicious story is always charming, always new,—a sempiternal fête—a fête of the eyes more than of any other sense,—a fête attractive and satisfactory, leaving nothing to regret or to desire.

All Scotland has applauded "The Sylphide;" Naples and St. Petersburg, London and Stockholm; the South and the North, the Ice and the Flowers. Never was there a union of approval more complete in the performance of an universally beloved *artiste;* but, then, never did *artiste,* in any profession, more decidedly merit consentaneous eulogy.

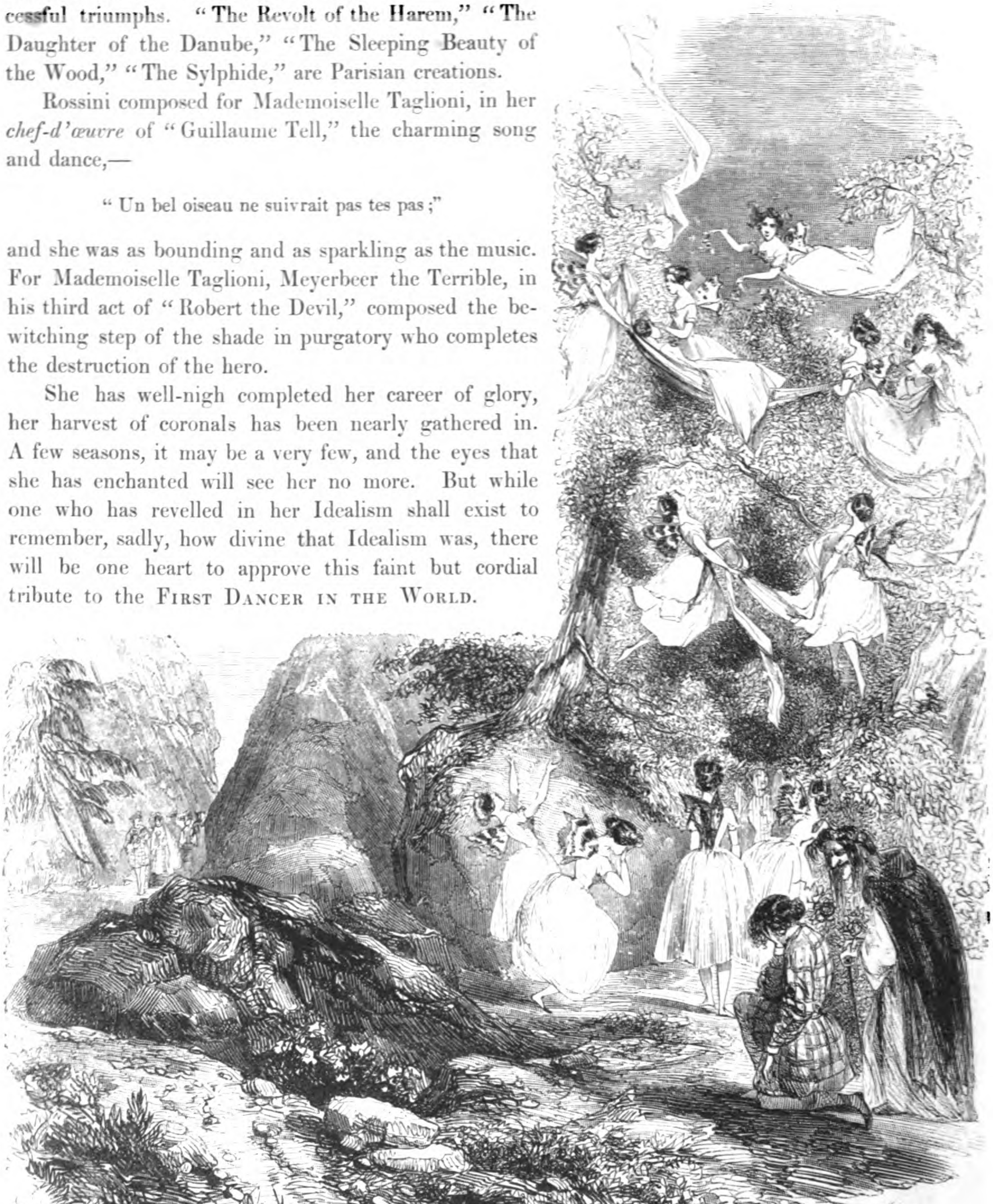
It is said that Taglioni is a Norwegian by parentage; but it is Paris which gave her birth; and there she has displayed her most brilliant efforts,—there she has composed her most successful triumphs. "The Revolt of the Harem," "The Daughter of the Danube," "The Sleeping Beauty of the Wood," "The Sylphide," are Parisian creations.

Rossini composed for Mademoiselle Taglioni, in her *chef-d'œuvre* of "Guillaume Tell," the charming song and dance,—

> "Un bel oiseau ne suivrait pas tes pas;"

and she was as bounding and as sparkling as the music. For Mademoiselle Taglioni, Meyerbeer the Terrible, in his third act of "Robert the Devil," composed the bewitching step of the shade in purgatory who completes the destruction of the hero.

She has well-nigh completed her career of glory, her harvest of coronals has been nearly gathered in. A few seasons, it may be a very few, and the eyes that she has enchanted will see her no more. But while one who has revelled in her Idealism shall exist to remember, sadly, how divine that Idealism was, there will be one heart to approve this faint but cordial tribute to the First Dancer in the World.



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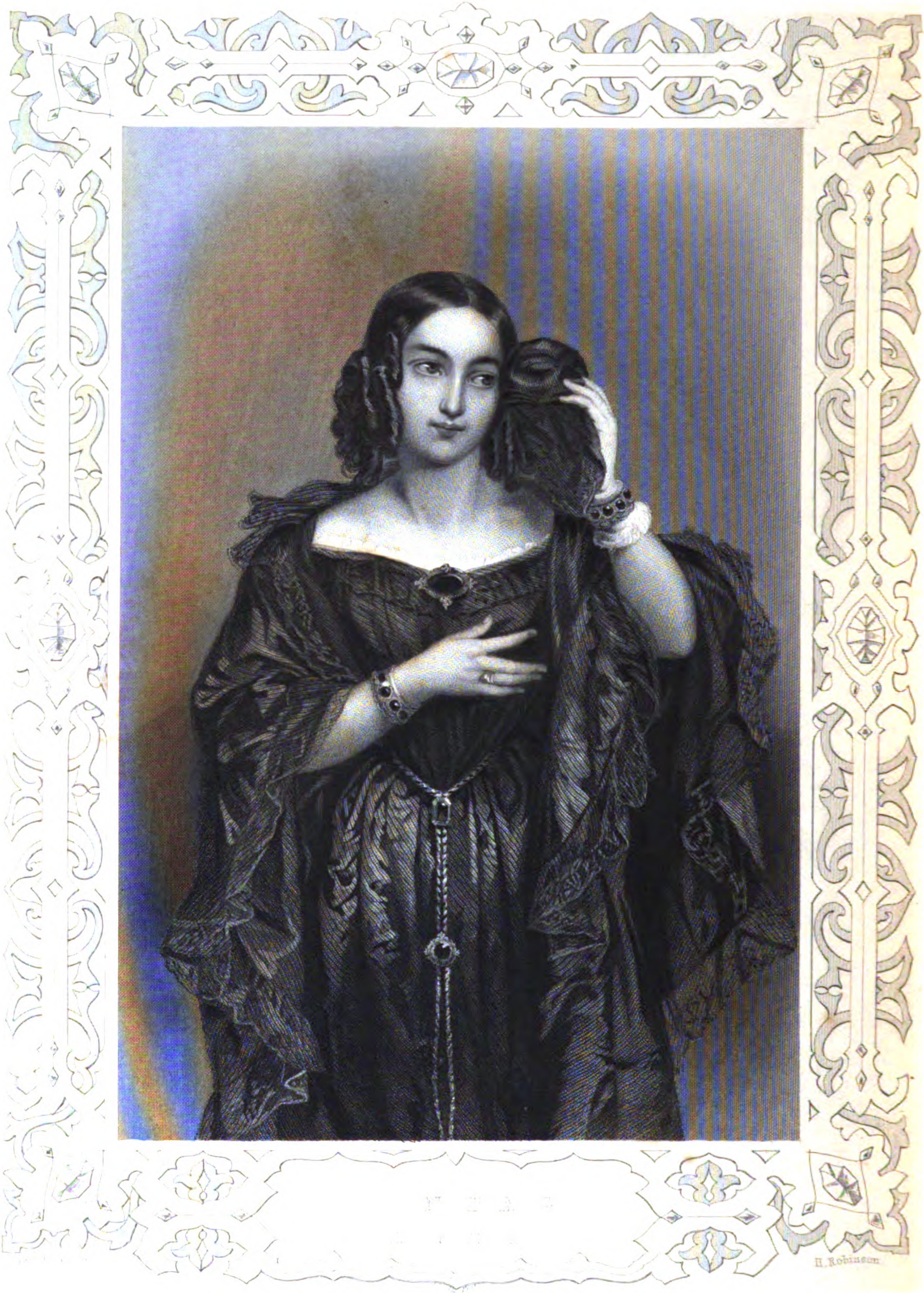

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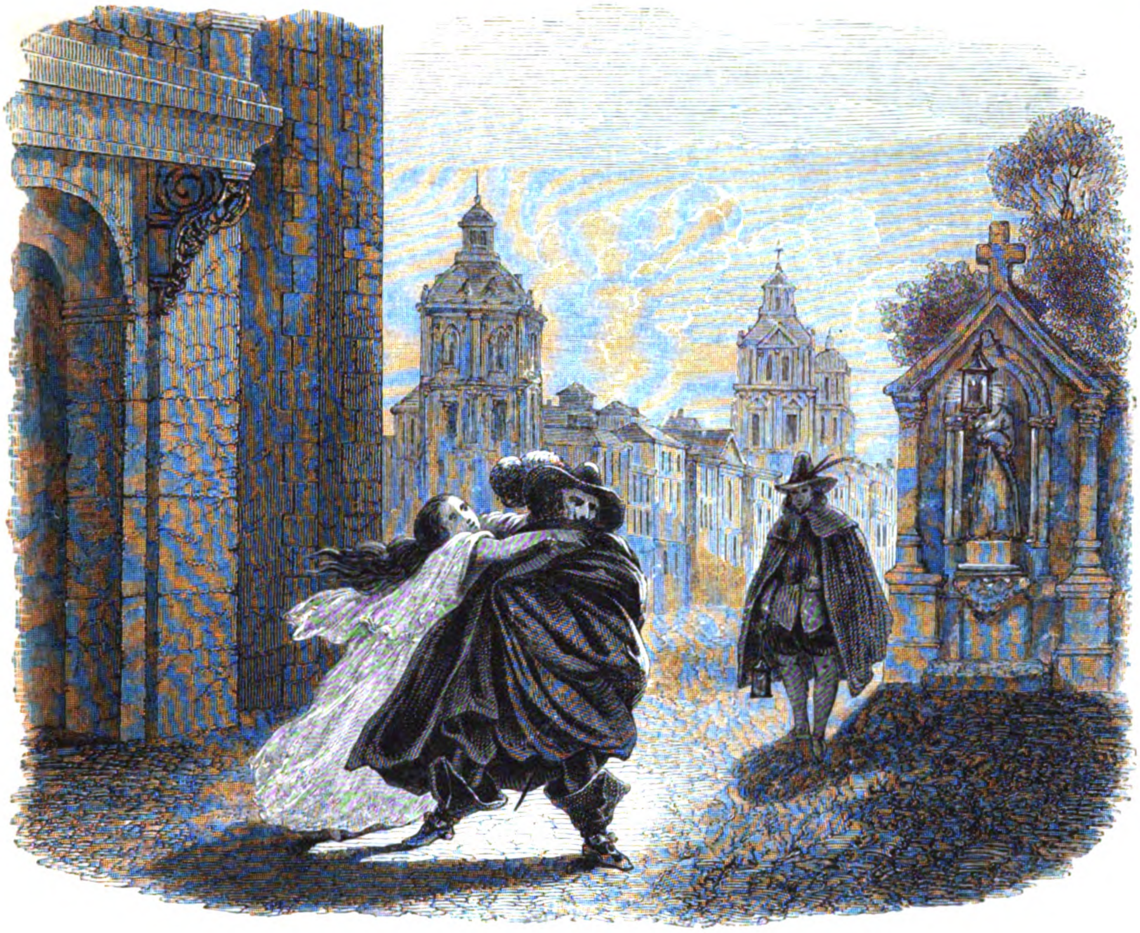
H. Robinson.

Published by David Bogue, Fleet Street, [illegible]



Don Juan.

Dramma Giocoso in Due Atti. Libretto del l'Abbate Casti.
Musica di W. A. Mozart.

Dramma Giocoso! So says the title. Comic Drama! So the author called it, and the composer did not dissent; but what theatrical production ever excited more hearts, elicited more tears, or left such deep impression on the souls of nations?

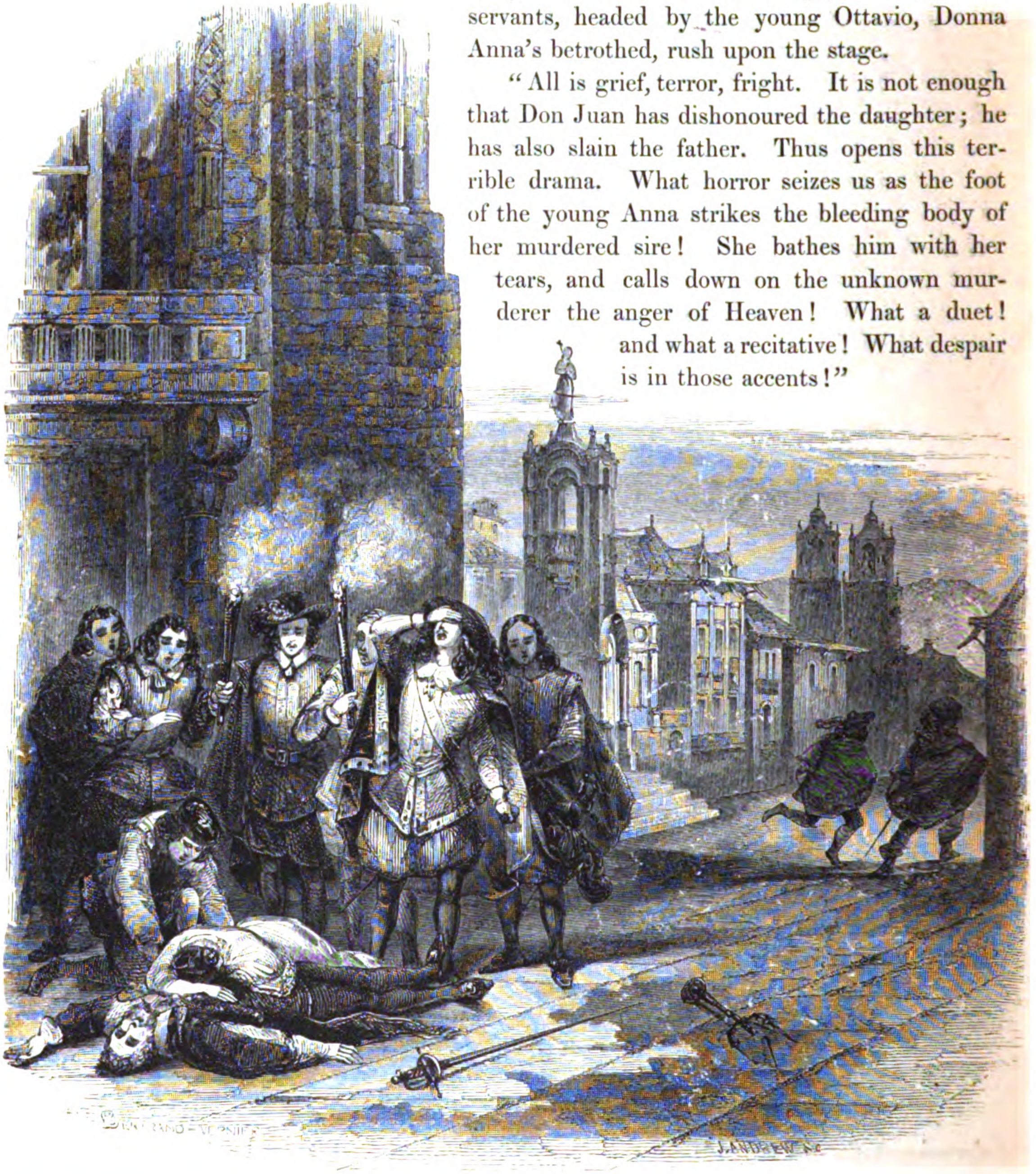
Without preface, let us plunge into the alternately gloomy and glittering scenes which Mozart has made immortal. Let us follow Hoffmann—a poet commenting on a poet.

"Don Juan," he writes, "rushes hastily on the stage, followed by Donna Anna, trying to retain him by his cloak. What a picture! She might be, perhaps, slimmer, taller, more majestic in her step; but what a head! Her eyes dart fire like electric sparks, full of love, hatred, anger, despair! Her hair is jet black; ringlets float down her swan-like neck; and her bosom heaves up and down full of emotion. And her voice! but listen:—

"Non sperar, se non m' uccidi!"

"Amidst the tumult of instruments there are from time to time, like lightning, infernal sounds. A crime is about to be committed. An old father hurries forward with his sword drawn, and pays with his life for his daring courage against an adversary so terrible! He falls! Don Juan and Leporello come forward together to the front of the scene. Don Juan, throwing off his mantle, appears in a dress of red satin, richly embroidered. His appearance is really noble, and his figure vigorous; his countenance manly; his eyes piercing; his lips softly rounded. What power in his brow! what enchantment in his look! Attired in a vest striped with red and black, a small grey cloak, and a white hat with red feathers, Leporello forms a perfect contrast to his honourable master. He is a remarkable mixture of good feeling, cunning, irony, and seriousness. They scale the walls and escape, as a crowd of servants, headed by the young Ottavio, Donna Anna's betrothed, rush upon the stage.

"All is grief, terror, fright. It is not enough that Don Juan has dishonoured the daughter; he has also slain the father. Thus opens this terrible drama. What horror seizes us as the foot of the young Anna strikes the bleeding body of her murdered sire! She bathes him with her tears, and calls down on the unknown murderer the anger of Heaven! What a duet! and what a recitative! What despair is in those accents!"

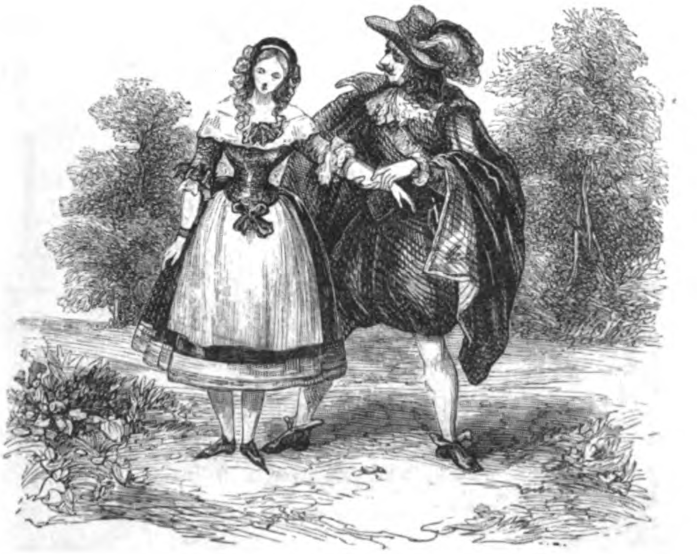


Another of Don Juan's victims! See, the mournful Elvira approaches, "with the fierce rage of a woman who knows she is no longer beloved." Her maledictions are terrific, but the compassionate Leporello re-enters, and consoles her after a peculiar manner of his own.

"What could you expect, Madam, and what can you hope for? The man is lost to you for ever! What! do you think to recover him from the midst of this ocean of women, princesses, duchesses, chambermaids, from fifteen to forty—from the pole to the torrid zone! It is out of the question." Then he details his catalogue (so admirably recounted by Lablache) of fair and dark, maids, wives, and widows, whose names were inscribed on the lists of his master's gallantries.

Next, we have an entire change of scene, and Zerlina and Mazetto are before us. There is that joyous chorus of the peasants, that pastoral melody which cuts so wonderfully across the dark and impassioned progress of the drama.

Again the Don crosses the stage, and we may be sure it is for no good purpose. The peasant chorus has awakened pastoral ideas in the breast of the libertine. Over the heartless, the brilliant, the noble, Juan has triumphed long enough: he would prefer, for the moment, something fresher and purer. He makes love to Zerlina!



The peasant girl is to be married to poor Mazetto, and he loves her; but Zerlina is a woman—Don Juan offers her his hand, his fortune, his heart; and she is yielding, when Elvira opportunely presents herself—Elvira, the representative of forsaken beauties. She snatches the young villager from the dangerous wiles of her seducer.

Don Juan's heart must have been deeply afflicted by the loss of his new conquest; for, rushing to the other extreme, he summons a crowd of loveliness around him. He has announced a splendid fête, and

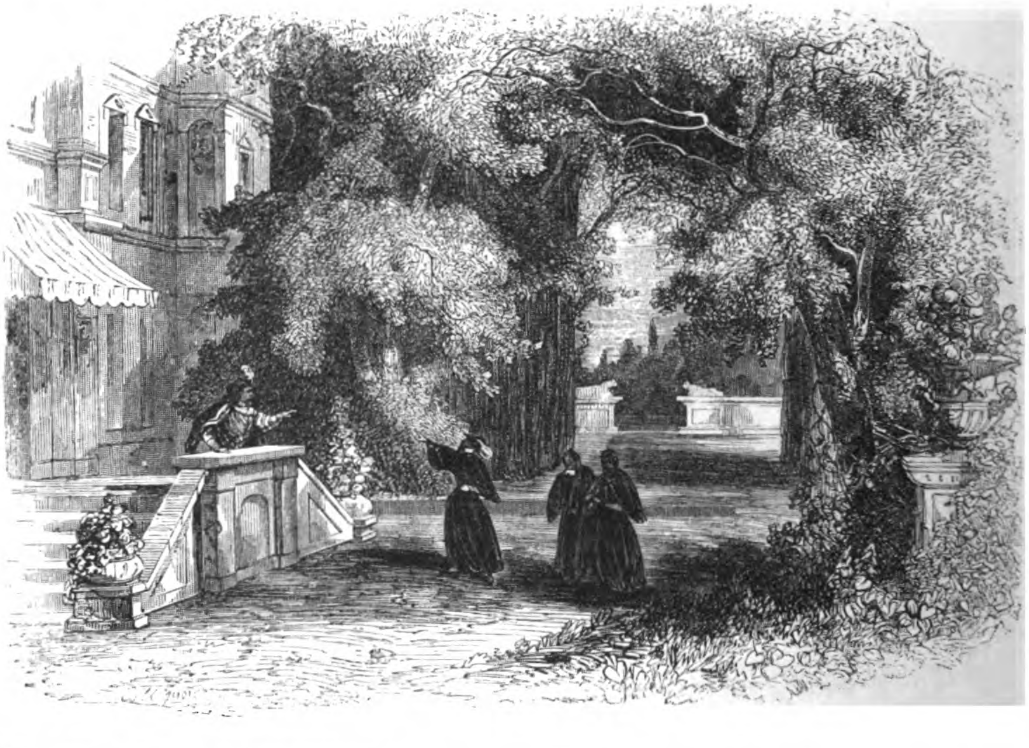
> "The laughing dames in whom he did delight"

muster in radiant troops at his call. His full and pliant voice makes the air resound with the characteristic and striking

> "Fin che dal vino."

The ball opens; but even before the ball Don Juan must have some amusement, some *distraction.* The simple Zerlina has excited his wearied sense, and he is curious to know the extent of a rustic maiden's resistance. He urges his passion, and his triumph is at hand, when his progress is suddenly arrested by the appearance, very ill-timed, of the simple-minded and very jealous Mazetto.

Now the fête begins, and some threatening masks are there. These are Anna, Elvira, Ottavio disguised; and their beautiful trio is a prayer which ascends to heaven in pure accents and mournful melody.

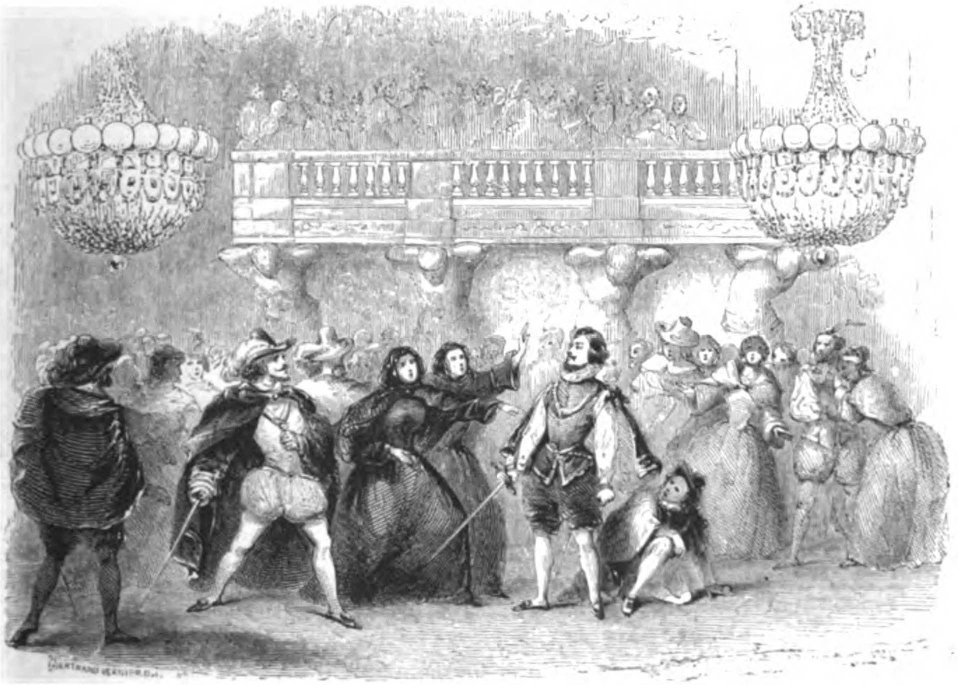


The stage opens, and a scene of mirth and brilliancy is disclosed. Beneath the floods of light poured down from innumerable lustres, bands of masked revellers trip around the hall of Don Juan. An orchestra in the background enlivens them with sportive and cheerful melodies; and presently, the graceful lord of the mansion enters to salute his guests. How proud the dame upon whose hand he bends! How anxious the maiden whom he passes by! Poor little Zerlina has come in to share the revelry; and it is not long before the piercing glance of the Don has detected his peasant love. Ah, Mazetto!

But in the midst of high-born women who smile upon the libertine, will he stoop to a peasant girl?—Will he? When did Don Juan allow a conventional rule to interfere with his self-will? Behold him! His arm is around the little plebeian's waist; his eyes are bent upon hers with language even more eloquent than the honied poison he is whispering in low, love tones, into her ear.

But the three masks, bent upon vengeance, gather round him, and—listen!—the very music gives ominous warning. Ottavio flings back his disguise, and denounces the murderer. Donna Anna points out the ravisher; Donna Elvira scowls upon the seducer. The crowd stand round—some in astonishment, others in rage. Swords begin to gleam, and the women fall back in terror.

Is the Don astounded, crushed, penitent? Look at him once more. Do



you hear that scornful laugh? Do you see that proud head thrown back in disdain? He will hardly abandon the peasant girl whom Elvira drags from his arms, and he bids loud defiance to his accusers.

> " With hand, whose almost careless coolness spoke
> Its grasp well used to deal the sabre stroke,"

he has unsheathed his fatal weapon, before which so many husbands and lovers have given way. One sword against so many? Ay!—see what one daring and resolute man can do! As the storm of indignation reaches its utmost fury, and the thunder-voice of the Don is heard out-riding it all, he suddenly rushes upon his assailants, and, striking furiously right and left, swords and arms fall like reeds before the wind, and his passage is free. With a shout of triumph he escapes, and the act closes.

How bold this *finale!* And what a commotion of contrary passions is excited, at once so clear to the understanding, and so energetic and impulsive in their effect. It must be owned that the Abbé Casti has well subserved the great composer. Never was woof better woven, or canvass better prepared, for the efforts of a man of genius, by a man of talent, than this.

At the beginning of the second act, the Sancho of Don Juan, the worthy Leporello, with his grey mantle, is very desirous to quit the service of his master. He fears that the " Fiend of Darkness " may come and punish a voluptuary like the Don, who sacrifices the whole world to his pleasures; and then he, poor devil! may have his share in the punishment. However, the arguments of Don Juan have a powerful effect on the mind of the valet, appearing as they do in the shape of plump and heavy piastres; and, as Don Juan is not sparing of those, Leporello is soon convinced. Don Juan is seized with a new idea; he fancies an *amourette* with a *femme de chambre.* And now the valet changes clothes with his master, putting on the embroidered mantle of his lord, giving him his whimsical costume as waiting-man, not seeing at the moment that he will become, in a short space of time, the dupe of the person whose plans and stratagems he has aided to fulfil.

Our good friend Leporello, metamorphosed into Don Juan, is very much embarrassed by his new-fangled splendour. Don Juan is getting up a scene in a comedy. He is a mixture of Voltaire, Beaumarchais, and Casanova de Seingalt. He is grown a different personage since the time when the middle ages only saw in him a very naughty fellow, who has a great many mistresses, and fights a great many duels. Don Juan amuses himself with every thing, yet the only end of human life appears to him to be to rail against life and his fellow-men.

How will this clod appear, and what will he do under the guise of a gentleman ? How will he listen to the doleful complaints of women sacrificed by Don Juan, and who will take the man for the master ? How will he receive their caresses ? And should he take them at their words, what will be his fright at the moment when Don Juan himself shall appear ? All these things fall out, all this comedy is played for the benefit of Don Juan, who, to make all complete, goes with his mandoline slung by his side, to sigh forth an amorous lay beneath the window of a waiting-woman who has attracted his roving eye.

The peasant Mazetto now comes, accompanied by his friends. The whole village is in an uproar; the peasants appear, sticks in hand, each ready to let fall his vengeance on this sad seducer, whose spells neither princess nor peasant girl can resist. Where is the guilty wretch ? Mazetto seeks him every where, but can only find the false Leporello, that is, the real Don Juan himself; and he confides to him his jealousy, and the conspiracy against his presumed master. Thereupon our Don Juan, like a gallant gentleman as he is, thrashes him soundly.

Poor Mazetto !

Zerlina reappears, and sings to him a delicious air. Then she goes away, coquetting and singing, with Mazetto's hand on her heart,—

"Sentilo battere,
Tocca un qua !"

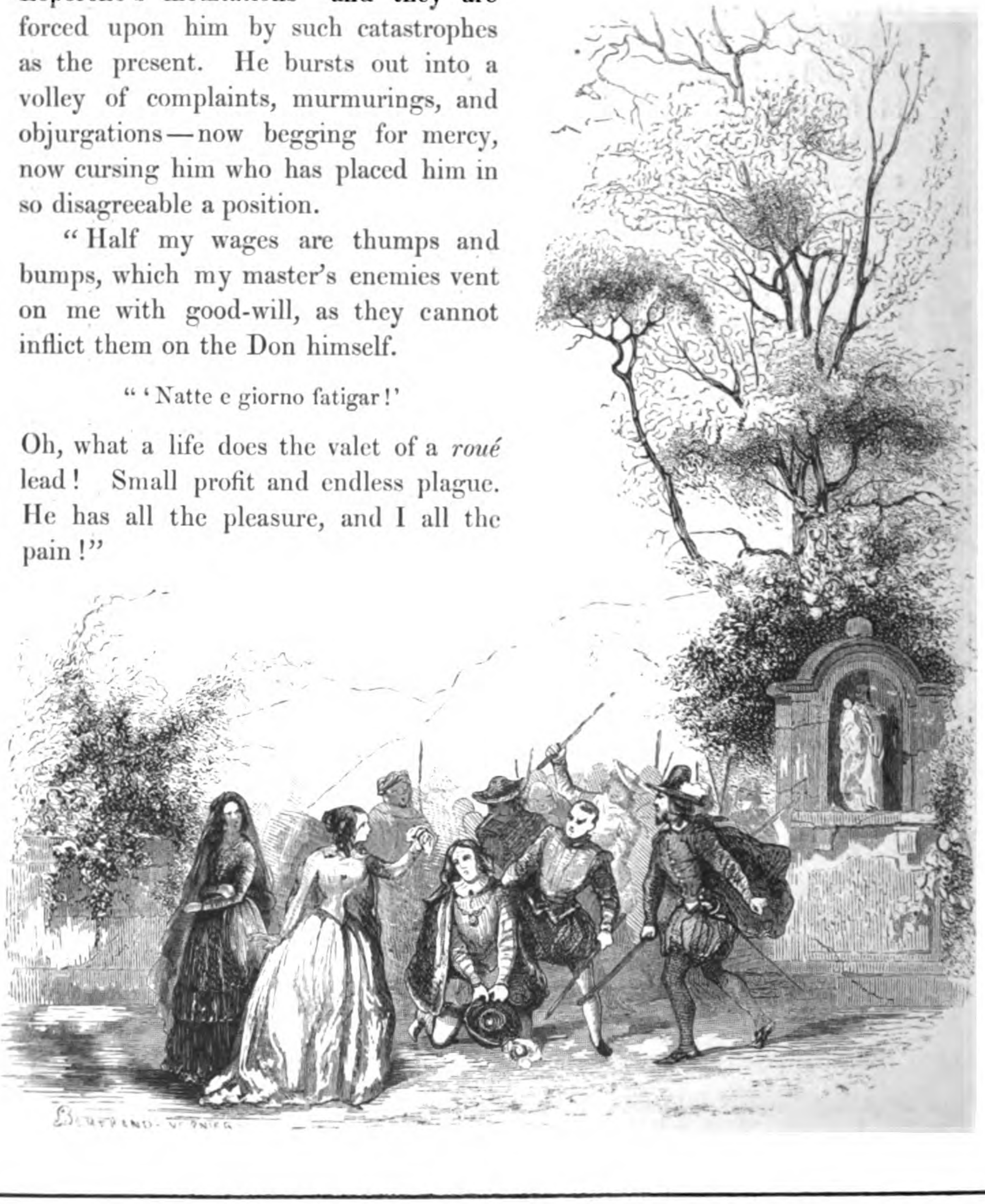
Happy Mazetto !

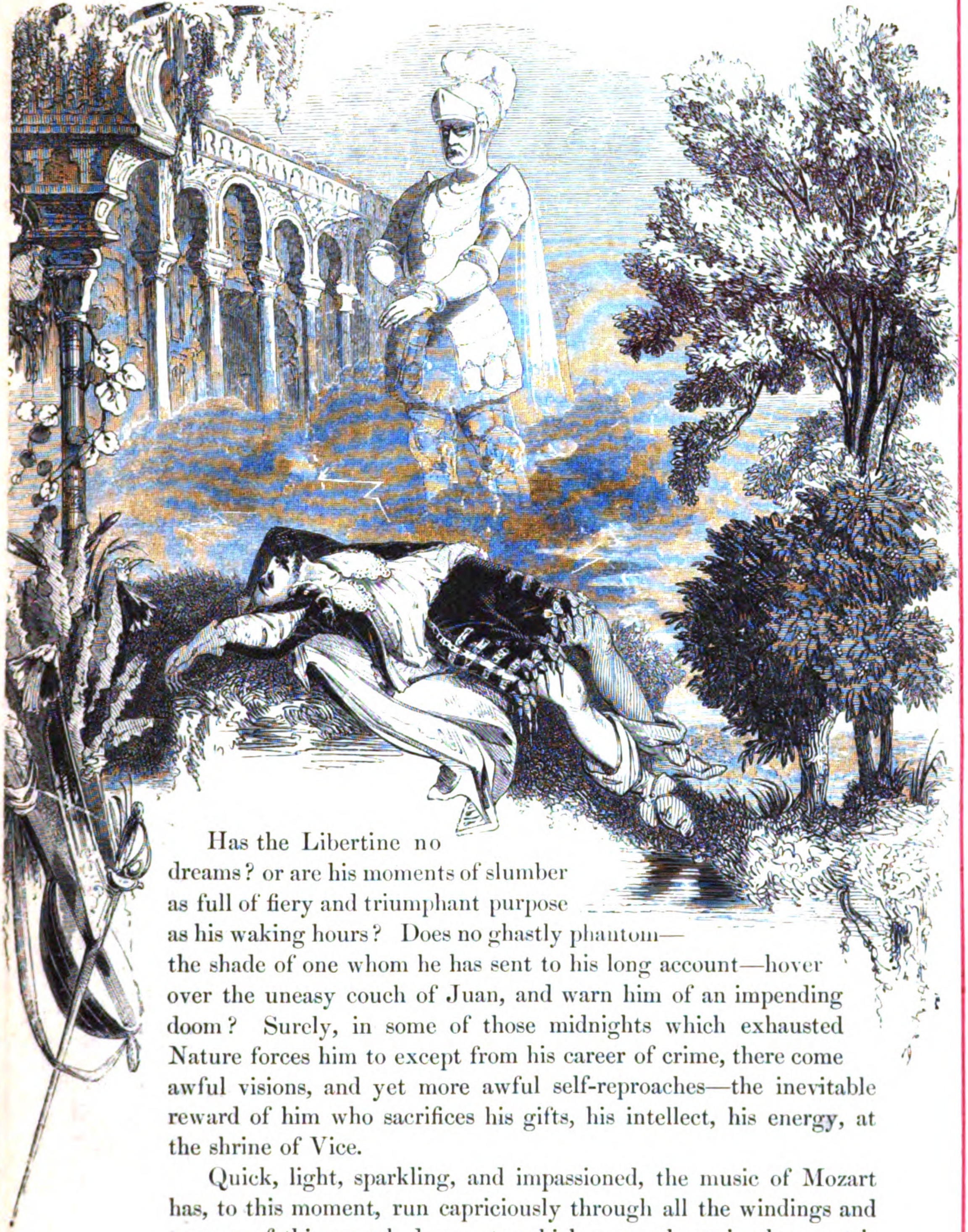
In this little air, admirably written by the Abbé, we detect the lively *badinage* and wanton imagination of the Italian libertine. And now Leporello, the lying double of his master, falls into the hands of the avengers, who are seeking for Don Juan every where. Ottavio, Zerlina, and Anna, lay hands on him. Alas! 'tis only Leporello whom they find—he, who instinctively avoids danger, and declines remaining as a hostage, falls on his knees, prays, supplicates, and entreats forgiveness. Far from agreeable are Leporello's meditations—and they are forced upon him by such catastrophes as the present. He bursts out into a volley of complaints, murmurings, and objurgations—now begging for mercy, now cursing him who has placed him in so disagreeable a position.

"Half my wages are thumps and bumps, which my master's enemies vent on me with good-will, as they cannot inflict them on the Don himself.

"'Natte e giorno fatigar!'

Oh, what a life does the valet of a *roué* lead! Small profit and endless plague. He has all the pleasure, and I all the pain!"





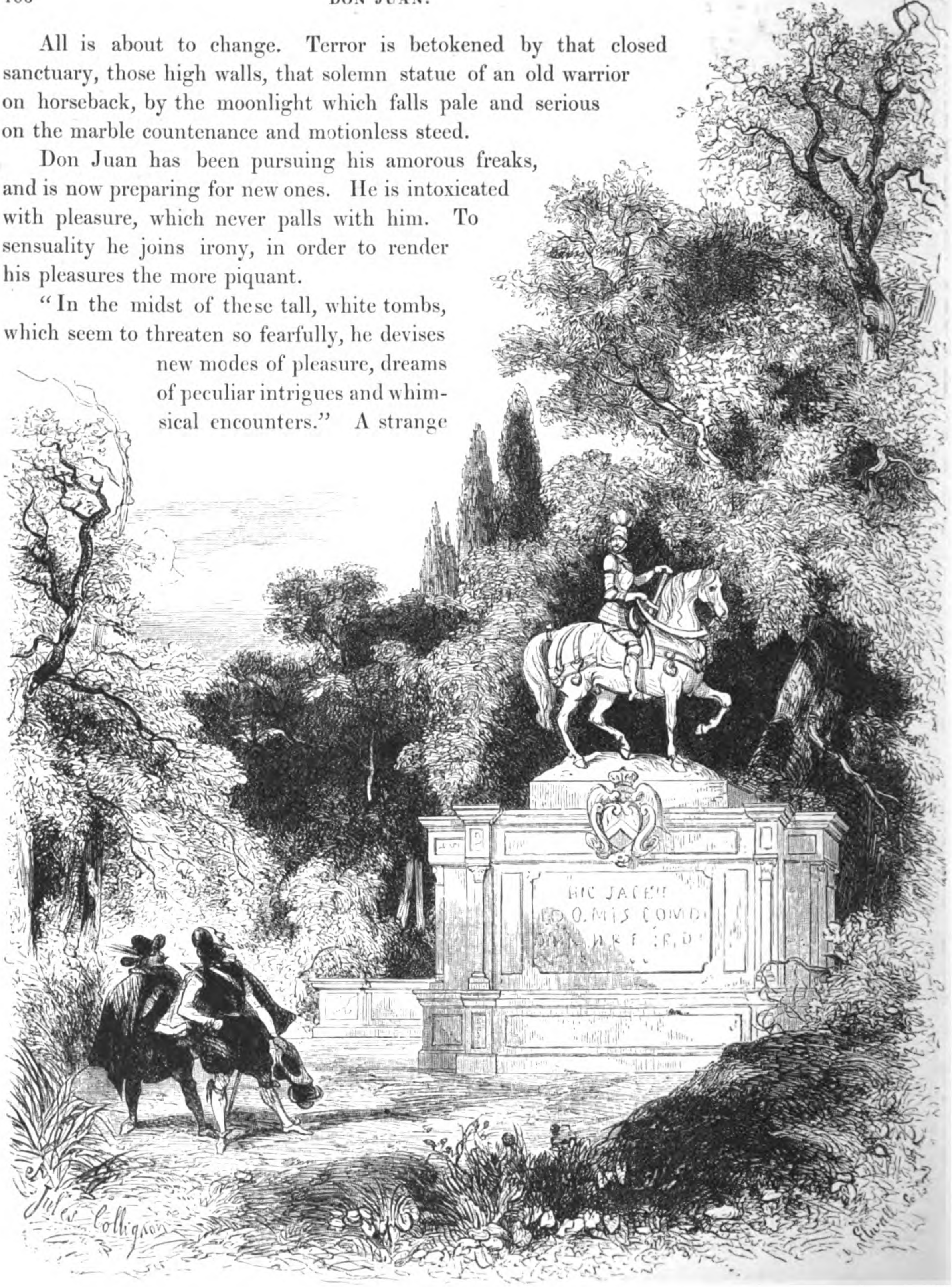
Has the Libertine no dreams? or are his moments of slumber as full of fiery and triumphant purpose as his waking hours? Does no ghastly phantom—the shade of one whom he has sent to his long account—hover over the uneasy couch of Juan, and warn him of an impending doom? Surely, in some of those midnights which exhausted Nature forces him to except from his career of crime, there come awful visions, and yet more awful self-reproaches—the inevitable reward of him who sacrifices his gifts, his intellect, his energy, at the shrine of Vice.

Quick, light, sparkling, and impassioned, the music of Mozart has, to this moment, run capriciously through all the windings and courses of this superb drama, to which so much genius has contributed. It now approaches a tragic *finale* with a step most grave, solemn—nay, terrific. The orchestra gradually prepares us by low and distant mutterings for the vengeance that is about to pass from human hands to the all-powerful hands of the Deity.

All is about to change. Terror is betokened by that closed sanctuary, those high walls, that solemn statue of an old warrior on horseback, by the moonlight which falls pale and serious on the marble countenance and motionless steed.

Don Juan has been pursuing his amorous freaks, and is now preparing for new ones. He is intoxicated with pleasure, which never palls with him. To sensuality he joins irony, in order to render his pleasures the more piquant.

"In the midst of these tall, white tombs, which seem to threaten so fearfully, he devises new modes of pleasure, dreams of peculiar intrigues and whimsical encounters." A strange



idea has entered the brain of the libertine—perhaps it is coupled with the recollection of a fearful dream; and he resolves, by a desperate piece of daring, to break down at once a spell which, in spite of his high courage, seems to have woven a chain around him.

He turns to Leporello, whose honest terror at being led into so gloomy a region is inexpressible, and points out to him the marble form of the Commandant.

Leporello shudders, and averts his eyes, for he well remembers whose hand had stretched yon old man a grey corse upon his own threshold. The slightest opposition adds to Don Juan's resolution; and drawing his sword—the same weapon which had beaten down the aged father's feeble blade—he shakes it at the terrified valet.

"Go to the tomb, and read me aloud the inscription which my affectionate Anna has caused to be traced there."

With faultering steps, and starting eyeballs, Leporello advances to do the bidding of his rash master. The latter watches him with authoritative gestures. Just as the servant has reached the marble, a hollow groan bursts forth from the statue. With a cry of horror Leporello runs back, and seeks refuge behind the Don. But the latter heeds not his agony, and again compels him to advance to the sepulchre.

"Read, or die!"

With difficulty Leporello begins to trace the letters—the pale moonlight not falling upon the inscription. Suddenly a red glare lights up the letters, and the dreadful fires of the regions below enable Don Juan to read the record of the murder he has done.

Awed, yet not subdued, he reads; and, as the blood-coloured legend dies away, he has recovered his reckless tone.

"That was courteous!" he exclaims to his horrified companion. "The least return I can make for the politeness of my worthy friend, is to offer him my hospitality. Leporello, go up to the Commandant, and ask him to sup with me to-night!"

But neither the glaring sword nor the determined eye of his master can drive the valet to so awful an act; and after much useless threatening, answered only by the imploring looks of Leporello, Juan, with a laugh, exclaims,—

"Well then, I must be the bearer of my own message."

And with composure—nay, with a mocking smile—Don Juan advances to the pedestal of the statue.

"Commandant, will you do me the favour to sup with me to-night?"

What are Leporello's agonies—what are the emotions of his haughty master—when the horrible statue, turning its marble face upon Don Juan, replies, in a deep and awful voice,—

"Yes!"

Yet, even at that dreadful moment, Don Juan is unsubdued—nay, he vows that the ghostly guest shall be welcome; and he bursts forth in a defying strain of mockery, like Achilles, the Homeric fatalist, when a somewhat similar phenomenon takes place, and the mouth of a dumb animal has given out of words of warning,—

> "The dauntless lord replied,
> With unabated will, 'So let it be;
> Portents and prodigies are lost on me.'"

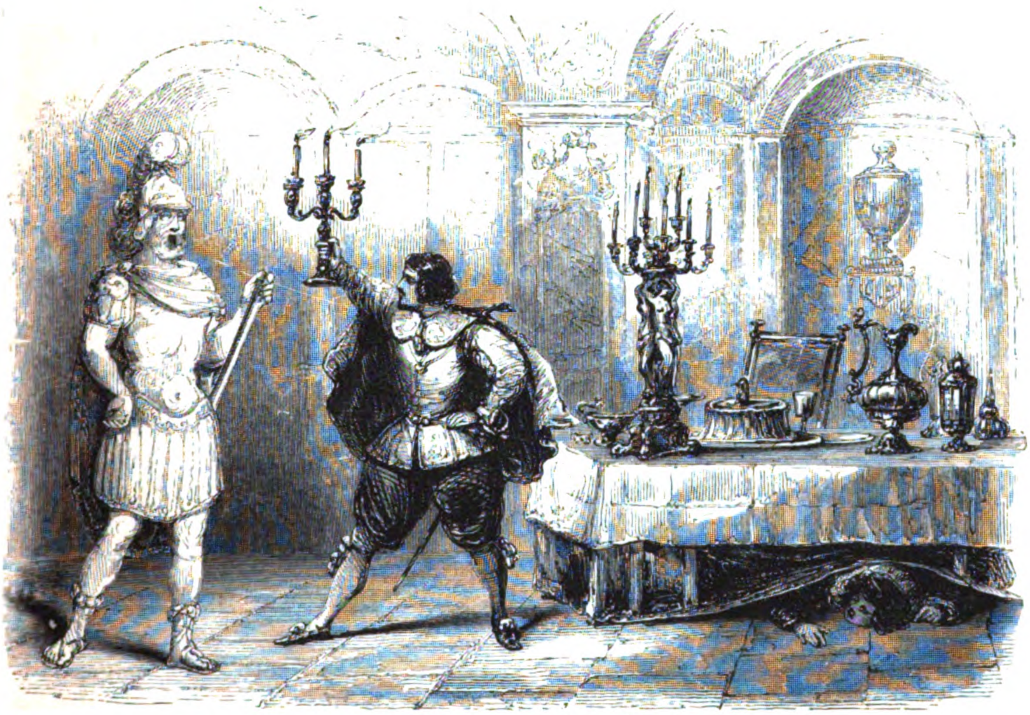
He orders Leporello to return home, a command the valet is not inclined to dispute, and to see that all due preparations are made for the reception of his terrible visitor.

Don Juan's halls are illuminated, and he makes all preparation to receive his guest: women—wine—are around and before him.

"He sits down," says Hoffmann, "and he uncorks his wine with rapidity, giving a free passage to the boiling spirits which sparkle in their confinement. It is in a chamber not too large, with a tall Gothic window, through which is seen the moon struggling with misty clouds; and whilst Elvira recalls to the infidel all his oaths, we see the lightning burst across the face of Heaven, and hear the sullen roar of the gathering storm."

Contemplating this extraordinary picture, in which terror and voluptuousness are mingled, we are reminded of the beautiful stanzas of Lord Byron, who, in his "Childe Harold," describing the same scenes, has again described his own youthful emotions, when the Gothic and sombre vaults of his hereditary halls resounded with the noise of similar orgies.

Some one strikes violently. Elvira and the young maidens hasten away; and, amid the fearful voices of infernal spirits, the colossus of marble is heard approaching. The ground quakes beneath the giant's thundering tread. Leporello turns pale, and hides himself. The tread becomes nearer and yet more near; and to the sound of appalling and unearthly music the statue of the murdered Commandant enters. And Don Juan advances to meet the apparition.

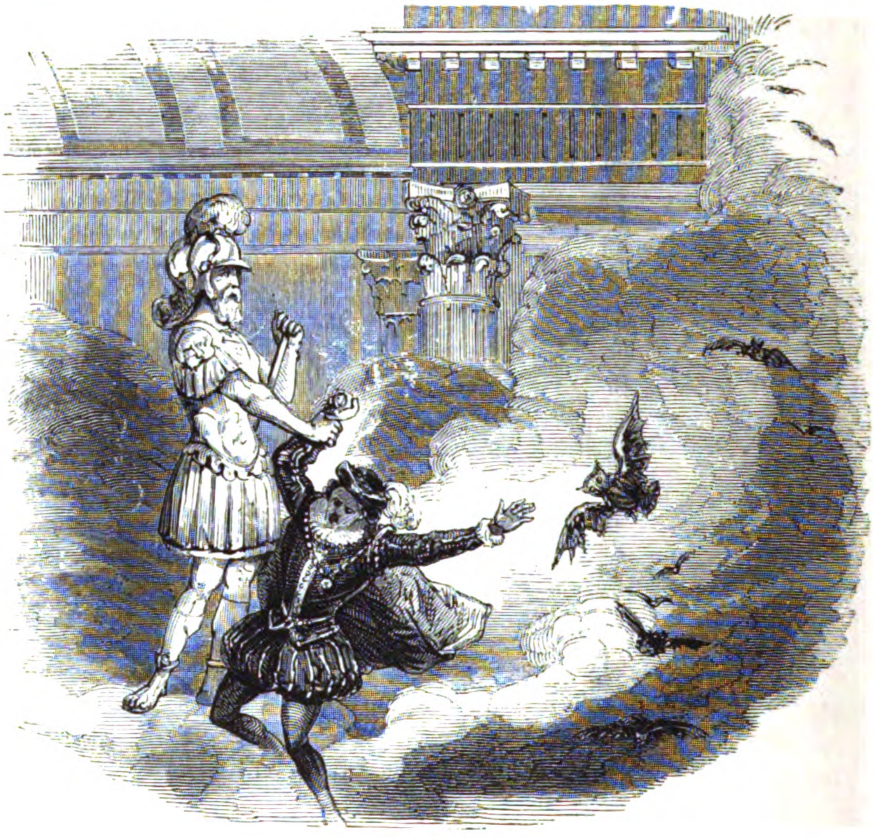


Most tremendous is the disclosure which now takes place. A more awful "situation" has never been conceived even by the most extravagant writers of the Nightmare school. The spectral Commandant declares to Don Juan that he has been sent, not upon a mission of punishment, but one of warning; and that, even now, if the libertine will repent his life of crimes, there is pardoning mercy for him.

Does Juan fall upon his knees and resolve to expiate a youth of sin by an old age of penance? Such had been the termination of the tale, had it been written in knightly days; but not such is the doom of the hardened libertine before us. He scoffs at the warning—ay, and at the being who gives it. Hideous is the tempest without—dreadful the music which tells the story.

Yet once more the warning to repent is given, and once more Don Juan replies, in a voice heard above the tempest, the thunder, and the frightful howlings of the fiends, his awful 'No!'

HIS HOUR IS COME! The statue extends its icy hand, and grasps the wrist of Juan. All is over!



It is especially in the analysis of Don Juan's character, as he lives in the immortal music of Mozart, that Hoffmann shews himself worthy of his fellow-countrymen. The one poet comprehends the other. Souls that have been consecrated in the same temple can alone appreciate that which is hidden from the profane world.

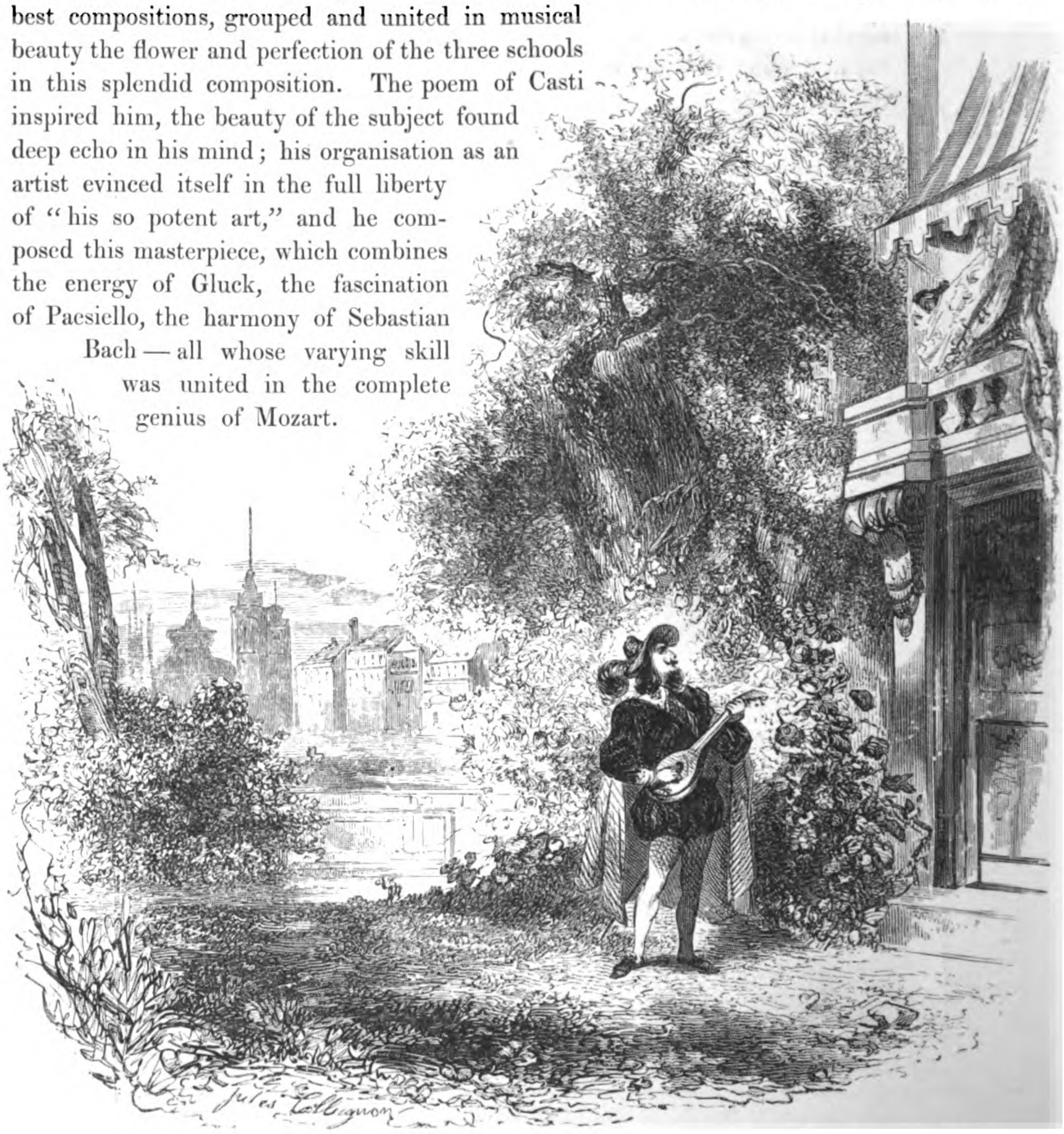
"People judge lightly," says he, "if they suppose that Mozart has meditated and written such music with a puerile fancy. A *bon-vivant* who likes women and wine, who foolishly invites to his table the stone statue of an old man whom he has killed in self-defence,—assuredly there is not a great amount of poetry in all that; such futile ideas would not invoke the appearance of the infernal powers on earth. Does Don Juan deserve that a marble statue should assume a soul and descend from horseback expressly to warn him of the anger of Heaven?

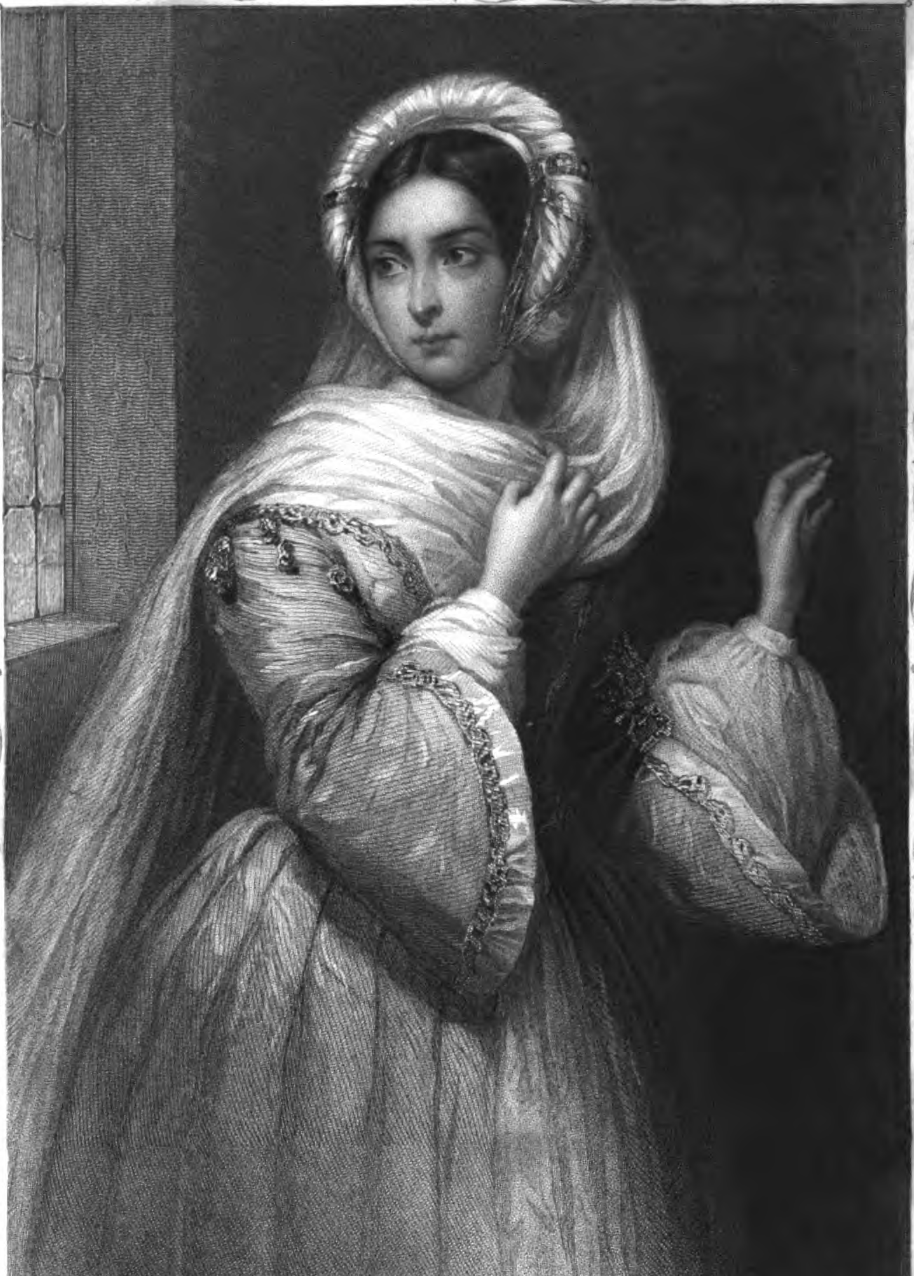
" No, certainly not!

" Nature had provided for Don Juan, one of her dearest children, all that could elevate a man above the crowd which is condemned to be, to do, and to suffer; she had lavished on him the gifts which bid the human nature approximate to the divine; she had destined him to shine, to conquer, and to rule. She had animated with a splendid organisation that vigorous and accomplished frame; had inspired that breast with a celestial spark; had given to him a soul capable of deep feeling, quick and penetrating intelligence. The desires which spring from this potent organisation, enfeeble it; an incessant ardour keeps his blood at fever heat, and urges the young man towards sensual pleasures, constantly renewed; and the hope of finding in them the satisfaction which he seeks every where in vain, destroys him.

" In truth, there is nothing on earth which more elevates a man in his own opinion than love; that love, whose vast and conquering influence gives light to the heart, and gives it at once happiness and confusion. Can we be surprised if, when Don Juan hoped to appease by love the passions which rent his breast, that the devil spread a net for him? It is he who inspired Don Juan with the thought that by love and the society of women we may accomplish on earth those celestial promises which we bear written in the deepest recesses of our hearts; that intense desire which, from our earliest days, brings us most closely to heaven. Flying, without rest, from beauty to beauty, enjoying their charms even to satiety, to the utmost intoxication,—believing himself always deceived in his choice,—hoping to attain the ideal which he pursues, Don Juan finds himself crushed by the pleasures of real life, and despising, above all things, his fellow-men, he is deeply exasperated at those phantoms of pleasure which he had so long considered as the supreme good, and which had so bitterly cheated him. Each deception he practised on woman was to him no longer a joy of the senses, but an insult to human nature and her Creator. A profound contempt for life, as he viewed it, and which he felt so much below him,—the ironical and unwearied gaiety which he extracted from the sight of happiness, vulgarly considered,—the disdain he felt for the calm and peace of those in whom the desire to fulfil the higher destinies of our being never excited a sensation,—impelled him to make cruel sport of these gentle, humble, submissive creatures, and to use them as the playthings of his wanton hours. Each time that he carried off a beloved bride, or troubled the repose of a united family, it was a triumph over Nature and Nature's God." What can we add to so elevated a criticism?

Mozart, born at a period when the melody of Italy, the harmonic science of Germany, and the dramatic expression of the musicians of France, had produced their best compositions, grouped and united in musical beauty the flower and perfection of the three schools in this splendid composition. The poem of Casti inspired him, the beauty of the subject found deep echo in his mind; his organisation as an artist evinced itself in the full liberty of "his so potent art," and he composed this masterpiece, which combines the energy of Gluck, the fascination of Paesiello, the harmony of Sebastian Bach — all whose varying skill was united in the complete genius of Mozart.





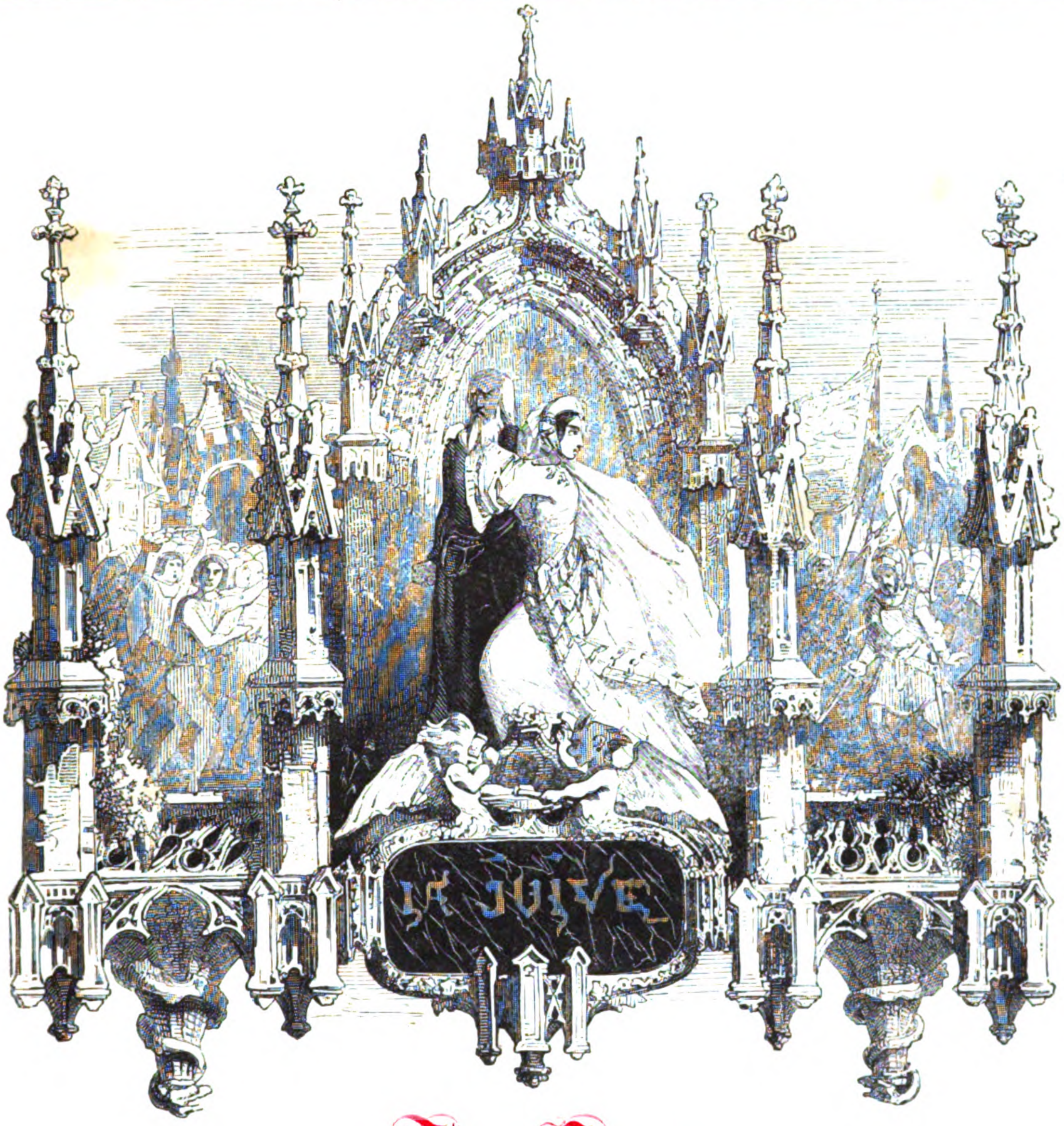
MLLE FALCON.

LA JUIVE

Charpentier

H. Robinson

Published by David Bogue Fleet Street [illegible]



The Jewess.

An opera in five acts, the words by M. Scribe, the music by M. Fromenthal Halery, and the *divertissement* by M. Taglioni.

And now, reader, the middle age is about to stalk in solemn pomp before you, with its ecclesiastical and feudal ceremonies, its fierce burgesses and their corporation privileges, its magnificent cardinals, its knights-bannerets, its glittering crests, its jewelled mitres, its blood-coloured and raven plumes, and caps of maintenance. In the centre behold a sorrowful, but impassioned, countenance—a form full of grandeur and of grief,—an Israelitish maiden environed by Christian adversaries,—a Jewess accursed before she was born,—one whom the communities of the European nation repulse with horror.

This was, indeed, a fine conception—a tragic creation which even the philosophic muse of Voltaire would not have disdained. And who does not know the power—the soul, which Mademoiselle Falcon threw into this glorious personation? Who does not retain the strong recollection of her brilliant tragic and lyric qualities?—She was the singular type of Hebrew beauty—the real daughter of the Mounts of Sinai and of Bethlehem. The eagle eye sparkles with liquid flame; the form of steel is pliant in its strength; the complexion is brown and warm; the long hair of raven black floats in the breeze, free from that pale and sickly shade which the climates of the north give to the skins and locks of their daughters: it is ebony bathed in sunlight.

When M. Scribe saw Mademoiselle Falcon, he perceived at once, with his usual penetration, that he had Judith before him, and that he had a glorious representative of a well-devised drama. That drama he wrote, and created for his heroine a world of tragic pomp, thrilling situations, and deep emotions.

Alas! the fragility of life and fame!—fragility the more touching and the more deplorable from the life of the artist and the reputation of the actress. One day, this exquisite voice of Mademoiselle Falcon was suddenly destroyed; that organ so sonorous, so deliciously attuned, was broken; those glorious notes, which vibrated through the very heart-strings—that impassioned echo of ancient Judea, were for ever silenced! Mademoiselle Falcon quitted the stage, and it was said that the Jewess of the Opera was lost to us for ever. But no; in this mobile world all losses are reparable, and another daughter of the tribe arose, and successfully filled the void which Mademoiselle Falcon had left. There was the same Israelitish type, softened and modified by grace; Europe was mingled with Palestine; and this union, less harsh and less peculiar, had much charm in its softer blending. Thanks to the new Jewess, to Mademoiselle Nathan Treilhet, the first lyric theatre in France was not deprived of one of its most attractive productions. Thanks to this youthful *cantatrice,* this opera of M. Scribe will be yet often represented—an opera which comprises a doleful and solemn narrative, whose origin and details are borrowed by dramatic fiction from the annals of the expiring middle ages.

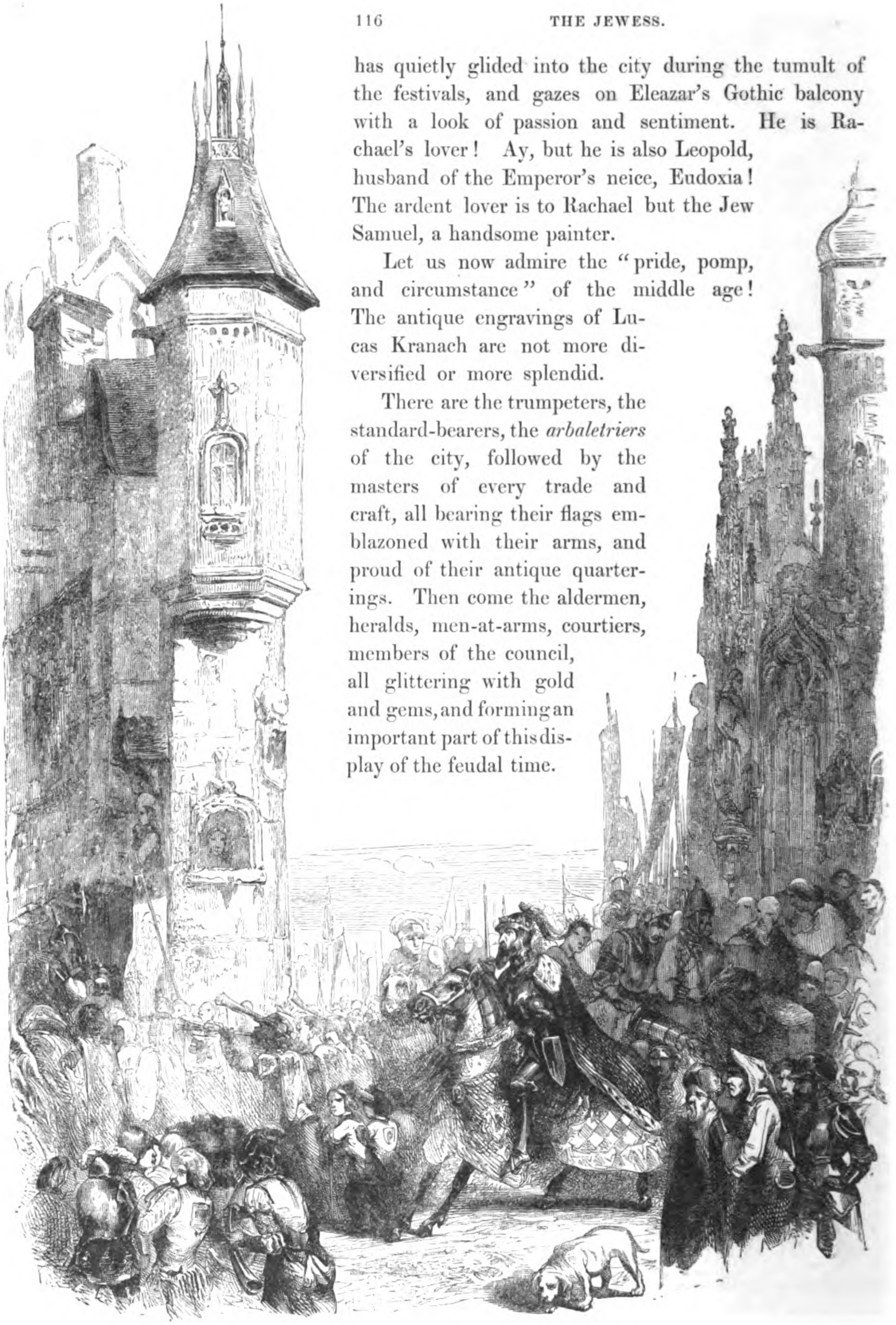
It was on a Sunday, in the year of grace 1414, and the people were hastening to the Church of Constance, that *chef-d'œuvre* of Gothic architecture, which was then in the utmost display of its vast magnificence, and the full blow of the flower of its beauty. The heretics had just been subdued, and the Senate of Prelates were about assembling in the French and German city; the distinguished strangers, attracted to the borders of this beautiful lake, whose surface reflects so many singular edifices, filled the hearts of all the Christian population with extreme joy; bells rung out in full peals, mingling their solemn and sacred sounds with the eternal and gentle murmurs of the Swiss fountains; *Te Deum,* chanted by thousands of voices, was wafted to heaven in clouds of incense;—the entire city held one Festival.

One man alone was a stranger to all this joyousness,—Hebrew by race, by name, and by creed,—an old dweller in Rome, whence a pontifical decree had banished all of his original nation. Eleazar, like the majority of the children of this proscribed and persecuted race, had acquired vast wealth—the golden ægis which was his shield and buckler against the hatred of the Christian people. His house, situated in the "*Grande Place,*" in front of the church, and his splendid display in his goldsmith's shop, were objects of envy to the Christians who were his neighbours. Under his roof was his young daughter, Rachael, whom he had brought with him from Rome, whence she had followed him in his banishment. She was the gentle and bright ray that lighted up his solitude—the perfumed flower which embalmed the loneliness of his hard-earned opulence. He might, no doubt, have continued his trade, and have sold, without fear, those admirable trinkets which none could surpass him in making, had he not been as obstinate as old men sometimes are, and as vindictive as a Malay. To the indignation of the populace, the sound of anvil and hammer is heard proceeding from his shop, even on this solemn meeting.

The Emperor of Germany has just subdued the Hussites, those bold and irreclaimable heretics, and Constance has made vast preparations for the conqueror's ovation to-day. But who is this young man wrapped in a brown mantle, who, fearing to be recognised, has quietly glided into the city during the tumult of the festivals, and gazes on Eleazar's Gothic balcony with a look of passion and sentiment. He is Rachael's lover! Ay, but he is also Leopold, husband of the Emperor's neice, Eudoxia! The ardent lover is to Rachael but the Jew Samuel, a handsome painter.

Let us now admire the "pride, pomp, and circumstance" of the middle age! The antique engravings of Lucas Kranach are not more diversified or more splendid.

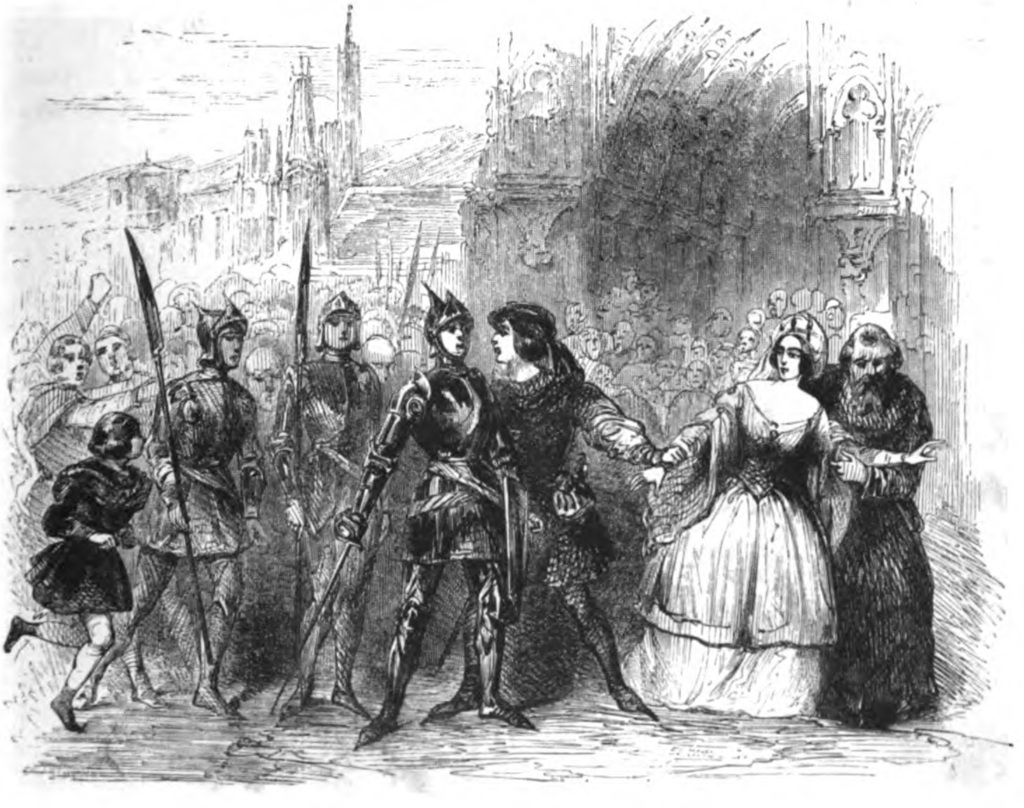
There are the trumpeters, the standard-bearers, the *arbaletriers* of the city, followed by the masters of every trade and craft, all bearing their flags emblazoned with their arms, and proud of their antique quarterings. Then come the aldermen, heralds, men-at-arms, courtiers, members of the council, all glittering with gold and gems, and forming an important part of this display of the feudal time.



Before the celebration of the Passover, Eleazar and his daughter have visited some friends. The Jew, supported by his child, is about to re-enter his house, when the *cortège* of the Emperor passes, and the masses of the people who are assembled to see the solemn procession push and drive the two children of Zion under the very porticoes of the cathedral. But a whisper—a rumour—pervades the excited crowd. A Jew has dared to profane with his accursed presence the portico of the House of God! It is the wretch who this morning has braved the anger of the Christian, and disturbed the rest of the Sabbath-day. Horrible! scandalous! The High Provost sees Eleazar and his daughter, and points them out to the vengeance of the populace.

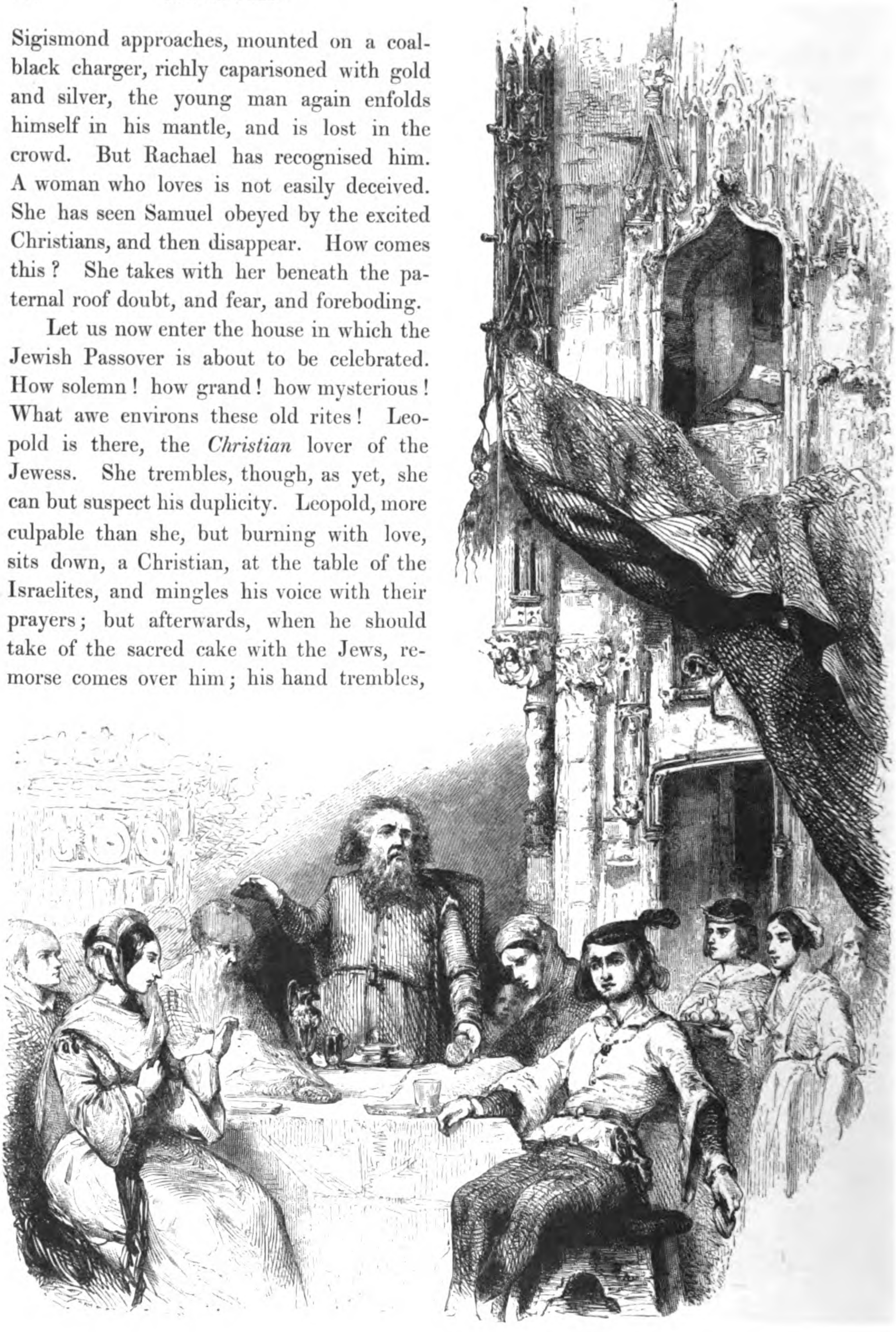
"Carry them away! drag them along! let them be cast into the lake! Let them perish there, the impious wretches! Let the old blasphemer and his daughter be sacrificed to Christian vengeance!"

And there is one rush at the unhappy Israelites. Clubs and staves are uplifted, and the uproar is indescribable. They are about to perish; the watery grave awaits them; and the infuriated multitude pursue them tumultuously. The aged man, with his white hairs, the innocent maiden—nothing stops them. But a young man springs forward, sword in hand, and drives back the waves of the furious mob. Before him all gives way; his is the accent, the gesture, of the suzerain; the brutal populace bend down their shamed faces. Leopold, Rachael's lover (for it is he), with a sign directs one of his officers to place the father and daughter in a place of safety; and then, when



Sigismond approaches, mounted on a coal-black charger, richly caparisoned with gold and silver, the young man again enfolds himself in his mantle, and is lost in the crowd. But Rachael has recognised him. A woman who loves is not easily deceived. She has seen Samuel obeyed by the excited Christians, and then disappear. How comes this? She takes with her beneath the paternal roof doubt, and fear, and foreboding.

Let us now enter the house in which the Jewish Passover is about to be celebrated. How solemn! how grand! how mysterious! What awe environs these old rites! Leopold is there, the *Christian* lover of the Jewess. She trembles, though, as yet, she can but suspect his duplicity. Leopold, more culpable than she, but burning with love, sits down, a Christian, at the table of the Israelites, and mingles his voice with their prayers; but afterwards, when he should take of the sacred cake with the Jews, remorse comes over him; his hand trembles,

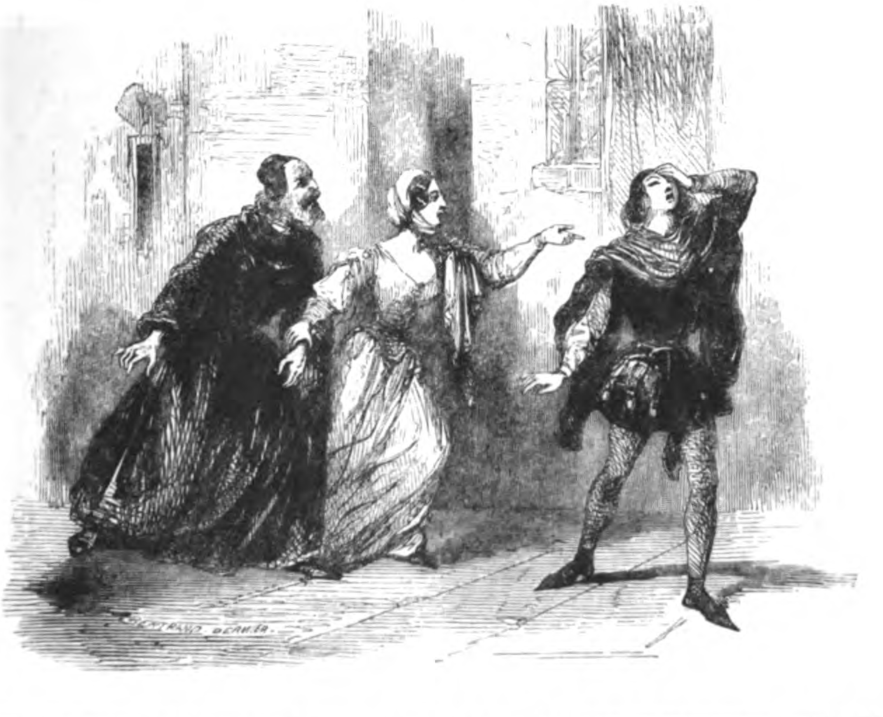


and he rejects the symbol of the Jewish communion. Rachael has observed this hesitation. She whispers him—"I will know——"

But hark! the knocker of the door is heard, and a lady presents herself, lovely, young, and wealthy. She desires to obtain, at any cost, from Eleazar the jeweller, one of those magnificent ornaments of which the workmanship surpasses the material, and of which only the goldsmith of Constance knows the secret. It is for a present to her husband that she desires this splendid gem,—for the husband of whom she is so proud, and whose triumph is that of Catholicism and all Europe:—it is for Leopold. The lady is no other than Eudoxia, the Emperor's niece.

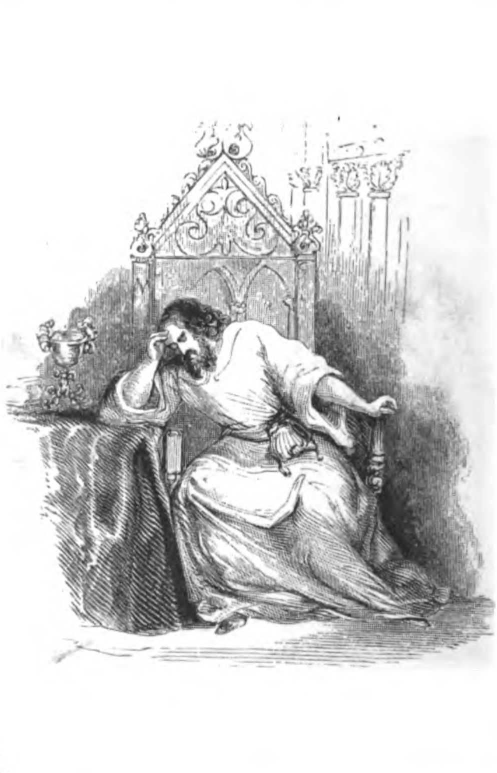
And Leopold is there, under the assumed name of Samuel, a witness of this proof of his wife's love, and yet guilty of infidelity. Astounded, he turns away his face; but his agitation has not escaped the watchful eye of Rachael. She resolves on an explanation. They meet in another room, and at this dangerous meeting Leopold proposes to Rachael to elope with him. The young girl, bewildered by her affection, consents, and the lovers are about to fly together, when Eleazar himself appears. How can we describe his anger? That Samuel, whom with open-armed hospitality he has received as a son, abusing the confidence of his credulous host, has seduced his daughter!

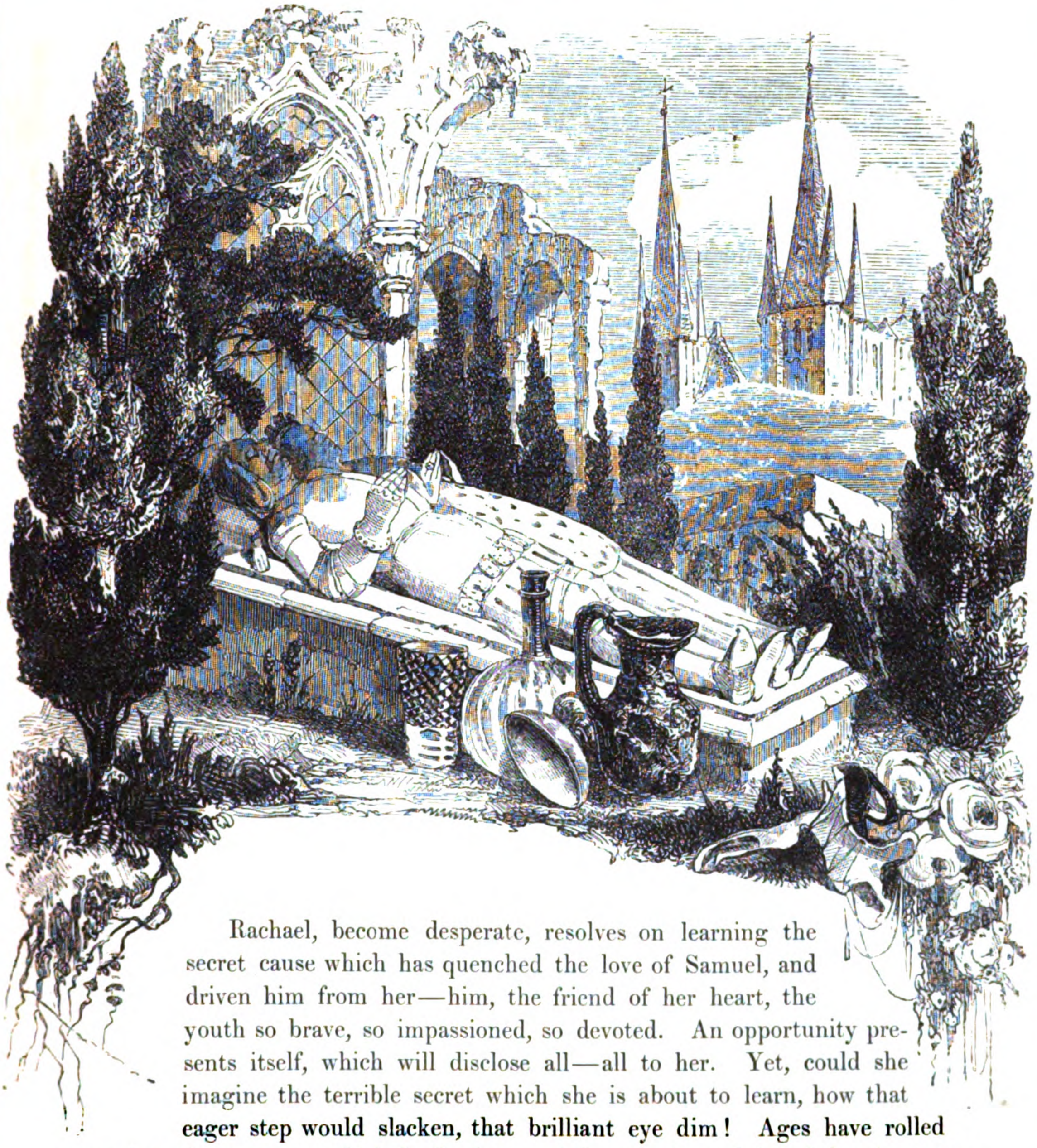
"I am a Christian," exclaims Leopold, "and cannot marry her!"



"Christian! Those accursed people, who have twice robbed me of my wealth, would now despoil me of my child!"

In this painful scene Rachael only sees one misfortune—that of losing him she adores! In vain do the laws denounce torture and death to the Christian and Jewess united in marriage; she will wed him—their union shall remain a secret. She implores her father to bless them. The old man hesitates long before he will join Rachael's hand with that of a hated Christian; but at length, overcome by the tears of his child, the old man yields. Rachael is about to be happy—at least she thinks so. Poor deluded maiden! How can her terror be described when she hears her lover refuse the union which the Jew has consented to bless! The marriage is impossible! Leopold, the husband of Eudoxia, now feels the weight of his crime. The fatal secret hovers on his lips, but shame restrains it; he has not the courage to own his shame before his idolised Rachael. At length, torn by the fierce contending passions of remorse and love, Leopold rushes away from her, the old man showering maledictions on him, and flies from the house into which he has brought misery, and anguish, and despair. And thus is brought on the crisis of this affecting romance.



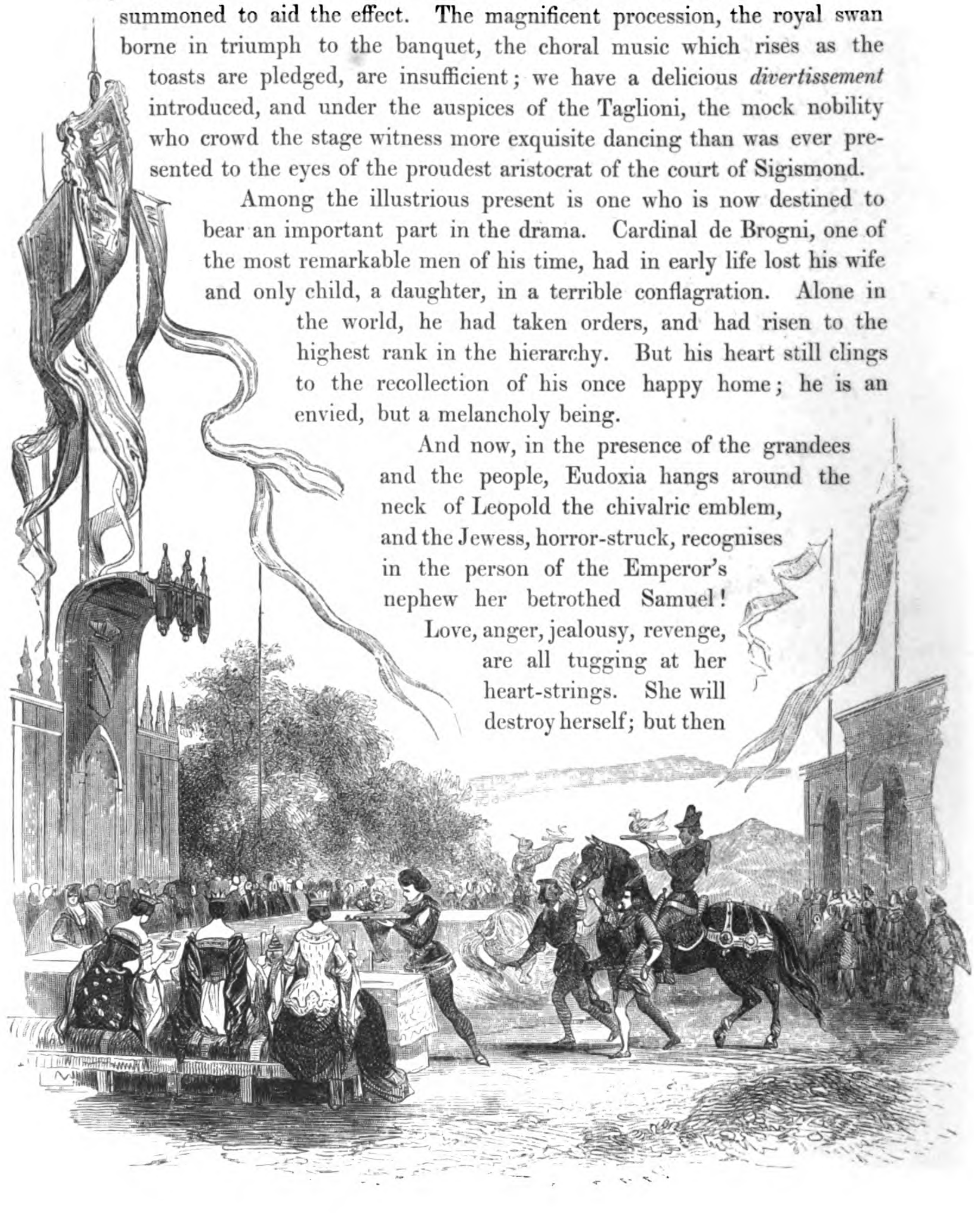


Rachael, become desperate, resolves on learning the secret cause which has quenched the love of Samuel, and driven him from her—him, the friend of her heart, the youth so brave, so impassioned, so devoted. An opportunity presents itself, which will disclose all—all to her. Yet, could she imagine the terrible secret which she is about to learn, how that eager step would slacken, that brilliant eye dim! Ages have rolled away since the scenes to which Scribe has carried us back, and ivy-clad ruins totter over the graves of their chief actors, but there is a revivifying power in the poet who created such a "situation" as this.

The triumphal feasts fill the city of Constance with magnificence and joy. Every where there are garlands, tapestries hanging from the walls, and clouds of incense. Eleazar, who has not forgotten his business amid his troubles, has made the jewel for the Emperor's nephew. Rachael accompanies her father to the palace, where he is about to convey to Eudoxia the splendid collar destined for her faithless spouse. And here the whole resources of the stage are brought into play to produce a worthy representation of the splendours of the middle age. Each department of art is summoned to aid the effect. The magnificent procession, the royal swan borne in triumph to the banquet, the choral music which rises as the toasts are pledged, are insufficient; we have a delicious *divertissement* introduced, and under the auspices of the Taglioni, the mock nobility who crowd the stage witness more exquisite dancing than was ever presented to the eyes of the proudest aristocrat of the court of Sigismond.

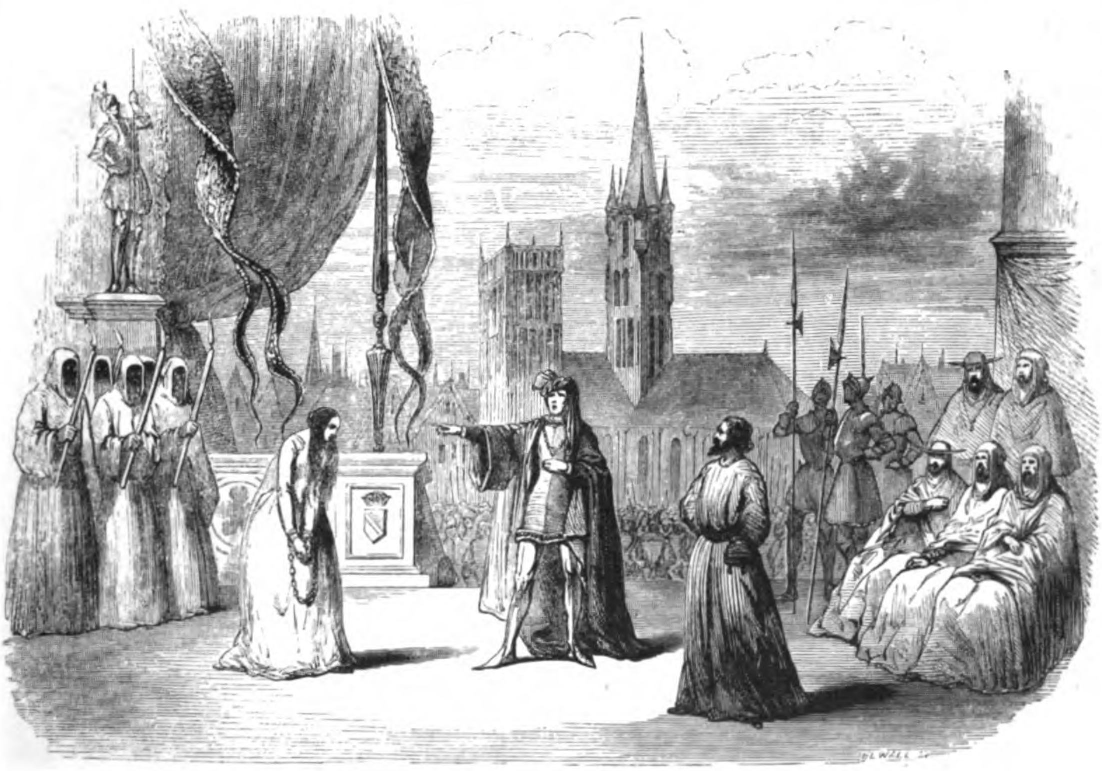
Among the illustrious present is one who is now destined to bear an important part in the drama. Cardinal de Brogni, one of the most remarkable men of his time, had in early life lost his wife and only child, a daughter, in a terrible conflagration. Alone in the world, he had taken orders, and had risen to the highest rank in the hierarchy. But his heart still clings to the recollection of his once happy home; he is an envied, but a melancholy being.

And now, in the presence of the grandees and the people, Eudoxia hangs around the neck of Leopold the chivalric emblem, and the Jewess, horror-struck, recognises in the person of the Emperor's nephew her betrothed Samuel! Love, anger, jealousy, revenge, are all tugging at her heart-strings. She will destroy herself; but then



she will have vengeance. The law punishes with death every Christian who has had an *amour* with a Jewess.

Rachael darts forward, declares she has been the mistress of Leopold, that she is a Jewess, and is ready to die. She is seized and fettered, almost ere her agonised father can step forth in horror to silence her. He well knows that for such a crime there is no pardon on earth, and he feels that at last the wretched Jew has been hunted down by his Christian foes. De Brogni gloomily arises; he pities the victims, but his elevated position forces him to become their judge. His anathema falls at once on Eleazar, his daughter, and Leopold. Princes, cardinals, and people, raise their eyes to heaven in fear. Rachael alone is fearless; she could not be united to Leopold during life, but in death he will bear her company.



The Jew and his daughter are hurried to prison, while, before the assembled court, Leopold has his proud decorations torn from him, and a doom of banishment is pronounced by his father. For him there is mercy; he may hope, after years of penance, or, better, of distant warfare, to be restored to his honours; and the Church, ever merciful to her children, may one day remove the anathema, and again receive him to its bosom. The gallant, the chivalrous, the impassioned Leopold, is thus driven forth to atone his guilt.

But what atonement can be made by the unhappy Jew, by the miserable maiden whose love has been her only crime? Alas! for them a hideous doom has been spoken. And, at this moment, in the great square of Constance, brutal executioners, surrounded by a yet more brutal mob, are preparing to carry it into effect. A platform is fast rising, for the ruffians are urged on in their labour by a crowd eager for a dreadful spectacle. Beams and planks, dark and vast, are fixed; and now what is that huge and black mass which is with difficulty dragged through yon fortress-gate, and slowly elevated to the platform? It is an enormous caldron, which, from vessels rapidly supplied, and hurried on by the assisting rabble, speedily is filled with oil. And now a glowing furnace roars below; and, in answer to the repeated demands of the crowd, the ferocious executioners growl out,—

"*It will boil in an hour!*"

Such is the dreadful death to which Eleazar and his child are doomed! In one hour the aged father is to be plunged into that horrid caldron; in one hour the gloating crowd will see the beautiful Rachael hurled, naked and shrieking, into that infernal bath. And for this thousands upon thousands are waiting and watching—thousands of Christians who have that morning knelt before the sign of universal Love!

Thus is the drama hurried forward. Eudoxia finds the means of obtaining access to the prison of the Jewess. Rachael, moved and despairing, resolves, at the sacrifice of her own life, to save him who has deceived her. She will assert that she has accused him falsely, and will die for that crime that he may be spared. And the Cardinal de Brogni, the enlightened man who, with many other prelates of the same period, marched in the van of civilisation, desires to save Eleazar from the dread vengeance of the law, and offers him his life if he will become a Christian.

"I deny the God of my fathers? Never!"

"You will die."

"I will die, and be revenged on thee!"

"On me?"

"Yes; this revenge at least is mine."

"What revenge? Speak."

"Thy Daughter. She lives!—I know her.

"My daughter! whom I lost in the flames, when my palace was destroyed in the conflagration?"

"Even so. An Israelite bore her away in his arms—I saw him."

"In the name of God—restore her to me!"

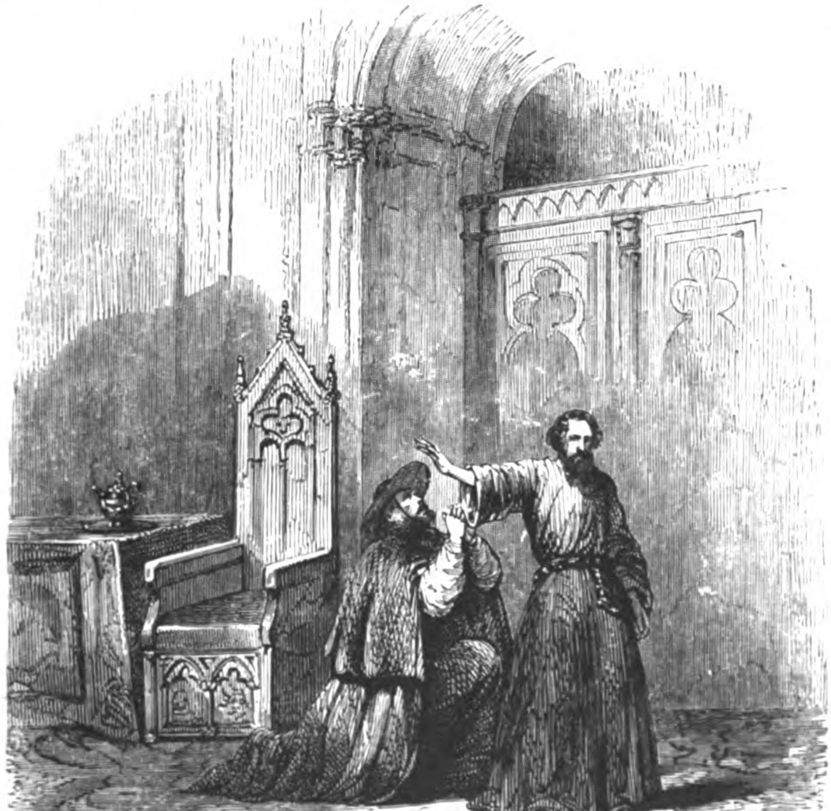
"I will not."

"And you know where she is?"

"I do."

"Ah! have pity on me, and restore my child!"

And the proud Cardinal falls at the feet of the accursed and condemned Jew.



"Arise, priest—arise! What! kneeling to a Jew?"

And, with a hollow laugh, he turns his back upon the Cardinal, who, in the deepest dejection, retires, unable to gain from Eleazar the secret, the possession of which would, he dreams, render happy the remainder of his life.

Ha! a thought has helped him, and revived his hopes. The obstinate Jew, accursed alike of God and man, refuses to the agonies of a father the knowledge where his own, his only child, is to be found. What mercy does so merciless a wretch deserve at that father's hands? Tears, prayers, have failed to extort the secret. Will the Jew yield it to the *rack?*

There is but little time to lose, for the great bell of the Cathedral is already sounding the knell of the Hebrews. Speedily the Cardinal reappears, with stern determination in his looks.

"Eleazar!"

"Again, priest? May not the Jew's last minutes be spent in communion with his God?"

"Thy God, Jew! Deserve his mercy by one—one act of humanity. Where is my child?"

"Have I not sworn to withhold the secret? Begone, nor think I will add perjury to my sins in my dying hour."

"That hour shall be more bitter than thy wildest fears can imagine. Enter!" And, in answer to the raised voice of the Cardinal, six masked forms appear.

"These, Jew, are the torturers. The agonies which they can crowd into one half hour are only known to themselves and to the wretches who have shrieked their lives out within these walls. Disclose thy secret, or learn theirs."

"Christian priest—never!"

"Drag him to the torture-vault," exclaims the Cardinal, in the extreme of rage; "and, while he has bone to crush or joint to wrench, use all your engines upon him. I—I will not be present at the work; but I will remain here. The instant he consents to confess, summon me."

Pale, but firm, Eleazar is hurried from the presence of the Cardinal. De Brogni, half repenting, yet burning to hear tidings of his child, listens eagerly. He hopes that the sight of the rack, or, at most, its first pang, will produce the effect he sighs for. But no messenger returns—still no summons. He paces the dungeon, and shudders at the deed which is now being done under his orders.

Ha! that yell of inexpressible anguish rings through the prison—will ring through the brain of the Cardinal till his dying day. Is that a groan which follows, or is it but the echo of his own remorseful murmur?

There is no further sound.

A messenger at last—his step is hasty—the Cardinal springs to meet him.

"Will he confess?"

"Your Eminence, no!"

"What!—what means have been tried?"

"All, your Eminence; and if he is to survive for the scaffold——"

"Take him thither."

And the baffled father leaves the prison—he will yet try one more effort upon the scene of death.

The last scene! We have the great square of Constance, crowded with spectators, and lined with soldiery. In the foreground is the platform, with the dreadful caldron, under which the flames still glow, though the scalding liquid within is tossing and hissing in fiery waves. A short flight of steps has been placed beside it, to enable the executioners to carry up their victim. The Cardinal appears, attended, and takes his place on the right, and the various ministers of the law are already present.

And now the doomed maiden is seen to mount the scaffold; her head droops upon her bosom, and her long raven tresses fall dishevelled over her beautiful shoulders. Yet her tread is firm, her eye steady—love has converted the martyr into the heroine.

She looks around for her father, but sees him not. Can they have murdered him, without allowing her one last embrace? She rushes to the Cardinal's feet.

" My father ?"

" He will be here anon, maiden," replies De Brogni, shuddering at the interview he is about to witness. A litter, borne by four supporters, is now brought forward; and what, in the name of humanity, is that crushed and gory form upon it? Livid with agony, and with every limb shattered, all that seems left of life in the Jew is his eye, which, even at this hour, gleams with malice—triumph. Almost senseless with horror, Rachael advances, but she is seized by two brawny executioners, who tear away her robe, and raising in their ruffianly arms the beautiful girl, now exposed to the gloating gaze of Constance, carry her up the steps, and await the signal.

The Cardinal approaches the litter where Eleazar lies, unable to move.

" The secret, Jew, and even now I save you both."

" Let HER die, priest, whom you have bared to the eyes of your city, and then ——"

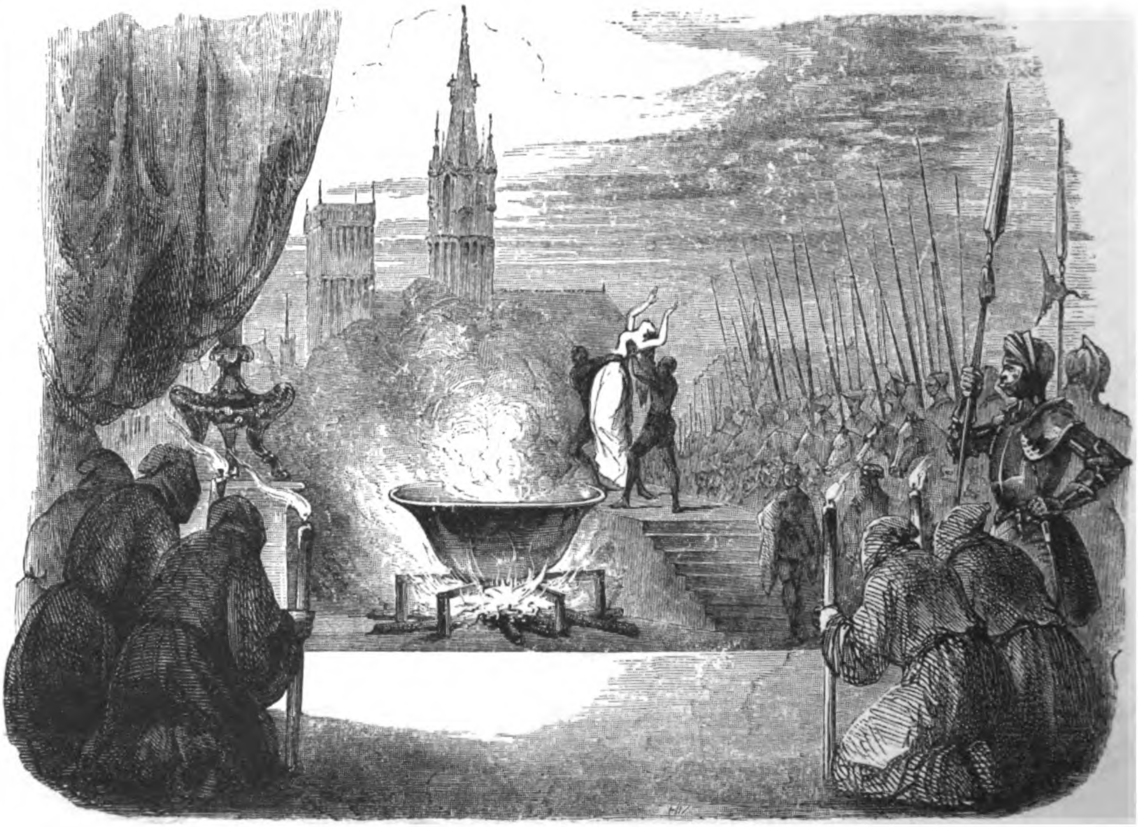
A dreadful cry, which, in spite of itself, that brutal crowd sent forth at so hideous a sight, announced to the wretched father that his child was now writhing in the boiling oil.

" Where—where is my daughter ?" gasps the Cardinal.

With one last and mighty effort the Jew raises himself on the litter, and, pointing to the horrible caldron, exclaims,—

" THERE !"

It is his corpse that falls backwards.



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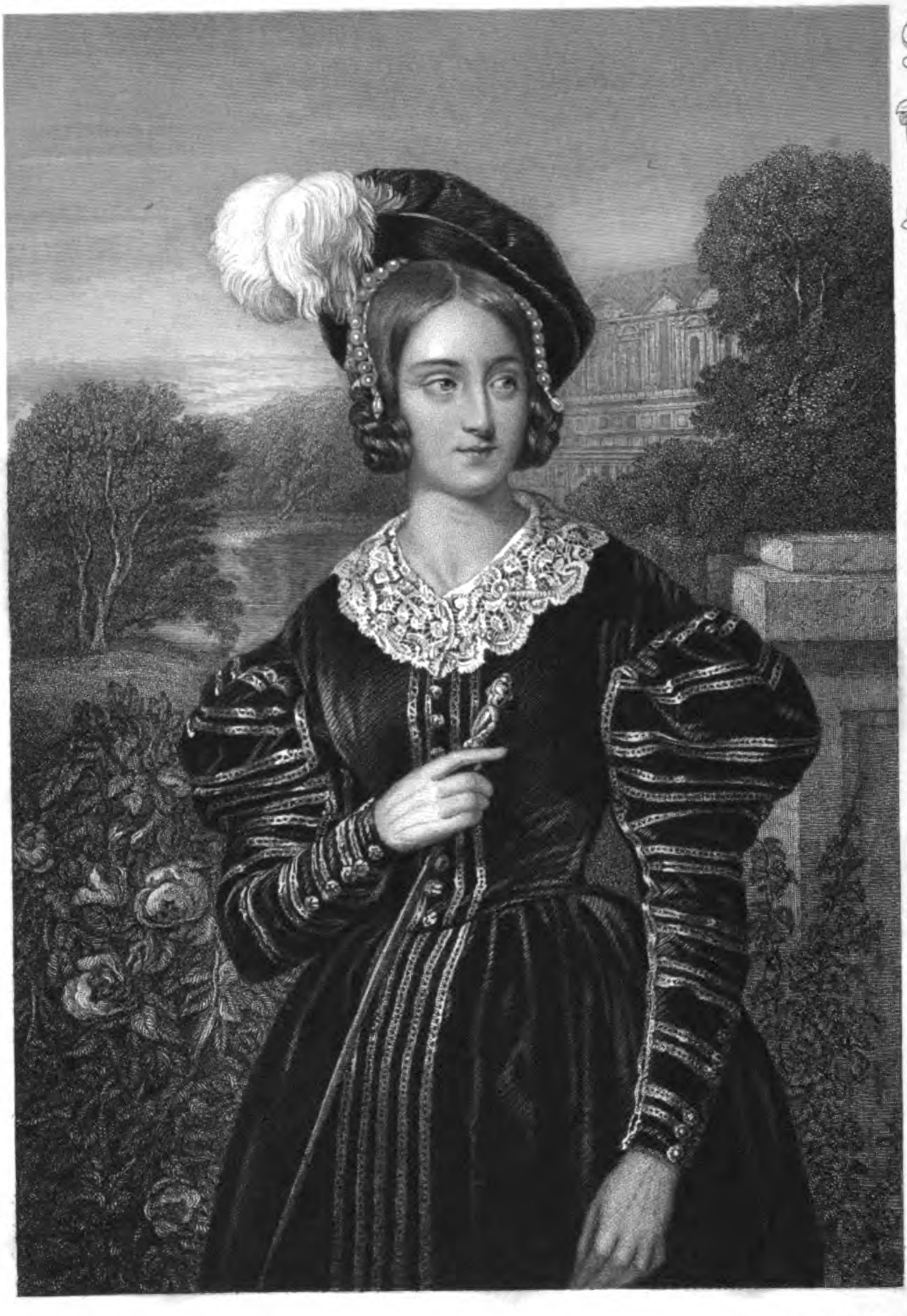

Charpentier

W. H. Egleton

DUBUS ORAS.
MARGUERITE DE VALOIS.

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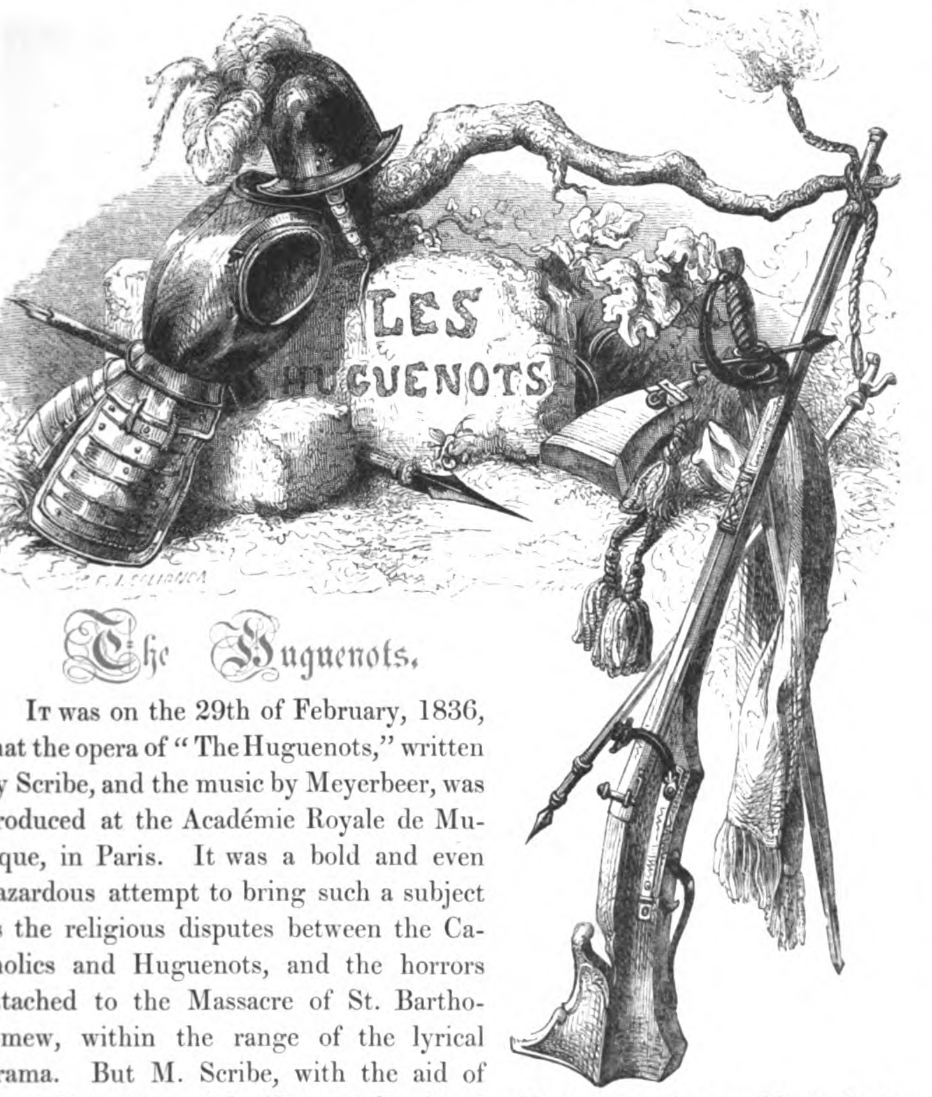
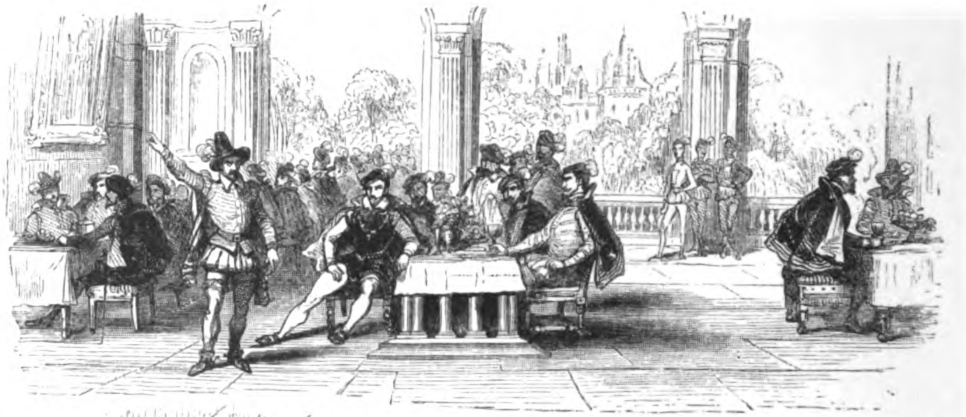


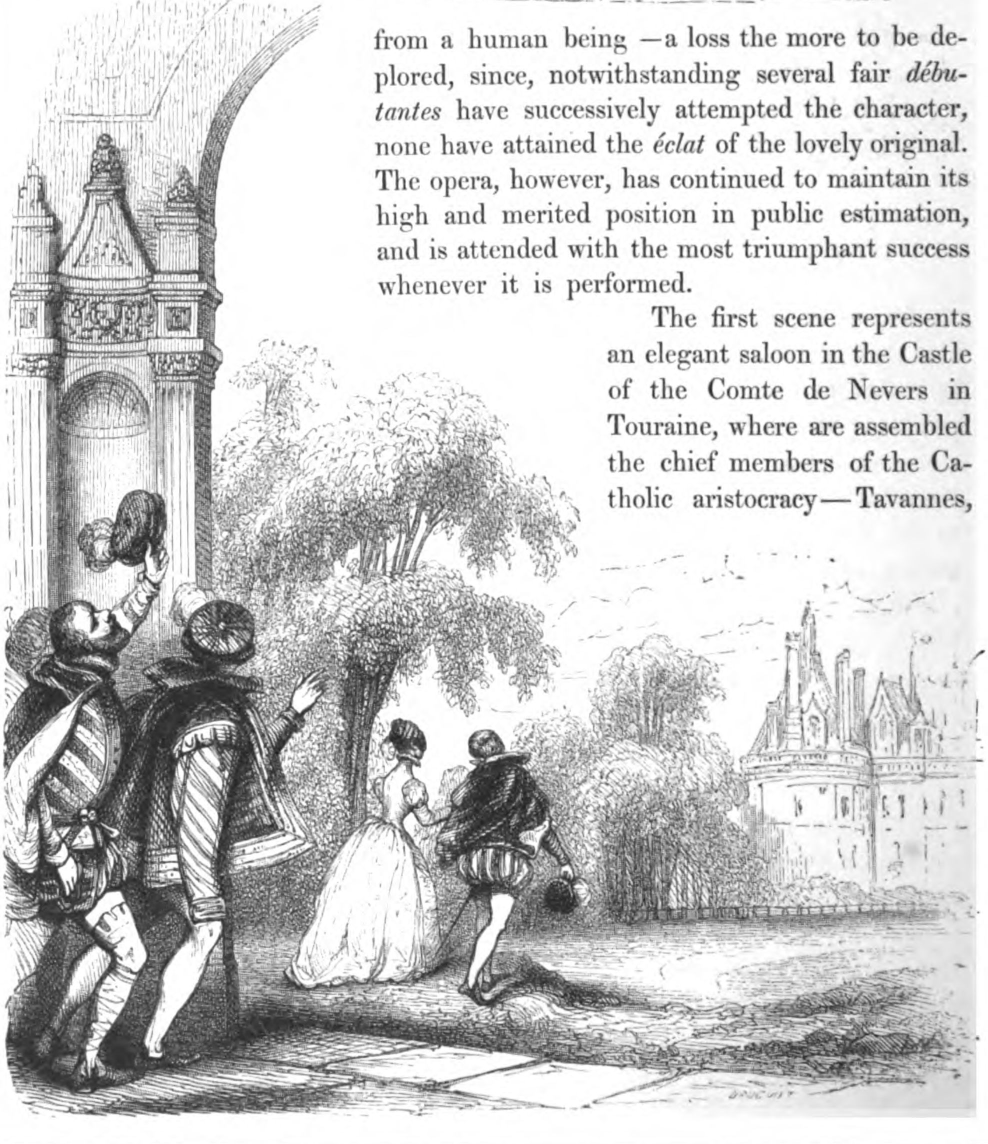
The Huguenots.

It was on the 29th of February, 1836, that the opera of "The Huguenots," written by Scribe, and the music by Meyerbeer, was produced at the Académie Royale de Musique, in Paris. It was a bold and even hazardous attempt to bring such a subject as the religious disputes between the Catholics and Huguenots, and the horrors attached to the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, within the range of the lyrical drama. But M. Scribe, with the aid of the "Chronicles of the Time of Charles the Ninth," by Prosper Merimée, has most successfully combated all the apparent difficulties; and Meyerbeer, being of the Jewish religion, has maintained a strict impartiality, and accorded an equal portion of the music to Papists and Lutherans. Adolphe Nourrit (whose premature death, when at the zenith of his professional career, we have to deplore) was, under the name of "Raoul de Nangis," the symbol of Protestantism; whilst the beautiful Cornélie Falcon, in the character of "Valentine," was the representative of Catholicism. A strange fatality seems to have attached to the two distinguished artists we have just named: the one was consigned to an early grave at Naples, and the other, from the effects of a severe illness, has been deprived of one of the finest voices that ever emanated



from a human being —a loss the more to be deplored, since, notwithstanding several fair *débutantes* have successively attempted the character, none have attained the *éclat* of the lovely original. The opera, however, has continued to maintain its high and merited position in public estimation, and is attended with the most triumphant success whenever it is performed.

The first scene represents an elegant saloon in the Castle of the Comte de Nevers in Touraine, where are assembled the chief members of the Catholic aristocracy—Tavannes,



de Cossé, de Retz, Thoré, Méru, &c., who sing a joyous chorus in commemoration of youth availing itself of the time present, and leaving the future to itself. The fête is not, however, complete,—another guest is expected, in the person of Raoul de Nangis, the Huguenot, but especially patronised by the king, who had just been reconciled to the brave Admiral Coligny, and who was desirous to establish a reconciliation with all parties. This was, alas! to be but of short duration. Raoul is received with marked distinction, and in the midst of their festivity he is requested to tell them some love adventure. He instantly complies by singing a charming air, detailing his having met, near the old tower of the Castle of Amboise, a lovely maiden, riding in a litter (the mode in use at that period), who was grossly insulted by some students, evidently inebriated. To rescue her and put to flight her aggressors was the work of a moment; but since then he had never beheld her; all which he eloquently expresses in the delicious romance since become so extremely popular, which thus commences:—

"Oh, fairer than the driven snow,
Purer than spring-tide's early glow!"

His new acquaintances, all unblushing libertines, cannot comprehend the purity of his Huguenot passion for the fair unknown, but drink to her health, wishing him success. Whilst they are all enjoying themselves, Marcel, the servant of Raoul, and a rigid Protestant, with sour aspect and formal demeanour, appears at the door. This faithful follower is astonished to find his master feasting, as he conceives, in the camp of the Philistines, and vents his indignation by chanting in a corner of the room the Hymn of Luther. This solemn and impressive music, forming such a contrast to the gay and joyous Bacchanalian airs of the Catholic noblemen, strikes at once upon the imagination of Raoul, who begins to reflect on his strange position, and sets down his brimming glass untasted.

"What is that wild and funereal air?" asks the Comte de Nevers.

"It is the canticle composed by Luther, as our protection in the hour of peril," replies Raoul.

"If I don't mistake," says de Cossé, addressing Marcel, "you are the soldier who at the siege of La Rochelle gave me this severe wound; but it was the fortune of war, and I do not bear malice. Come, let us drink together."

"I do not drink," replies the fierce Puritan.

"Well, if you will not drink, sing," they all exclaim; and Marcel thunders forth the famous air of the Huguenots—

> "Down with the convents accursed!
> May the monks all prostrate be!
> Be their gaudy altars reversed!
> To the flames with their Breviary!"

When this opera was brought out in London in 1841, by the German company then at Drury Lane Theatre, the character of "Marcel" was assigned to Herr Staudigl, who is allowed to have the finest bass voice in Europe. He sung the music, and especially this Hymn, with marvellous effect. The deep notes of his mellow and matured voice resounded in splendid harmony throughout the opera, whilst his acting made the character of the Puritan follower of a Huguenot lord the most prominent in it.

Whilst he is singing the second verse, a servant enters, and tells the Comte de Nevers that a lady wishes to speak with him.

"Another despairing victim!" he cries. "Since my intended marriage has been announced I have not had a moment's peace. If it is Madame d'Entrague, or the young Comtesse, or Madame de Raincy, I will not go."

"This lady I have never seen before," says the valet.

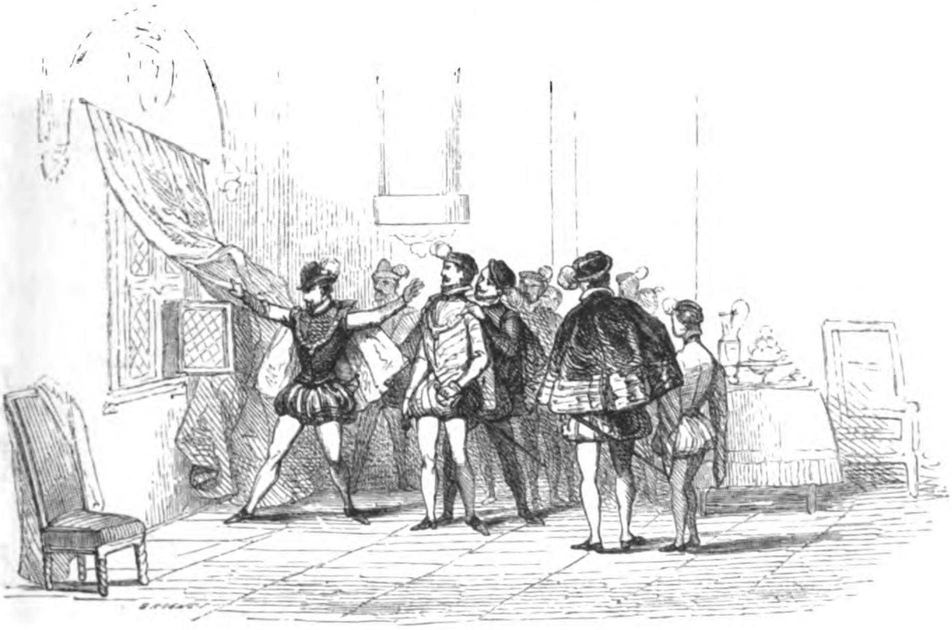
The Comte, asking pardon of his guests for leaving them at such a moment, retires to receive this mysterious visitor.

Tavannes, more curious than the others, raises the curtain, exclaiming,—

"She is a very charming, delicious creature!"

Raoul also looks, when, to his grief and astonishment, he discovers his fair unknown, and accuses her of perfidy in giving a preference to the dissipated Nevers over his own pure and loyal attachment. In vain do his gay companions endeavour to rally him, singing—

"When bright eyes
Our love despise,
Let us be wise—
There are brighter elsewhere!"



Raoul will not listen to their boisterous mirth, and his anger is aroused, as well as his indignation, on again perceiving the unknown at the end of the garden, reconducted by his supposed happy rival.

"I will speak to her," he cries, "if only to tell her of my disdain."

But they prevail upon him to refrain, as it would be a breach of hospitality.

The Comte de Nevers enters immediately after, wrapped in thought, and much abstracted. The visit he has just received was not of that pleasing and flattering nature which his libertine companions had supposed—it being from his fair bride, one of the ladies of honour to the Queen, Marguerite de Valois, by whose advice and desire the maiden had come to solicit of the Comte that he would release her from her troth. As a gallant chevalier, he feels he is bound not to refuse her request, but in secret he is devoured by rage. He tries, notwithstanding, to conceal his inward vexation, and receives courteously the felicitations of his friends on this new conquest. These fulsome compliments augment the anger of Raoul, who is on the point of demanding satisfaction for what he rashly conceives to be meant as a personal insult, when a page appears, saying he is charged to deliver a missive to one of the gentlemen present.

"It is a letter," he says, "from a noble lady whom I must not name, but beautiful and virtuous enough to excite the envy of kings."

"Give me the letter," says the Comte de Nevers, carelessly.

"Are you Sir Raoul de Nangis?" asks the page; "for it is to him this billet is addressed."

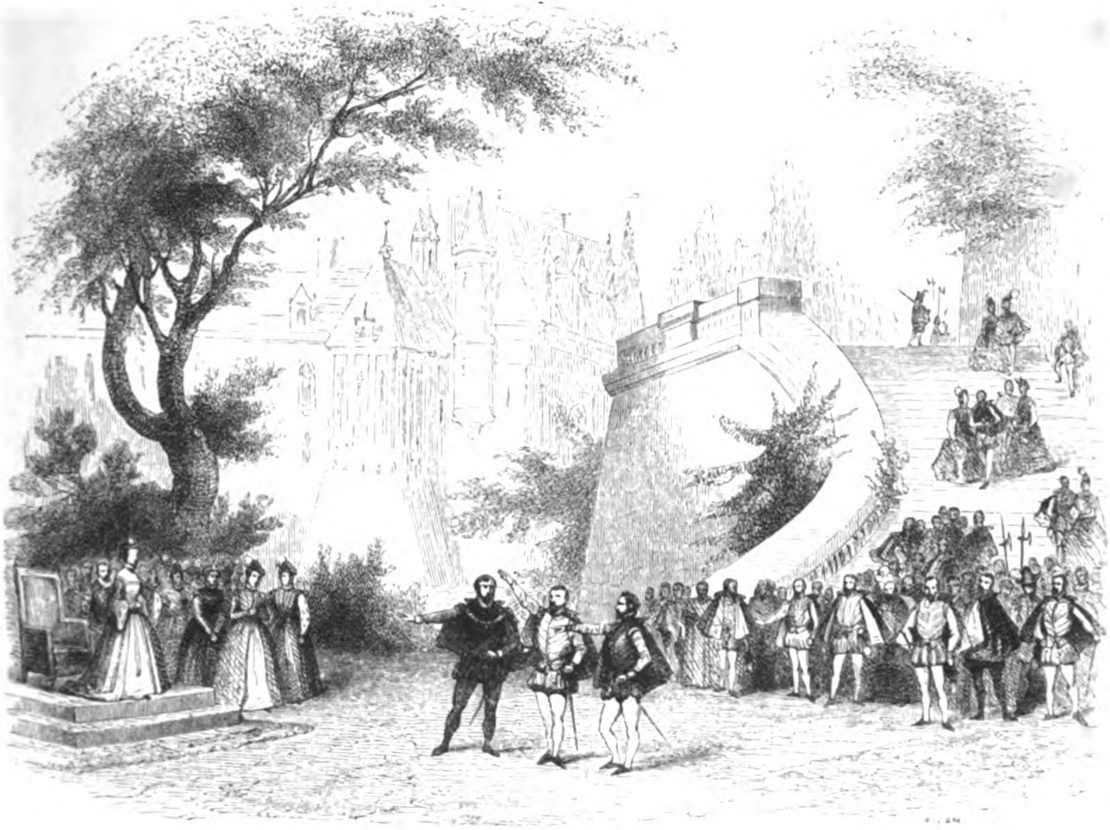
All appear astonished, and none more than Raoul himself, who, however, opens the note, and reads these words:—

"In a moment you will be sought for; if you are brave, allow yourself to be blindfolded, and conducted to me in silence."

"It may cost me dear, yet will I go," replied Raoul. "Look, gentlemen!"

"Good heavens!" they exclaim, "it is the handwriting of Marguerite de Valois! Her seal—her device! The Queen commands his presence—he is secretly beloved!"

Raoul is at once overwhelmed with offers of service, protestations of friendship, and devoted attachment; but he, not having heard their previous exclamations, cannot comprehend this sudden and obsequious respect. He is still lost in conjecture, when several masked men appear, and make signs for him to follow them. All the company, Raoul inclusive, appear greatly excited, and a very skilfully arranged chorus exhibits and expresses their various feelings. Raoul and the masked messengers disappear, and the curtain falls.



The SECOND ACT takes place in the park of Chenonceaux, some leagues from Amboise. The château, whose base is washed by the waters of the Cher, is seen in perspective at the back of the stage, with its lofty roofs and spiral turrets almost in the clouds. The river, after dashing rapidly under the arches of the bridge, winds deviously in all directions, and is lost amid the shades of the tall and umbrageous trees. A large flight of steps, seen on one side, leading to the gardens of the château, heightens the effect of the scene, which is one of the most complete and magnificent ever produced.

It is mid-day. Marguerite de Valois, surrounded by her maids of honour, is completing her toilette beneath the shade of the lofty trees. Urbain, her page, is holding a looking-glass before her. In a strain of delicious melody the young and lovely betrothed of the king of Navarre sings of the spring-time and love,—of all that is fresh and beautiful. What to her are Papists or Huguenots, with their feuds and bloodshed?—she thinks only of enjoying perpetual fêtes, and one round of varying pleasures. The sun is scorching—the atmosphere in a glow. The waters of the Cher in this sequestered part of the park are limpid and inviting. Marguerite desires her women to prepare every thing for the bath; but scarcely have they quitted the princess than she sees approaching, breathless with anxiety, a lovely girl: it is the youngest and fairest of her maids of honour, Valentine de Saint Bris, the mysterious beauty seen at the Comte de Nevers'. Marguerite de Valois, who has conceived for her the strongest affection, eagerly inquires the result of her interview with the Comte.

"He has promised me," says Valentine, "to refuse my hand."

"Then you will soon marry the man your heart has chosen."

"Alas! Heaven forbids this alliance;—our faiths are opposed."

"What does that matter? Am not I the betrothed of the king of Navarre, one of the Protestant leaders? I would wish your marriage to take place at the same time with my own."

"And my father?"

"I have his word that he will consent."

"But Raoul?"

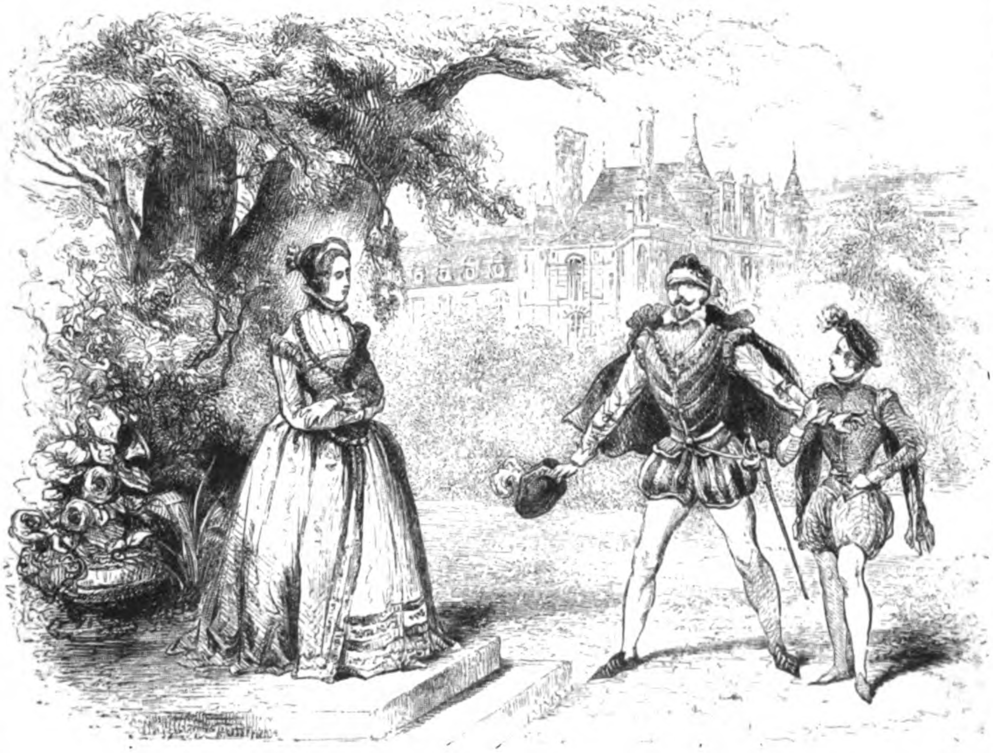
"He will soon be here, and you shall be united."

It was, in fact, for the purpose of offering to him the hand of Valentine, who could not live without loving him, and whom he accuses of ingratitude, that the Queen had sent secretly for Raoul.

"Oh! madam, I can never speak to him," says the artless girl.

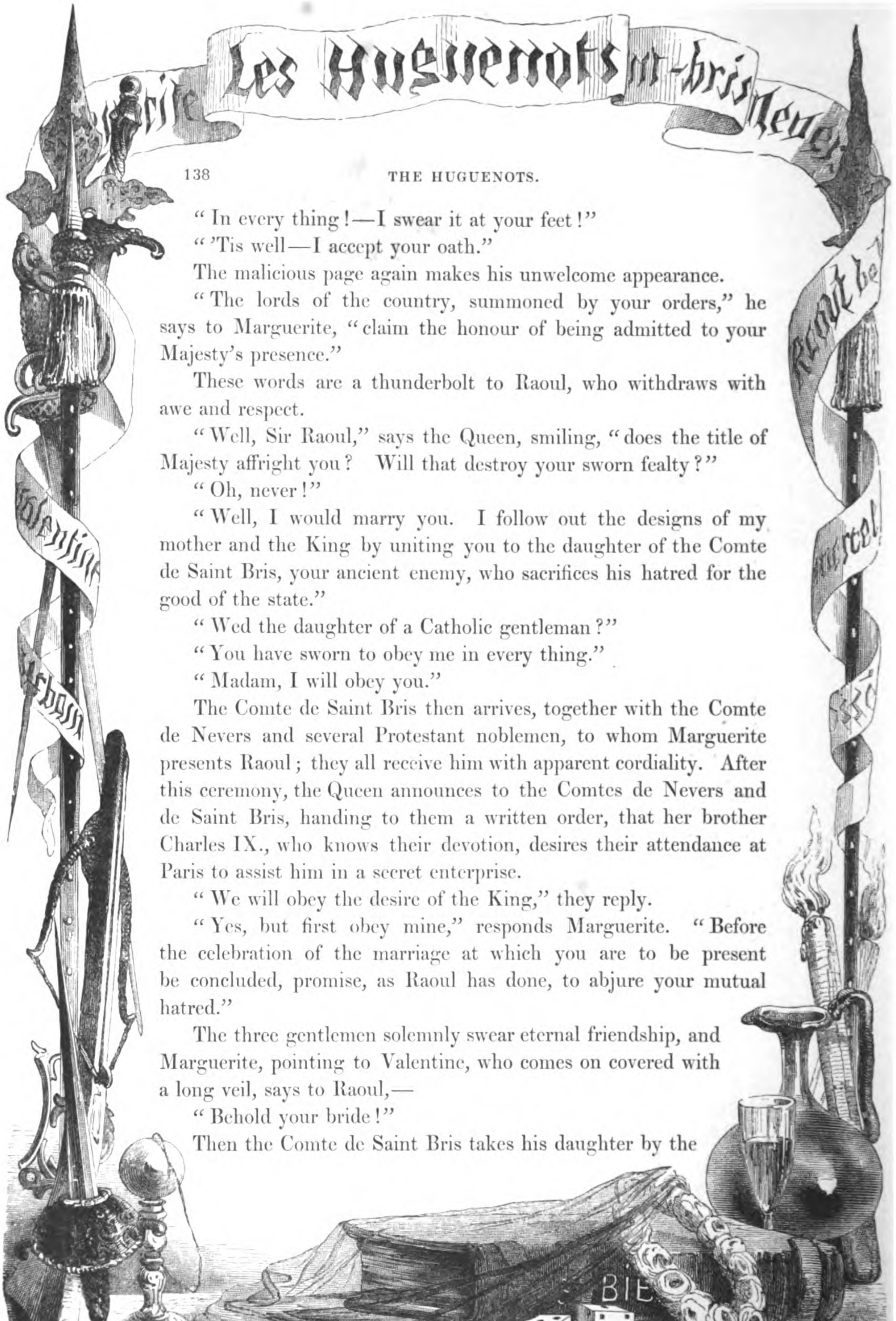
"Oh! leave that to me," gaily replies Marguerite, who had, in her desire to effect the union of these lovers, forgotten to follow her women, who are already prepared to enjoy their bath. Several of them, attired only in dressing-gowns of light gauze, are on the river's brink, and, before they plunge into the sparkling waters, sport, dance, chase each other, and form various groups, which the Queen contemplates with a smile, whilst she seats herself listlessly on a bank of turf. A party of the young maidens disappear behind the thick foliage, and are seen soon after disporting in the cool river. These graceful diversions are interrupted by the hasty arrival of Urbain, who appears suddenly amongst them, like Actæon surprising the nymphs of Diana. The mischievous young page announces to Marguerite (not without many sly and impertinent glances around him) that Raoul has reached the château, and will appear before the Queen directly. These words renew the alarm of the modest bathers, who throng about their mistress, uttering cries like the timid hinds affrighted by the hunters: but seeing Raoul approach with his eyes bandaged, they take courage; so much so, indeed, that the Queen is compelled to make signs to them to withdraw.

Alone with the young Protestant, Marguerite allows him to remove the covering from his eyes.



"Oh, heavens! where am I?
Is this an illusion of my dazzled sight?"

Raoul exclaims, who does not know the Princess, and is struck by the aspect of her regal beauty. Then, thinking that he is *en bonne fortune,* and desiring to avenge himself, by this conquest, of Valentine's disdain, he offers, in a charming duet, his love, his arm, his life, to the Queen of Navarre, who is greatly amused at the mistake of the gallant cavalier, and asks if he is ready to obey her in all things?



"In every thing!—I swear it at your feet!"

"'Tis well—I accept your oath."

The malicious page again makes his unwelcome appearance.

"The lords of the country, summoned by your orders," he says to Marguerite, "claim the honour of being admitted to your Majesty's presence."

These words are a thunderbolt to Raoul, who withdraws with awe and respect.

"Well, Sir Raoul," says the Queen, smiling, "does the title of Majesty affright you? Will that destroy your sworn fealty?"

"Oh, never!"

"Well, I would marry you. I follow out the designs of my mother and the King by uniting you to the daughter of the Comte de Saint Bris, your ancient enemy, who sacrifices his hatred for the good of the state."

"Wed the daughter of a Catholic gentleman?"

"You have sworn to obey me in every thing."

"Madam, I will obey you."

The Comte de Saint Bris then arrives, together with the Comte de Nevers and several Protestant noblemen, to whom Marguerite presents Raoul; they all receive him with apparent cordiality. After this ceremony, the Queen announces to the Comtes de Nevers and de Saint Bris, handing to them a written order, that her brother Charles IX., who knows their devotion, desires their attendance at Paris to assist him in a secret enterprise.

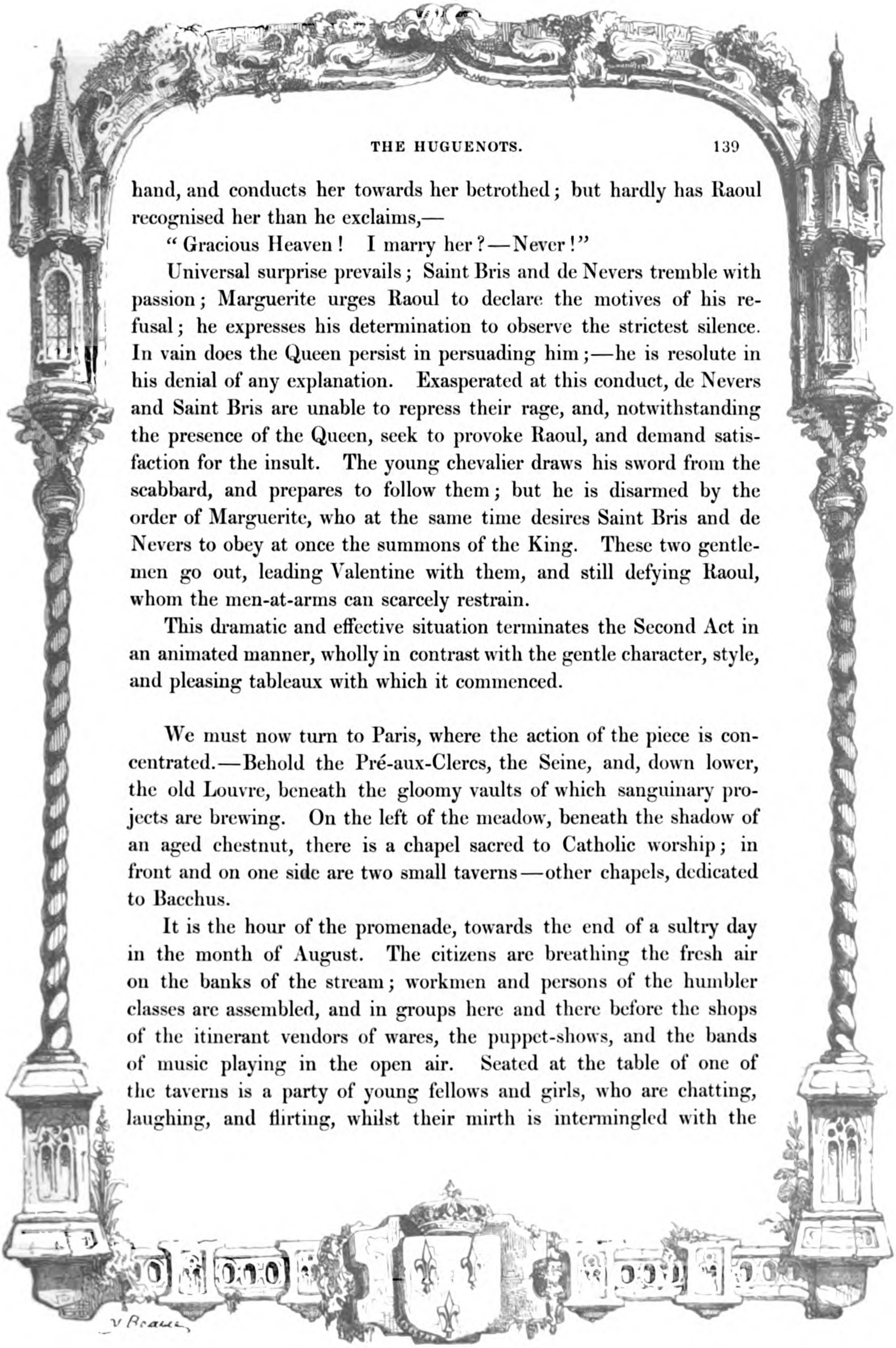
"We will obey the desire of the King," they reply.

"Yes, but first obey mine," responds Marguerite. "Before the celebration of the marriage at which you are to be present be concluded, promise, as Raoul has done, to abjure your mutual hatred."

The three gentlemen solemnly swear eternal friendship, and Marguerite, pointing to Valentine, who comes on covered with a long veil, says to Raoul,—

"Behold your bride!"

Then the Comte de Saint Bris takes his daughter by the



hand, and conducts her towards her betrothed; but hardly has Raoul recognised her than he exclaims,—

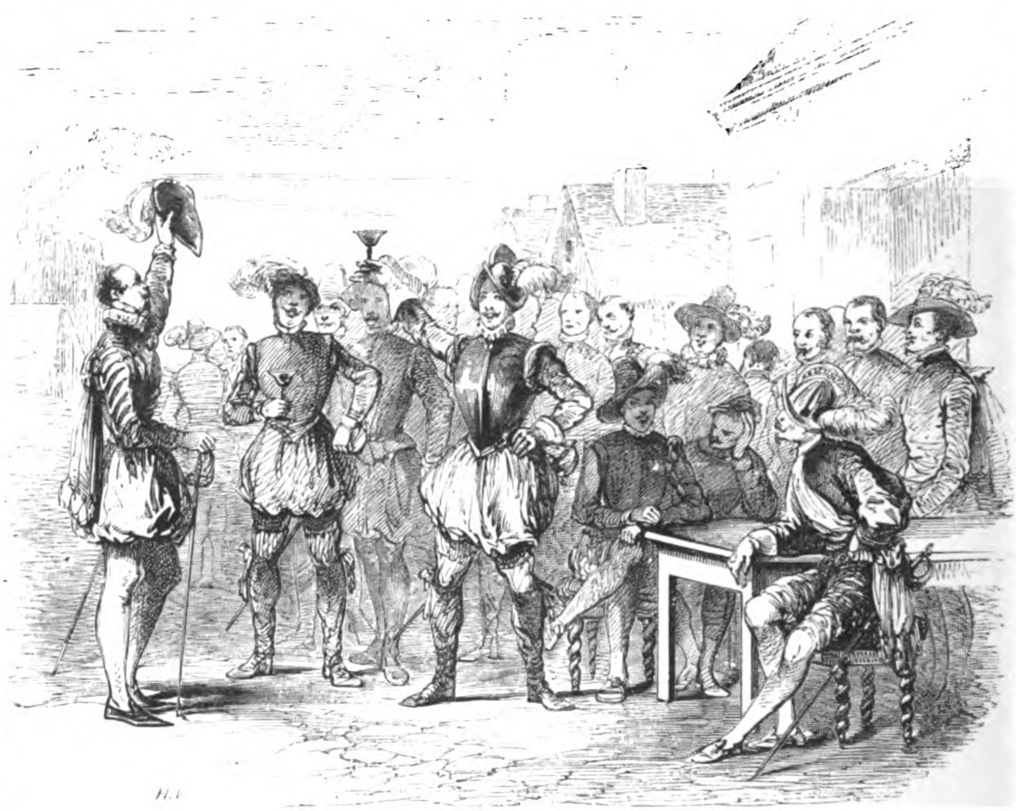
"Gracious Heaven! I marry her?—Never!"

Universal surprise prevails; Saint Bris and de Nevers tremble with passion; Marguerite urges Raoul to declare the motives of his refusal; he expresses his determination to observe the strictest silence. In vain does the Queen persist in persuading him;—he is resolute in his denial of any explanation. Exasperated at this conduct, de Nevers and Saint Bris are unable to repress their rage, and, notwithstanding the presence of the Queen, seek to provoke Raoul, and demand satisfaction for the insult. The young chevalier draws his sword from the scabbard, and prepares to follow them; but he is disarmed by the order of Marguerite, who at the same time desires Saint Bris and de Nevers to obey at once the summons of the King. These two gentlemen go out, leading Valentine with them, and still defying Raoul, whom the men-at-arms can scarcely restrain.

This dramatic and effective situation terminates the Second Act in an animated manner, wholly in contrast with the gentle character, style, and pleasing tableaux with which it commenced.

We must now turn to Paris, where the action of the piece is concentrated.—Behold the Pré-aux-Clercs, the Seine, and, down lower, the old Louvre, beneath the gloomy vaults of which sanguinary projects are brewing. On the left of the meadow, beneath the shadow of an aged chestnut, there is a chapel sacred to Catholic worship; in front and on one side are two small taverns—other chapels, dedicated to Bacchus.

It is the hour of the promenade, towards the end of a sultry day in the month of August. The citizens are breathing the fresh air on the banks of the stream; workmen and persons of the humbler classes are assembled, and in groups here and there before the shops of the itinerant vendors of wares, the puppet-shows, and the bands of music playing in the open air. Seated at the table of one of the taverns is a party of young fellows and girls, who are chatting, laughing, and flirting, whilst their mirth is intermingled with the harsh tones of some Huguenot soldiers, who are drinking and singing at a table on the opposite side of the stage:—



"March! soldier of old Calvin's breed;
To you the Papist maid 's decreed,
Yours the bright gold and silver fine,
And good wine!"

But room there—make way! There is a marriage procession advancing towards the chapel. In the midst of a brilliant assemblage of court lords and ladies a young bride approaches. Heavens! it is Valentine! de Nevers is at her side! The Comte de Saint Bris has given her to him to avenge himself for Raoul's disdain, for whom, he adds, he has yet in store a chastisement still more terrible. The *cortège* enter the chapel, whilst the female spectators go on their knees and pray. This pious demonstration irritates the Calvinist soldiery, and they resume their chorus, which arouses the young men and work-people, and they retort in threatening words and gestures. A struggle is evidently at hand, when the arrival of a troop of gipsies fortunately attracts the attention of all in another direction. These *gitanos* restore the gaiety of the populace; they tell the young girls' fortunes, and then dance a merry round to a joyous air. The *divertissement* ended, Saint Bris and de Nevers come out from the chapel, where they have left Valentine, who wishes to remain there, engaged in prayer, until the evening. After the curfew, the relatives and husband of the young bride are to return to conduct her in state to the Hôtel de Nevers. All the wedding attendants depart: the Comte de Saint Bris remains, with only one gentleman, a brother Catholic, named Maurevert. Marcel, the formal servant of Raoul, soon presents himself before them, and hands to the Comte a note from his master, who has that very day reached Paris in the suite of Marguerite de Valois. Saint Bris opens the letter, which contains a challenge.

"As I expected," he says: and then, turning to Marcel, "This evening I shall expect Sir Raoul de Nangis on this spot."

"A duel with him?" inquires Maurevert, in a low voice; "you must not incur that risk;—

"'Another course there lies
To strike an impious wretch, which Heaven sanctifies.'"

"What mean you?"

"Come with me, and in the presence of the Almighty I will unfold to you the projects which are meditated."

They then both retire into the chapel.

Night draws on, and the sound of the curfew-bell is heard, and the serjeants of the watch come in and disperse the tardy walkers in the Pré-aux-Clercs. The students and Huguenot soldiers, whose day has not yet concluded, merely leave the outside for the inside of the taverns, that they may continue their libations and play privately. When the meadow is entirely deserted, Maurevert and Saint Bris are seen on the threshold of the chapel, and, after exchanging some words in a low tone, separate with an air of mystery. Thoughtless men!—they have forgotten Valentine!

Valentine, who, hidden behind a pillar, has, without designing it, overheard their horrid intentions, and who, for the sake of her father's reputation, desires to prevent their accomplishment. Marcel appears punctually, impelled thither by his fearful forebodings. The faithful fellow determines to be present at the duel, and, if needs be, he will die with his master. Valentine recognises him.

"Hear me," she exclaims. "Is not Raoul to be here immediately?"

"He is."

"And to fight?"

"True."

"Let him come well attended."

"Gracious God! does danger menace him?"

"I dare not tell thee."

"Who, then, are you?"

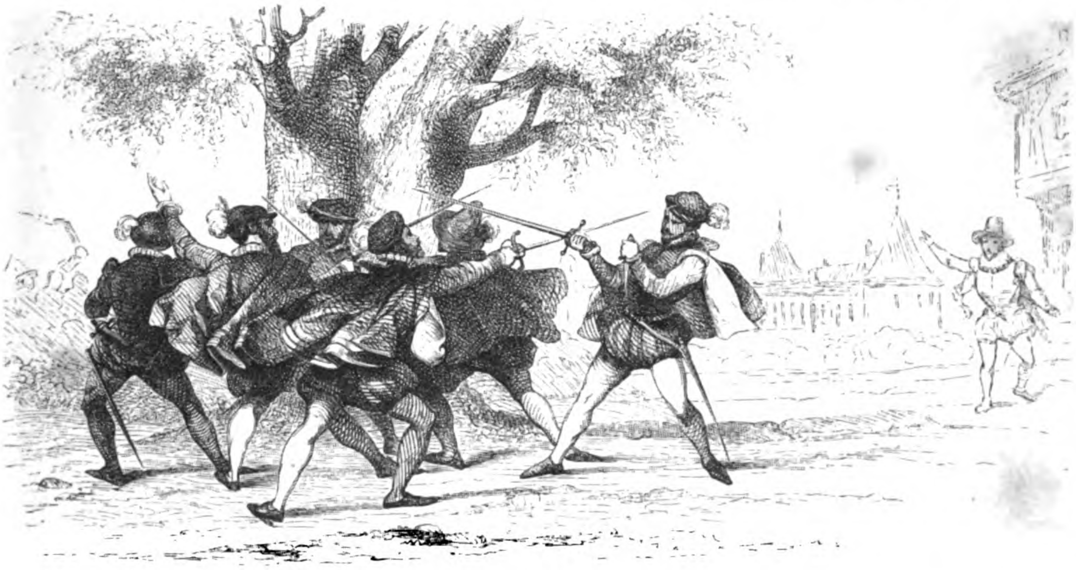
"I? I am—the woman he loves,—who seek to save him even by an act of treachery,—and whom he must forget for ever!"

Marcel seeks to know more, but she leaves him with a rapid step, and betakes herself to the chapel.

There is no time to warn Raoul, for he arrives at that instant with his seconds, and Saint Bris with his two "friends." Marcel tries, however, by some words uttered hastily and in a low tone, to make his master comprehend that he has fallen into a snare; but Raoul treats him as a madman, and hurls at his antagonist his defiance in words so energetic, and always so loudly applauded:—

"In my own good right is my trust," &c. &c.

They then decide on the conditions of the combat, measure the distance and the weapons, and the two adversaries and the four seconds betake themselves to their swords. At the moment when they begin to exchange thrusts, Marcel, who is on the watch, exclaims aloud that he hears footsteps, and sees the shadows of a band of men approaching. He has scarcely said so, when Maurevert, followed by two Acolytes, rushes on the stage, calling for aid against the Huguenots, who, he says, are making a cowardly attack on a Catholic. At his shouts a dozen or more suspicious-looking persons come from an obscure corner, where they were in ambush, and attack Raoul and his companions, whom they surround. The brave Calvinists, turning back to back, shew a valiant front to the enemy, who assail them on all sides; but in this unfair strife their small and condensed battalion is each moment more closely pressed, and they are nearly defeated by such vast odds, when suddenly they hear in one of the taverns this Huguenot chorus:—



"Plan, rataplan, war we'll have!
Drink, drink we,
To the good and brave,
To Coligny!"

"Defenders of the faith! to the rescue!" cries Marcel.

The doors of the tavern open, and the appearance of the Protestant soldiers makes Maurevert and his band retreat; but at this moment the young students arrive, attracted by the noise, and range themselves on the side of the Catholics.

"To the stake with the Pagans!" "To the devil with the bigots!" are shouted on either side, and a struggle ensues. The two rival forces rush with fury against each other; Saint Bris and Raoul cross weapons,—another instant, and blood must flow.

"Rash men, desist!" cries a well-known voice, and every sword is returned to its scabbard. "Dare you, in Paris, and in the front of the Louvre itself, to engage in such hostilities?"

It is Marguerite de Valois, who returns on horseback to her palace, followed by her guards and pages bearing flambeaux. Saint Bris and his party declare that they have been treacherously attacked.

"It is they," says Marcel, "who have basely attempted to assassinate my master."

"How know'st thou that? Who has informed thee?"

"An unknown female, whom I saw here but now."

"Thou liest!" exclaims Saint Bris. "Where is this woman?"

"Behold her!" replies the stout sectarian, pointing to Valentine, who at this instant appears at the entrance of the chapel. At the sight of his daughter the Count is thunderstruck.

"What!" cries Raoul, "to save me she has not hesitated to betray her sire—and yet she loves me not!"

"She loved none but you," replies Marguerite, in spite of the entreaties of Valentine to be silent.

"But that mysterious visit to de Nevers?"

"She went to urge him to renounce all claims to her hand."

"Oh! Heaven, is it possible?—and I could believe that—— Pardon! pardon! give her to me—to me who adore her!"

"You do love her!" exclaims Saint Bris, with savage joy; "then I am avenged; for this very day she espoused another!"

How can we depict the despair of Raoul, who bursts into an agony of tears! Whilst the Queen endeavours to calm his mind, a bark, splendidly ornamented, with silken sails and gilded sides, sparkling with lights, and enlivened by delicious music, descends the river, and anchors beside the meadow. De Nevers, attended by his bridesmen and all the guests of his wedding ceremony, arrives to seek Valentine, and escort her to the château of *her husband*. It is hardly possible to describe the varied feelings of the parties, whose feelings of love, revenge, pity, sorrow, exultation, and despair, are given in most complicated yet expressive harmony. Wretched Raoul! he is compelled to witness the triumph of his rival, to see him depart, with an air of pride and joy, and take with him all his hope, happiness, nay, life itself! Marguerite conducts the unhappy lover from the Pré-aux-Clercs, while the Huguenots and Catholics are still assailing each other in terms of foul reproach; and thus terminates the Third Act.

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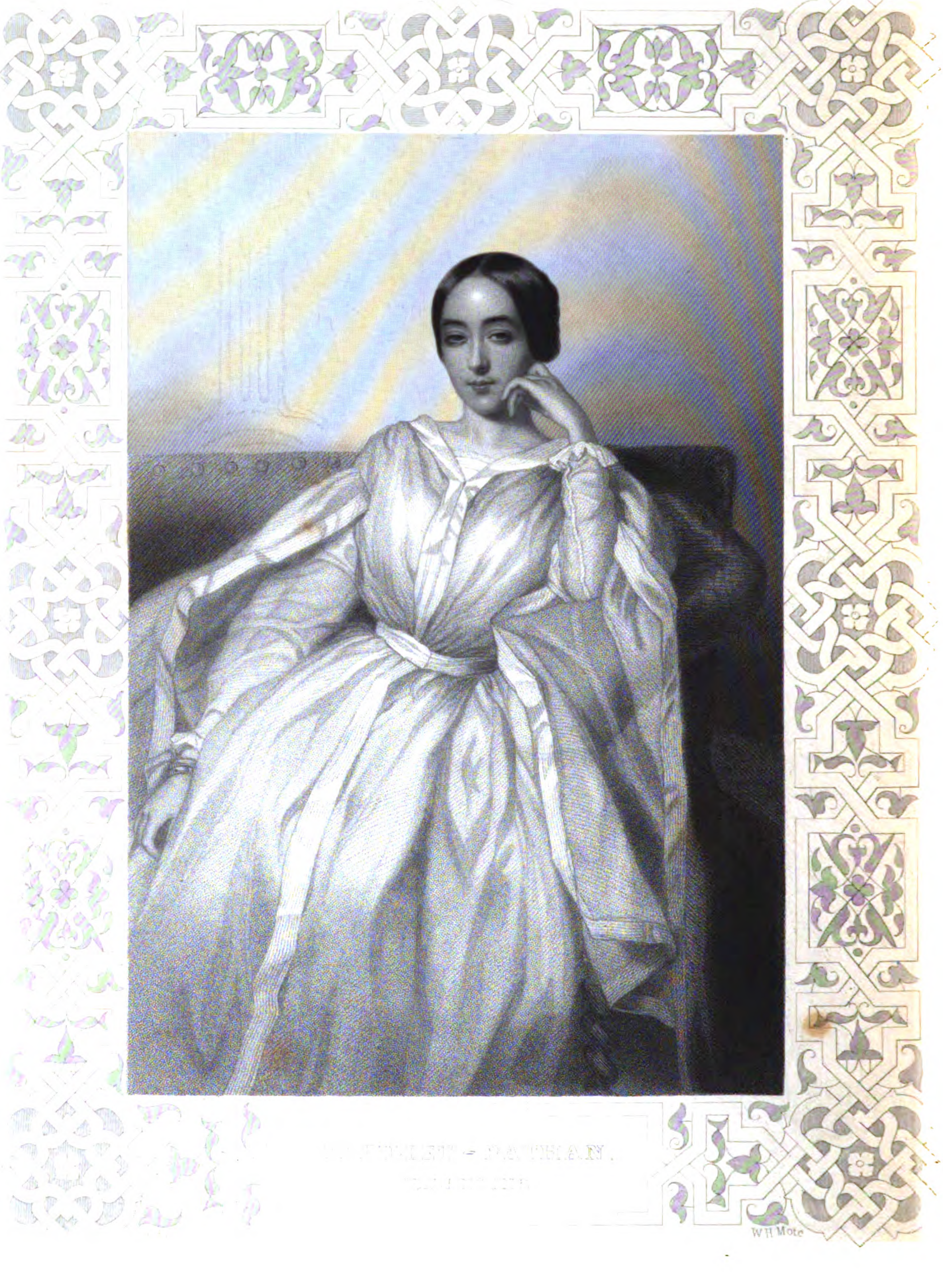

VIOLET – FATHAN.

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W H Mote

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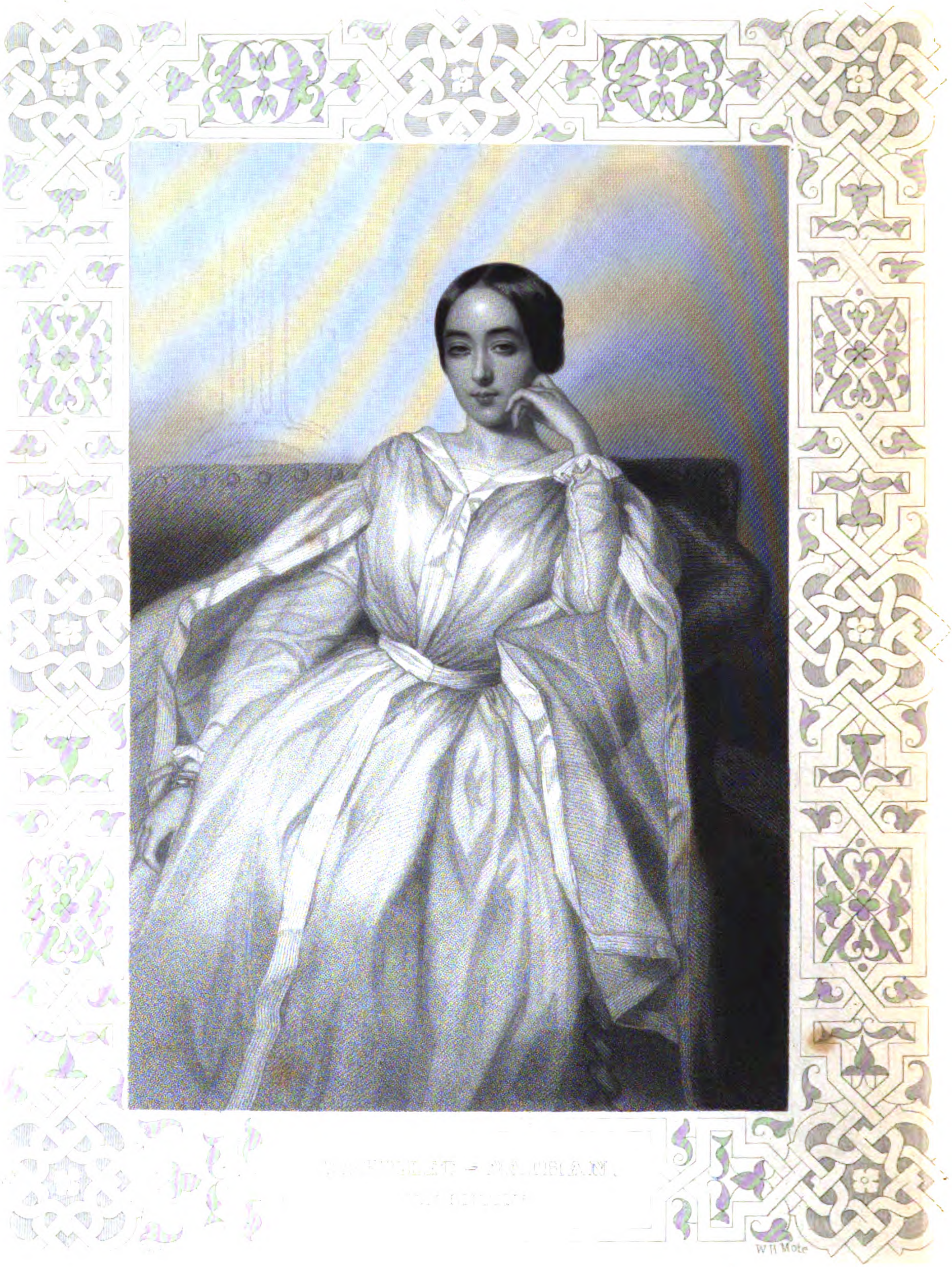

[illegible] — MALIBRAN.

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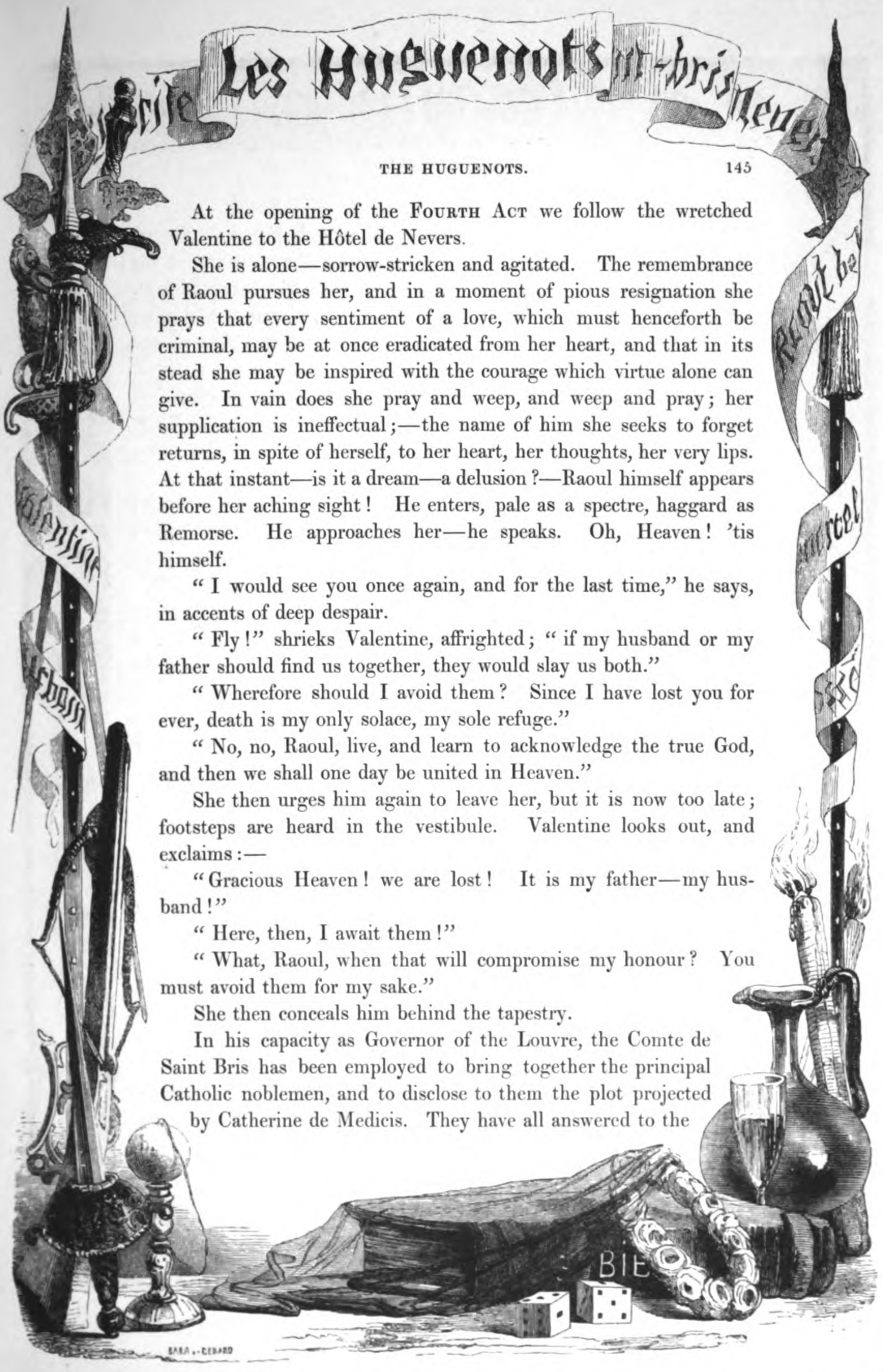


At the opening of the **Fourth Act** we follow the wretched Valentine to the Hôtel de Nevers.

She is alone—sorrow-stricken and agitated. The remembrance of Raoul pursues her, and in a moment of pious resignation she prays that every sentiment of a love, which must henceforth be criminal, may be at once eradicated from her heart, and that in its stead she may be inspired with the courage which virtue alone can give. In vain does she pray and weep, and weep and pray; her supplication is ineffectual;—the name of him she seeks to forget returns, in spite of herself, to her heart, her thoughts, her very lips. At that instant—is it a dream—a delusion?—Raoul himself appears before her aching sight! He enters, pale as a spectre, haggard as Remorse. He approaches her—he speaks. Oh, Heaven! 'tis himself.

"I would see you once again, and for the last time," he says, in accents of deep despair.

"Fly!" shrieks Valentine, affrighted; "if my husband or my father should find us together, they would slay us both."

"Wherefore should I avoid them? Since I have lost you for ever, death is my only solace, my sole refuge."

"No, no, Raoul, live, and learn to acknowledge the true God, and then we shall one day be united in Heaven."

She then urges him again to leave her, but it is now too late; footsteps are heard in the vestibule. Valentine looks out, and exclaims:—

"Gracious Heaven! we are lost! It is my father—my husband!"

"Here, then, I await them!"

"What, Raoul, when that will compromise my honour? You must avoid them for my sake."

She then conceals him behind the tapestry.

In his capacity as Governor of the Louvre, the Comte de Saint Bris has been employed to bring together the principal Catholic noblemen, and to disclose to them the plot projected by Catherine de Medicis. They have all answered to the summons: de Nevers, Tavannes, Méru, de Retz, de Cossé, de Besme, &c. &c. Without being at all disturbed at the presence of his daughter, Saint Bris announces to the gentlemen who surround him, that, to put a stop at once to religious discords, to end at a blow an impious contest, Heaven wills, and Charles IX. ordains, that all the Protestants be massacred that very night!

"Who will strike them?" demands the husband of Valentine.

"We will!" exclaims Saint Bris. "Such is the order of the King. Will you swear to obey it?"

"We swear!"

Only one of the band has kept silence, and that is de Nevers. The others demand an explanation of his silence, and he boldly says that his honour will not allow him to immolate defenceless foes.

"When the King commands?"

"He commands me in vain when he bids me stain the pure name of my ancestors!" and pointing to their portraits hanging from the wall, he adds, "They are all soldiers—there is not one assassin amongst them!"

"Traitor! would you betray us?"

"No! but, sooner than thus sully the brightness of my sword, I would break it! God be the judge between us!"

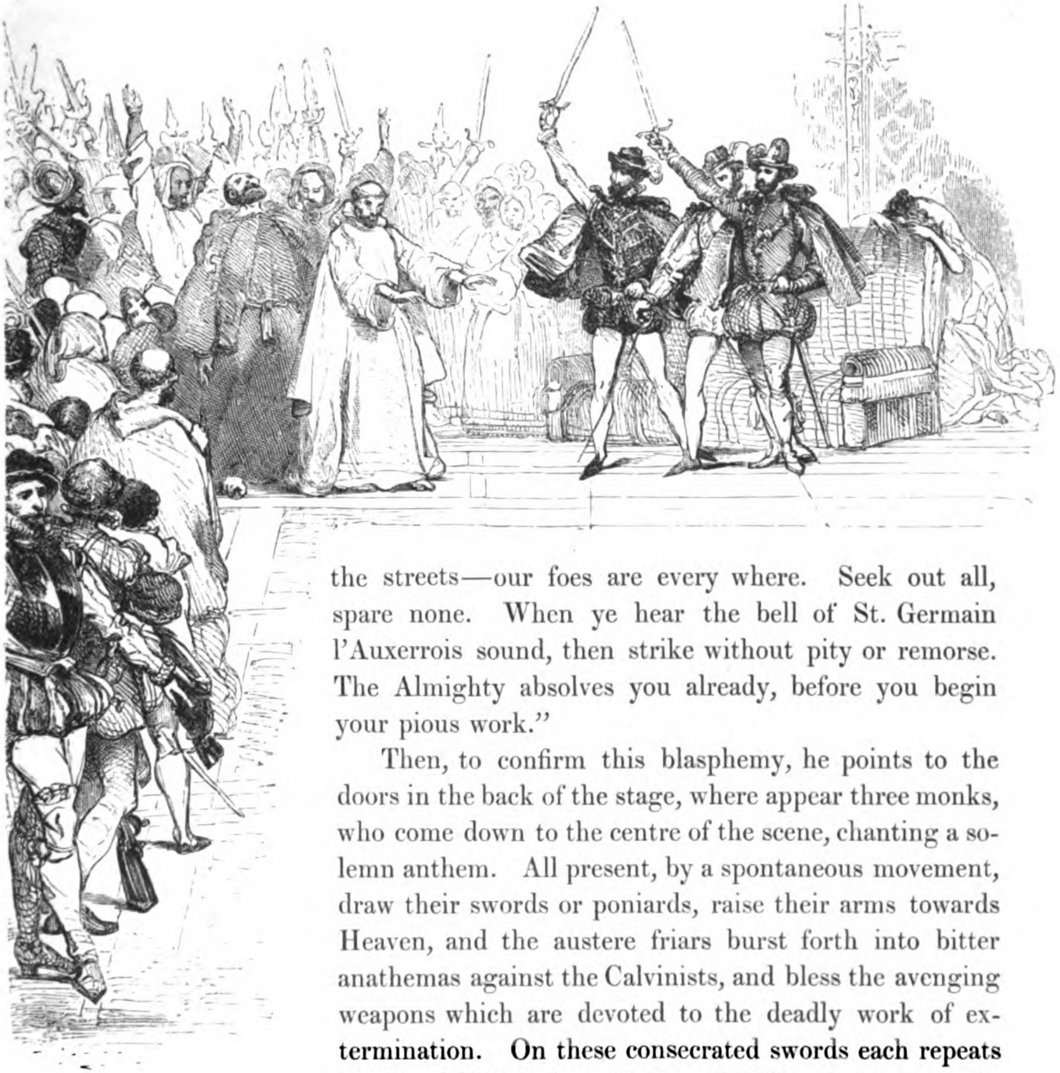
On hearing such noble language, Valentine throws herself into her husband's arms.

"Oh, now I am yours for ever!" she exclaims.

But Saint Bris, pointing out de Nevers to the leaders of the citizens and the people, who appear at this moment, bids them not to lose sight of him until morning. They take him off a prisoner, and at a signal from her father Valentine retires.

There now remain about the Comte none but the gloomy fanatics sworn to the horrible assassination. The fierce interpreter of the behests of the Medicis gives them their final instructions, and to each and all he assigns their post and their victims.

"Go thou, de Besme, to Coligny, and let him be the first sacrifice; you, Tavannes, Cossé, Méru, to the Hôtel de Sens, where the heretics are feasting with the King of Navarre; you to the houses and



the streets—our foes are every where. Seek out all, spare none. When ye hear the bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois sound, then strike without pity or remorse. The Almighty absolves you already, before you begin your pious work."

Then, to confirm this blasphemy, he points to the doors in the back of the stage, where appear three monks, who come down to the centre of the scene, chanting a solemn anthem. All present, by a spontaneous movement, draw their swords or poniards, raise their arms towards Heaven, and the austere friars burst forth into bitter anathemas against the Calvinists, and bless the avenging weapons which are devoted to the deadly work of extermination. On these consecrated swords each repeats his homicidal oath, and then, led by their respective chiefs, the throngs of conspirators disperse quickly and in silence.

When they have all departed, Raoul, pale and alarmed, comes forth from beneath the curtain which has concealed him, and rushes towards the door, which he finds closed from without.

"Whither go you?" says Valentine, who appears from her apartment.

"To warn my friends and comrades to arm themselves against assassins!"

"Against my father? Oh! pray refrain—consider!"

"To hesitate were to forfeit my honour, my friendship. Let me go without delay."

"You shall not go, unless you would pass over my body!"

Then follows a fearful struggle between the poor girl and her lover. She clings to him, clasps his knees, and entreats him, with tears streaming from her eyes, to remain with her until the dawn of day; but seeing him unmoved by her tears and agony, she cries,—

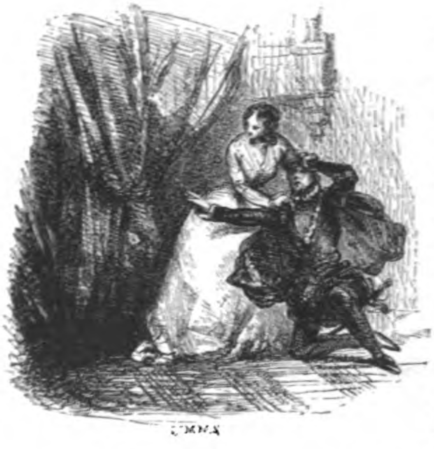
"Oh! I would not have thee die, Raoul!—Raoul, I love thee!"

This utterance from the heart—this impassioned avowal, makes the young cavalier hesitate. He forgets all his religion, his duty, his menaced comrades, and he falls at the feet of Valentine overwhelmed with love and joy. The toll of a distant bell recalls him to his senses.

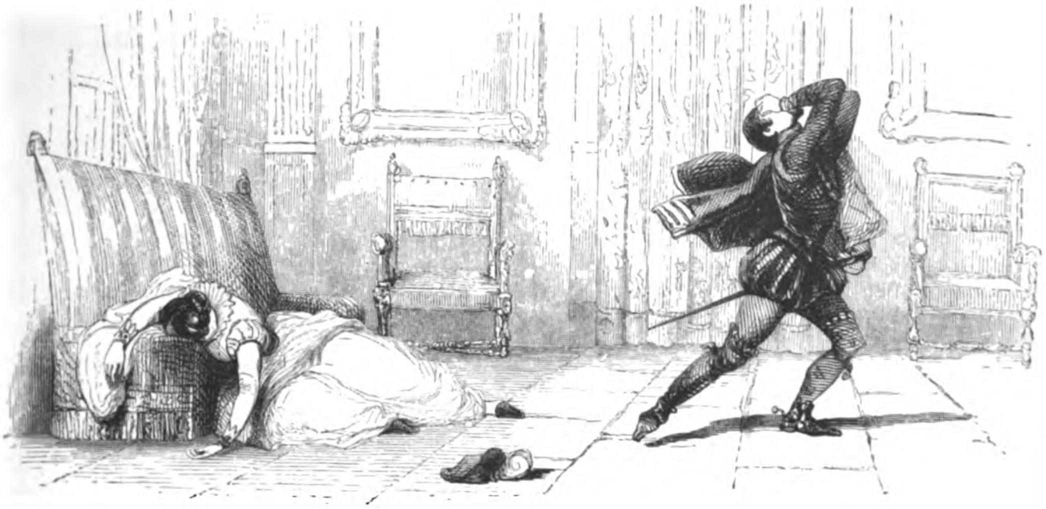
"Ah, that is the signal for the massacre!" he exclaims, "and my friends are already sacrificed. Farewell!

"'I hasten to defend them,
Or share their threatened fate!'"

Their struggle, which had been momentarily interrupted, is renewed. Valentine encircles him in her arms again, clinging to him with all the strength and energy of despair, seeking to retain him by all the reiterated protestations of the most passionate love;—but it is too late. There is no longer an echo in the breast of Raoul, to whose heart every note of the tocsin sounds a knell. Again the sound of the bell is heard, and the noise of arms, and the shout of combatants.



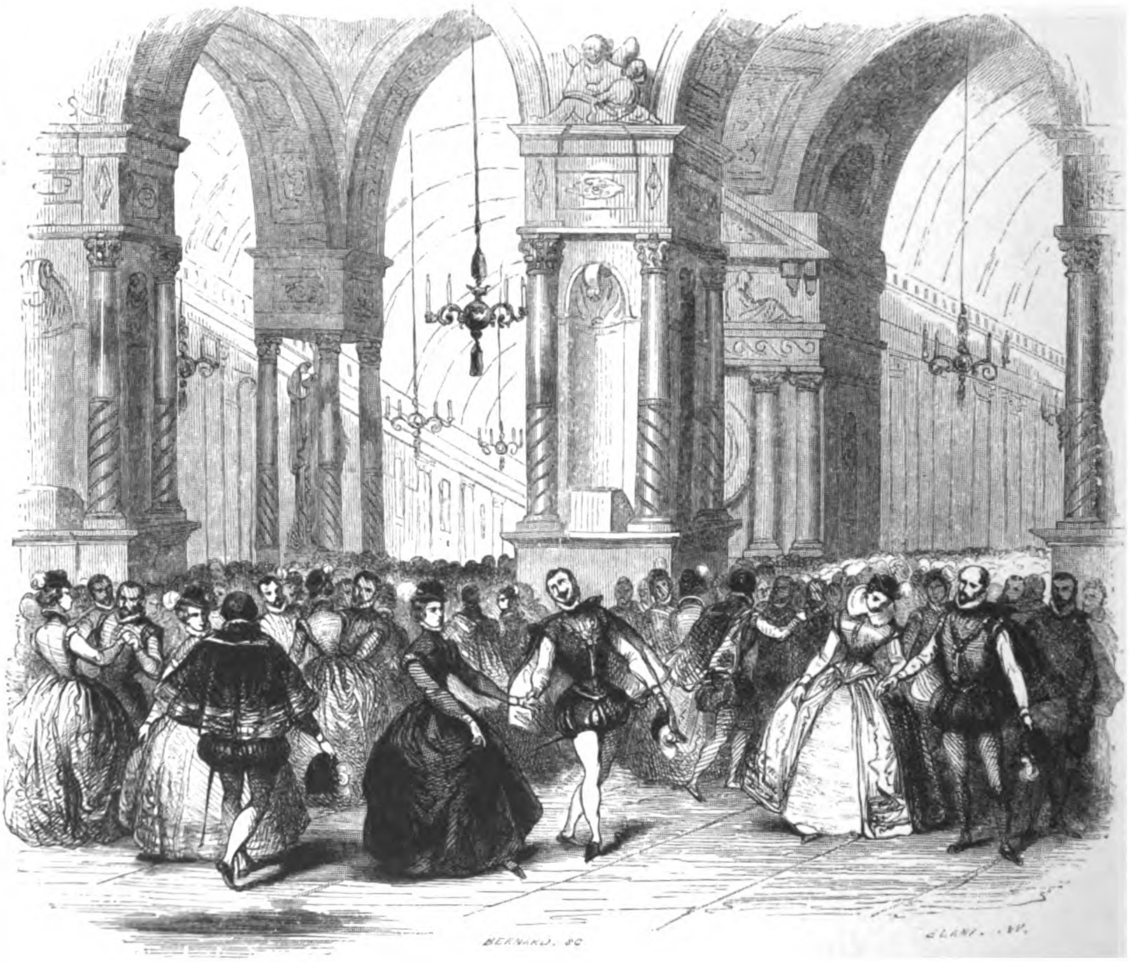
"Dost thou hear?" says the distracted Raoul, "my friends' fate—they cry for me! Heaven watch over thee, my beloved one—I must avenge them, or die!" And, disengaging himself violently from the clasp of his adored, he leaps into the street by the window. Valentine shrieks violently, and falls fainting on the ground.



As a theatrical situation this scene, with only two actors, is indubitably the finest in the whole opera. It produced on the first representation the most remarkable effect, and was followed throughout by the utmost anxiety, fear, and anguish, excited by the perpetual change of interest which the progress of the act exhibited. As a man who is thoroughly versed in his business, M. Scribe chose it as the termination of his Fourth Act, well knowing that in all plays, lyric or otherwise, success depends in a great measure on the force, progress, and *working out* of this act. From that moment the result of the *poem* was decided. We must add, too, that the struggle of the two lovers was most powerfully depicted by Nourrit and Mademoiselle Falcon, and also by their successors, Madame Stoltz and Duprez.

The FIFTH ACT consists of a series of tableaux, which should be seen, as it is difficult to describe them. During its progress, the action of the drama is marked by scenic effects. Fortunately we have at hand the aid of the pencil as well as the pen.

The curtain at its rising discloses the interior of the Hôtel de Sens, all the apartments of which are illuminated as if for a ball, and filled by a numerous assembly. All the Protestant chiefs are there. Ladies of the court, in their gala dresses, laugh, and talk, and dance with the young nobles. A variety of dances and amusements succeed rapidly, and all appear light of step and joyous of heart, when Marguerite de Valois and Henri de Navarre appear in the midst of the ball. Groups of ladies and cavaliers precede the royal pair, and pay their respects and the honours of a fête given expressly on occasion of the marriage. The King and Princess cross the saloon, then disappear, and the dances recommence. At a moment, far above the crash of the orchestra, is heard the tolling of a distant bell. The dancers pause and listen, but this sound does not instil any ideas of terror or dismay, and the ball is resumed with increased gaiety and animation. All at once another noise is heard, which begins at a distance, comes nearer, and then all eyes are turned with



anxiety towards the bottom of the stage, and Raoul is seen entering with a hurried step, pale, with his hair dishevelled, and his garments stained with blood.

"To arms! to arms!" he cries, in a voice of thunder. "Our friends are murdered—the assassins draw nigh, with hasty and deadly steps!"

They cannot believe him; and he then relates the fearful scenes he has witnessed:—

> "By the glare of their torches' funereal light,
> I saw the blood-stained soldiers as they strode;
> Their voices yelling in the fearful night—
> 'Strike, strike the wretches who're condemned by God!'"

He has seen Coligny fall beneath the steel of the murderers, who spare neither the old, women, or children. As he was hastening to the Louvre, to entreat justice of the King, he had seen Charles IX. from the balcony of the palace setting the example and exciting the carnage. At this declaration all present utter a cry of horror and of vengeance. The women, palsied with fear, rush out hastily, followed by their pages and attendants, by all the doors of the apartments, and the men, drawing their swords, hasten after Raoul, with whom they repeat,—

> "Sword to sword let's now oppose,
> Avenge our brethren on our foes!
> Down with the vile assassins—down!"

The scene changes to a cloister, at the back of which is a Protestant church, of which the windows appear lighted up. The Calvinist women, carrying their children in their arms, enter in haste and terror by a side door, seeking a refuge from the sanguinary persecutors. Marcel, who arrives at the same time, wounded and faint, shews them a small wicket-gate, which leads to the interior of the church, and then he goes on his knees and prays in silence. Raoul enters.

"Is it thou, Marcel?" he inquires.

"Yes; I was praying for you, and I bless Heaven that I see you once more!"

"Thou art wounded!" exclaims his master, on looking earnestly at him; "but I will revenge thee!"

"Alas! it is impossible; we are surrounded, hemmed in on all sides. This temple is our last refuge; enter there—there, at least, we shall die on holy ground!"

"Whither do ye hasten?" asks a voice eagerly. It is the voice of Valentine.

"To glory!" replies Raoul.

"To martyrdom!" exultingly cries Marcel.

"No, you shall live—for I come to save you," says the young maiden to her lover; and she gives him a white scarf, by the protection of which he can reach the Louvre in safety, and, when there, Marguerite de Valois will obtain for him his life, if he will promise to embrace the Catholic faith.

Raoul rejects the proposal with scorn;—he will die, as he has lived, in the faith of his forefathers.

"Even did I become an apostate," he says, passionately, to Valentine, "you would not be mine? All conspires to keep us separate!"

"Oh, no! I may love you now without a crime."

"Yes," says Marcel, "de Nevers died the victim of his generosity, whilst attempting to rescue me from the hands of the assassins."

"What! is he dead?" cries Raoul: "is he dead?" And a violent struggle between love and duty arises in his mind.

"Marcel," he exclaims,

> "'Dost thou not see the bliss that is before me?'"

> "'And see'st not thou God's threatening finger o'er thee?'"

replies the old Puritan, in a tone of severe reproach.

Raoul hesitates but one instant longer; then, seizing the hand of his faithful adherent, he says,—

"Adieu, Valentine! I await my death near thee."

"Then you refuse the certainty of life and safety which I bring thee? When I would live for thee alone, ungrateful man! thou wouldst die without me! But learn the depth—the sincerity—of a woman's love: that I may not leave thee, but cling to thee in life and death, I here abjure the Catholic faith. I am now and henceforth a Protestant. In hell or heaven, wheresoever be thy lot, there shall be mine also!

"'None but God's will be done,
Whate'er he may decree;
So we on earth be one,
And in eternity!'"

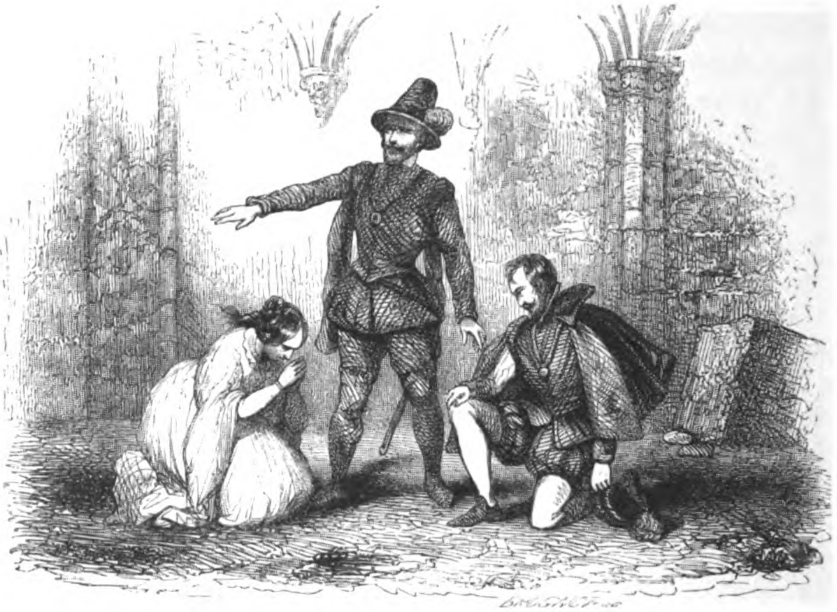
At these words, spoken with enthusiasm, Raoul throws himself into the arms of Valentine, whose countenance is radiant with resolution and beauty, and turning towards Marcel (who is deeply moved at this scene) he says,—

"No minister of Heaven is at hand to sanctify this union; but do thou, old and faithful friend, by the rights of virtue and age, consecrate our marriage in the presence of the Almighty God."

Marcel is wondrously affected, and a mental struggle appears for an instant—it is but for an instant—to agitate the war-bronzed features of the soldier, to shake his stalwart frame. It passes—(we should mention, in justice to the superb artist whom we have previously named, that this moment of agony is most exquisitely given by Staudigl)—and he is humiliated that his love for one, his admiration of the other, of the beings before him, had even suggested a thought that they might be saved from martyrdom by a few false words.

It is over, the fire of enthusiasm rekindles the veteran's eye, and its glow rushes to his darkened cheek. The gentlest, the loveliest of Christian rites, shall be celebrated even at that moment of fatal presentiment, of pending destruction.

The lovers kneel, and Marcel, with outstretched hands, and tones of the deepest pathos, bids them swear eternal love and union even in death. They vow, and he confirms the oath, in a noble trio, during which is heard, at intervals, a chorus from the church where Luther's Hymn is sung by the female and youthful voices. Raoul and Valentine are wedded—what more has Marcel to do on earth?



> "For his creed, for his Master, his race he has run,
> And he welcomes the death—for his mission is done."

Suddenly the pious strain is interrupted by a vast noise of arms clashing and loud shoutings. At the back of the scene, through the gratings, are seen the flames of torches and the glitter of halberds;—the murderers have assailed the last asylum of the Calvinists! The

Protestants, far from shewing dismay, sing their holy canticle with redoubled fervour, and for an instant a great tumult and discord reign; then all is suddenly hushed—the lights are extinguished, and all become silence and darkness.

"They sing no longer!" exclaim Valentine and Raoul at the same time.

"They are with their God!" adds Marcel, solemnly.

Again the three, full of religious fervour, and animated by pious inspirations, encourage each other to await with resignation the death which so speedily awaits them.

At that moment armed men appear, and having broken the door of the cloister rush on to the stage. Raoul, Marcel, and Valentine, hand in hand, advance, and present their bosoms to the deadly weapons of the assassins.

They retreat, as if astonished; then return, surround them, and, pointing to the cross of Lorraine and the white scarf, exclaim,—

"Abjure or die!"

"We will die!" exclaim the three martyrs, with one voice.

Their murderers, exasperated, rush at them, separate them, and take them in different directions; and at the instant they disappear several reports of fire-arms are heard in the street.

The scene then changes for the last time.

The theatre represents the view of a quarter of Paris in the year 1572.

The massacre is here seen in the full display of its horrible extent. Bands of furious soldiery overrun the city, spreading terror and death in all directions. Raoul and Marcel have fallen in the highroad, mortally wounded: Valentine is there, attending and consoling them. A body of musketeers appear on one side of the stage, with Saint Bris at their head.

"Who goes there?" he asks, in hoarse tones.

Raoul attempts to reply; Valentine places her hand over his mouth: but, making a desperate effort, he half raises himself, and cries,—

"A Huguenot!" and then falls lifeless.

"We, too, are Huguenots!" exclaim Valentine and Marcel.

"Fire!" says the Comte to his troop.

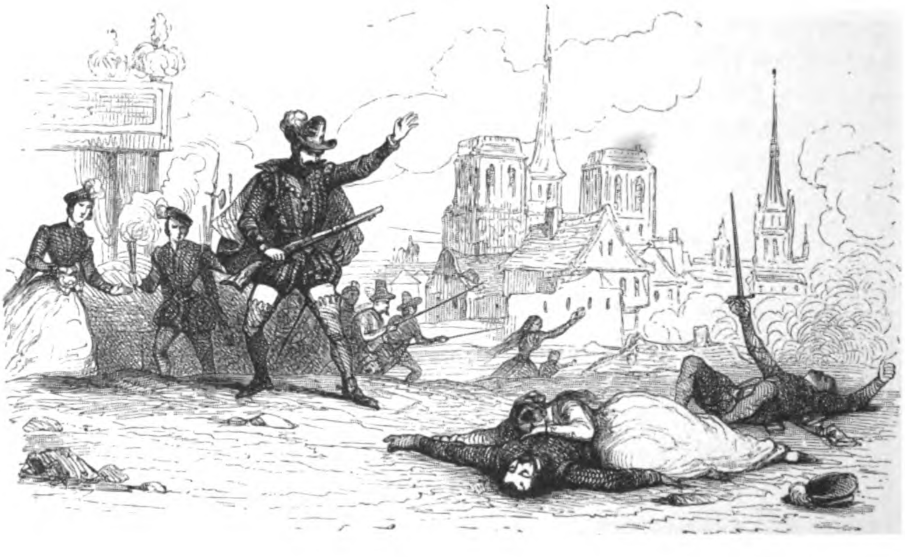
The soldiers obey, and Valentine, pierced to the heart by a bullet, falls, uttering a dreadful shriek.

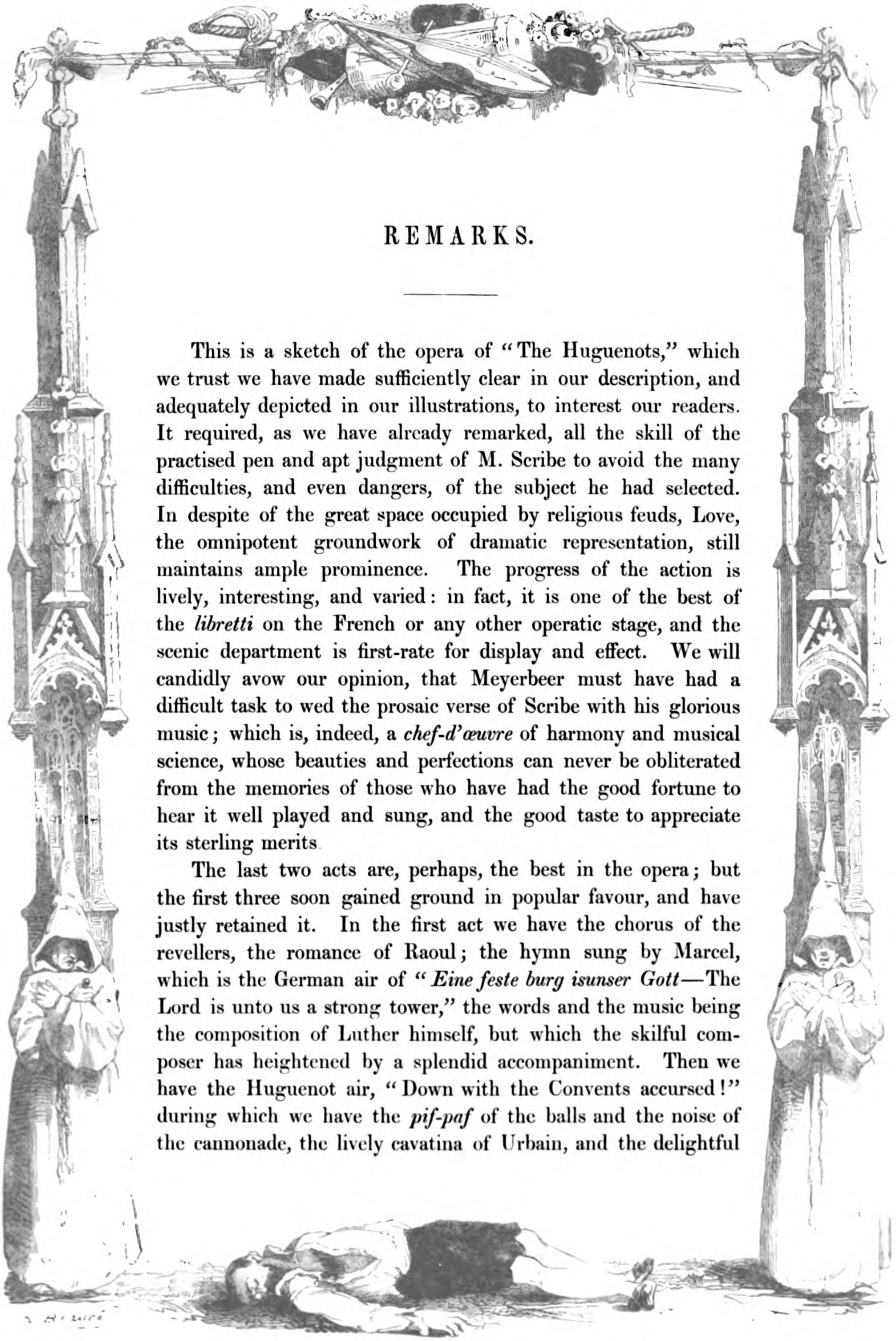
Saint Bris recognises her voice, and shrieks out, "My child!"

"Yes," says Marcel, "God hath already avenged us: a moment, and I go into His presence to accuse you!"

"And I to pray for thee," murmured Valentine, with her dying breath.

During this scene of death and desolation Marguerite de Valois arrives, who, having just quitted the ball, is hastening to the Louvre. At the sight of the two lovers extended lifeless on the earth she utters a cry of intense grief, and with her hand waves to the Catholic soldiery to cease their work of vengeance and bloodshed.





REMARKS.

This is a sketch of the opera of "The Huguenots," which we trust we have made sufficiently clear in our description, and adequately depicted in our illustrations, to interest our readers. It required, as we have already remarked, all the skill of the practised pen and apt judgment of M. Scribe to avoid the many difficulties, and even dangers, of the subject he had selected. In despite of the great space occupied by religious feuds, Love, the omnipotent groundwork of dramatic representation, still maintains ample prominence. The progress of the action is lively, interesting, and varied: in fact, it is one of the best of the *libretti* on the French or any other operatic stage, and the scenic department is first-rate for display and effect. We will candidly avow our opinion, that Meyerbeer must have had a difficult task to wed the prosaic verse of Scribe with his glorious music; which is, indeed, a *chef-d'œuvre* of harmony and musical science, whose beauties and perfections can never be obliterated from the memories of those who have had the good fortune to hear it well played and sung, and the good taste to appreciate its sterling merits.

The last two acts are, perhaps, the best in the opera; but the first three soon gained ground in popular favour, and have justly retained it. In the first act we have the chorus of the revellers, the romance of Raoul; the hymn sung by Marcel, which is the German air of "*Eine feste burg isunser Gott*—The Lord is unto us a strong tower," the words and the music being the composition of Luther himself, but which the skilful composer has heightened by a splendid accompaniment. Then we have the Huguenot air, "Down with the Convents accursed!" during which we have the *pif-paf* of the balls and the noise of the cannonade, the lively cavatina of Urbain, and the delightful *septette* which follows,—all conspiring to make the first act a splendid introduction, glowing with life, spirit, and joyousness.

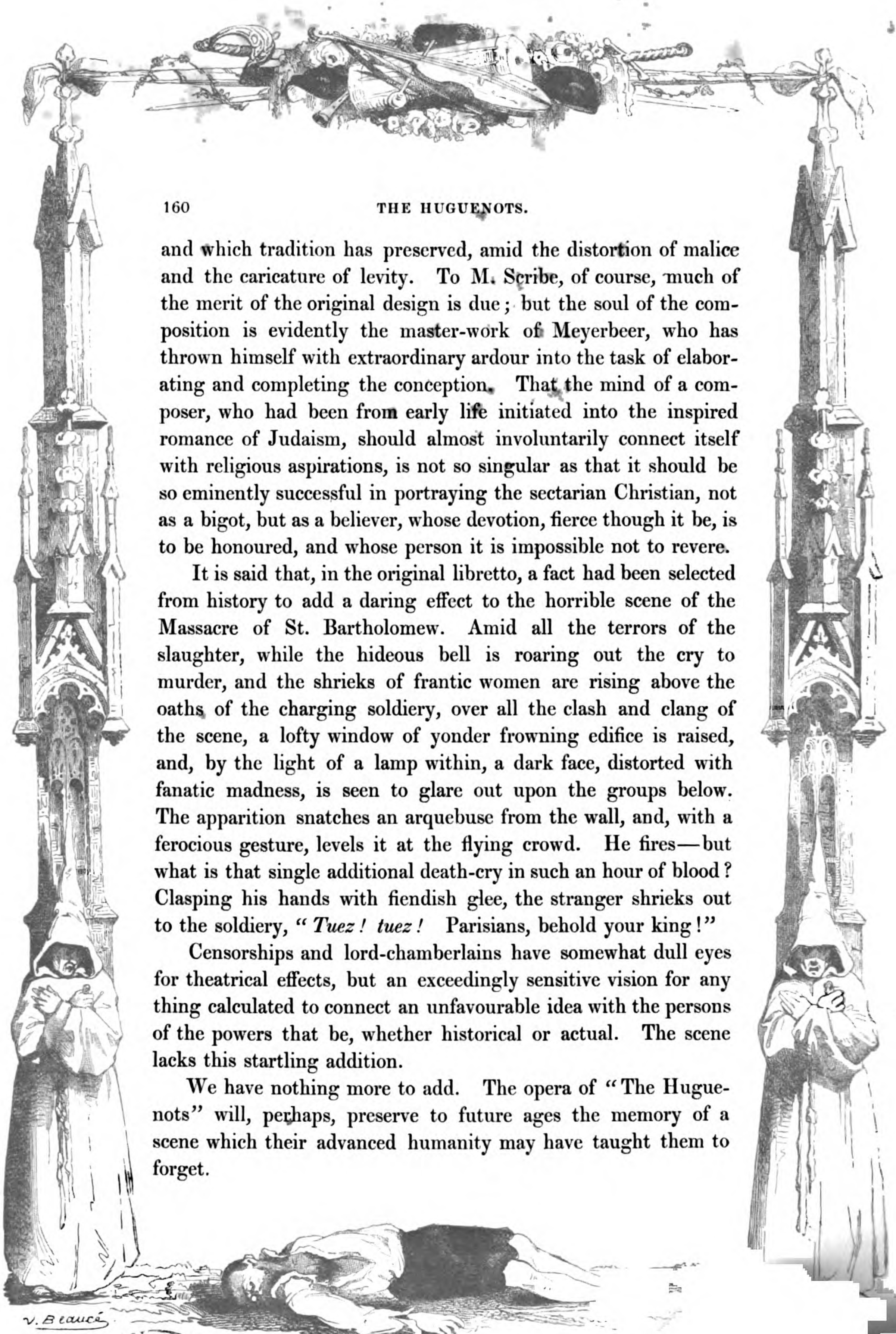
The second act begins with three *morceaux*, which form the principal situations: first, the glorious air which Marguerite de Valois sings—a sparkling and skilful combination of notes, sustained in the *allegro* by a *quintette* of female voices which harmonise in chromatic variations as novel in idea as masterly in effect; then the duet with the Princess and Raoul, a flowing and original melody, full of delightful turns; and then concluding with a chorus so powerful and effective!

At the opening of the third act it would seem as though the musician wished to laugh at difficulties: he has brought together four or five different choruses which cross each other, interfere, mingle, without for one instant injuring the harmony or diminishing the effect. There is the chorus of the Huguenot soldiers, "On, brave lads!" which begins in *four* time, and towards the end, by an unprecedented *tour de force*, glides insensibly into a valse movement. With this chorus, so varied in rhythm and arrangements, we have the round of the gipsies and the monotonous chime of the curfew. Then we have the duo in which Valentine informs Marcel of his master's danger—a splendid "bit;" and the septette of the duet so magnificently led off by Raoul, "In my own right I have full faith,"—a glowing strain, and enough of itself to give celebrity to the act.

We now come to the fourth act, in which terror and passion swell the scene on all sides; and throughout the scene, from the entrance of the monks, the music is characterised by the almost magnificent and sublimity of style. Nothing can exceed the effect produced by the fearful trio, "Glory to God the Avenger," which precedes the benediction of the unsheathed daggers; and so the excitement proceeds, without constraint or any artificial means, by the aid of the more simple of musical resources. The psalmody, which bursts on us at first with the wrath of the tempest, and ends in deep notes like the distant growling of the thunder, is cut from the first by an accompaniment in discord, which descends until the voices again resume the upper part. After the adjuration of the monks we have a full chorus glowing with energy, fierceness, rage, and religious fury, whose general effect, skilfully managed, gives to the savageness of fanaticism a tone which is effective, majestic, solemn. Then the delightful duet in which Valentine and Raoul struggle with each other, in alternations of despair and love, grief and ecstasy! We are led away by the scene, the situation, the music, and the singers; and when the curtain falls we ask, What more can be expected of musical composition and of stage effect?

There is yet another scene, most striking and powerful: it is that in which Raoul and Valentine are united by Marcel when he is dying, and when the three willing martyrs, in a splendid trio, which seems altogether to be strained from terrestrial pollution, offer their lives as a willing sacrifice to the God of Luther.

The genius of Meyerbeer is essentially devotional. His choral effects have almost invariably an elevation which can only be produced by long study of the association of religious ideas. The situations in which he most delights are derived less from incidents of human life and human passion than from the profounder conflicts of supernatural agencies. In the opera we have now analysed, the religious sentiment of the composition approximates more nearly to devotion as understood and recognised in England than was to be expected from a theatrical poet. The character of Marcel, as developed in "The Huguenots," might easily be taken for one of the enthusiastic and high-minded Puritans who fought in the cause of religious liberty, before the "cause" itself had become a mere stepping-stone for advancing the selfish interests of the Parliamentary leaders. The stern devotion displayed by Marcel to his chief was also the eminent characteristic of many of the earnest and zealous men who swelled the ranks of the insurgents of the seventeenth century; and the whole of his language is tinged with the same sombre, yet not uncheering hue, which marked their style,



and which tradition has preserved, amid the distortion of malice and the caricature of levity. To M. Scribe, of course, much of the merit of the original design is due; but the soul of the composition is evidently the master-work of Meyerbeer, who has thrown himself with extraordinary ardour into the task of elaborating and completing the conception. That the mind of a composer, who had been from early life initiated into the inspired romance of Judaism, should almost involuntarily connect itself with religious aspirations, is not so singular as that it should be so eminently successful in portraying the sectarian Christian, not as a bigot, but as a believer, whose devotion, fierce though it be, is to be honoured, and whose person it is impossible not to revere.

It is said that, in the original libretto, a fact had been selected from history to add a daring effect to the horrible scene of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Amid all the terrors of the slaughter, while the hideous bell is roaring out the cry to murder, and the shrieks of frantic women are rising above the oaths of the charging soldiery, over all the clash and clang of the scene, a lofty window of yonder frowning edifice is raised, and, by the light of a lamp within, a dark face, distorted with fanatic madness, is seen to glare out upon the groups below. The apparition snatches an arquebuse from the wall, and, with a ferocious gesture, levels it at the flying crowd. He fires—but what is that single additional death-cry in such an hour of blood? Clasping his hands with fiendish glee, the stranger shrieks out to the soldiery, "*Tuez! tuez!* Parisians, behold your king!"

Censorships and lord-chamberlains have somewhat dull eyes for theatrical effects, but an exceedingly sensitive vision for any thing calculated to connect an unfavourable idea with the persons of the powers that be, whether historical or actual. The scene lacks this startling addition.

We have nothing more to add. The opera of "The Huguenots" will, perhaps, preserve to future ages the memory of a scene which their advanced humanity may have taught them to forget.

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