

PLUTO AND PROSERPINE;

OR, THE

BELLE AND THE POMEGRANATE.

AN ENTIRELY NEW AND ORIGINAL

*Mythological Extravaganza or Sicilian Romance
OF THE 19th CENTURY,*

IN ONE VOLUME.

BY

FRANCIS TALFOURD, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

Abon Hassan, Ganem, Macbeth Travestie, Shylock, Alcestis, The Strong-Minded Woman, Black-eyed Sue, By Special Appointment, March of Intellect, Jones the Avenger, Mammon and Gammon, The Heart-wreck, &c.

PART AUTHOR OF

Sir Rupert the Fearless, La Tarantula, Leo the Terrible, Godiva, Thetis and Peleus, Spirits in Bond, Princesses in the Tower, Willow Pattern Plate, &c., &c., &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

89, STRAND,

(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market),

LONDON.

PLUTO AND PROSERPINE.

*First performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket,
on Easter Monday, April 5, 1858.*

Characters.

PLUTO (<i>King of Hades, the Elysian Fields, and the Low Countries generally—a Monarch whose character is by no means so black as it has been painted, though probably not nearly so good as it will appear, by the representation of</i>)	Mr. COMPTON.
ASCALAPHUS (<i>Lord Chamberlain</i>) ...	Mr. CLARK.
MINOS (<i>Lord Chancellor</i>)	Mr. COURTYE.
RHADAMANTHUS	<i>Judges of the Inferior Courts,</i>
ÆACUS	<i>wherein their Sessions were regularly held,</i>
CHARON (<i>the Ferryman of the Styx</i>) ...	Mr. BRAID.
CERBERUS (<i>the Watch-Dog</i>)	Master CARROLL.
EXANGELOS (<i>a Herald</i>).....	Mr. WEATHERSBY.
MERCURY	MISS FITZINMAN.
CERES (<i>Queen of the Harvest, and Commander-in-sheaf of the Land Forces generally</i>)	Mrs. BUCKINGHAM WHITE.
PROSERPINE (<i>her "one fair Daughter" born to her by Jupiter, and subsequently borne from her by Pluto</i>)	Miss LOUISE LECLERCQ.
MINERVA (<i>Goddess of Wisdom, and Proprietress of Pallas Court Seminary for Young Goddesses</i>)	Mrs. POYNTER.
DIANA	Miss FANNY WRIGHT.
FLORA	Miss MEDEX.
HEBE	Miss E. McLEWEE.
THETIS	Miss LEWIN.
AURORA	Miss LOVELL.
CASTALIA	Miss BROOKS.
IRIS	Miss CLARA DOUBERY.
ARETHUSA	Miss POOLE.
CLIO	Miss VERNON.
EUTERPE	Miss HASTINGS.
THALIA	Miss PERRY.
CALLIOPE	Miss PHYERS.
A CONTENTED FARMER (<i>"Rara avis in terris"</i>)	Mr. COSSACK.

✓ X6367440

PLUTO AND PROSERPINE.

The new Scenery painted by and under the direction of Mr. WILLIAM CALLCOTT; Scenes 1st & 5th, by Mr. G. MORRIS; Scenes 2nd & 3rd, by Mr. O'CONNOR. The Overture and Incidental Music composed and arranged by Mr. SPILLANE. The Costumes (executed from Drawings especially designed by ALFRED CROWQUILL) by Mr. BARNETT and Miss CHERRY. The Properties by Mr. FOSTER. Machinist, Mr. OLIVER WALES.

Programme of Scenery, Incidents, &c.

THE PALACE OF PLUTO, WITH

Distant View of Tartarus and the Elysian Fields.

The Morning Levee.—A Bachelor's Miseries.—The Herald—his Message and its Consequences.

MINERVA'S SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES,

Wherein the young Idea exhibits early toxophilish propensities, and talks-over-lightly of the Marriage state.—“Essay on Man,” (not Pope's).—The Reproof.—The Visitor.—The Half-holiday.

EXTERIOR OF THE SEMINARY.

The “young man” aforesaid, who, though too wise to look silly, will, on this occasion, attempt to silly-look-wise.

THE PLAINS OF ENNA

WITH

MOUNT ÆTNA IN THE DISTANCE,

Now known as Valdemon, and painted from Drawings taken on the spot,

Wherein the Audience will (it is hoped) welcome an old Friend of their childhood, and also be introduced to a particularly novel DIVERTISSEMENT, invented and arranged by Mr. LECLERCQ, to be called the

PAS DE JUPONS,

Supported by Miss LOUISA LECLERCQ, Miss FANNY WRIGHT, and the LADIES of the CORPS DE BALLET.

The Lover shews his Address by giving a false one.—The Eloement.—How Minerva, by an unfortunate accident, loses the sight of her left Pupil, and how Ceres *pulls up* the blind and looks out of wind (oh!) in the search.—Proceedings for excessive Distress.

PLUTO AND PROSPERpine.

CHARON'S FERRY HOUSE, ON The Banks of the Styx.

Arrival of the Bridal Party.—Detection of the Cheat.—The Lady proves herself anything but an inexpressive “she.”—Remorse of the base Deceiver, and Magnanimous Resolve.

WAVING CORN-FIELDS OF SICILY.

Rejoicings for the bounteous Harvest, in honour of which will be introduced a DANCE illustrative of

THE TRIUMPHS OF CERES,

Invented and arranged by Mr. LECLERCQ, and in which Miss FANNY WRIGHT, Mr. C. LECLERCQ, and Mr. A. LECLERCQ will appear, with the LADIES of the CORPS DE BALLET.

Unwonted and unwanted appearance of the Party in question.—The Daughter still a long way out of sight, and the Mother very near out of mind.

THE CURSE UPON THE LAND,

WITHERING OF THE CROPS,

And Usurpation of the Malignant Poppies.

A ray of hope.—News of the Fugitives.—The Departure.

SEQUESTRED VALE

IN

THE ELYSIAN FIELDS.

“She would and she would not.”—Fashionable Arrivals.—The Condition.—The POMEGRANATE.—Mutual Concessions, leading to an amicable adjustment of differences and general adjournment to Earth.

REVOCATION OF THE CURSE.

Revival of the Fruits and Flowers, illustrated in

An Allegorical Tableau,

REPRESENTING

THE AWAKENING OF NATURE

TO FERTILITY AND GLADNESS.

PLUTO AND PROSERPINE.

SCENE I.—*The Palace of Pluto; black and gold pillars through which is seen the kingdom of Hades. Tartarus enclosed within a brazen wall, and surrounded by the river Phlegethon to the extreme left, enveloped in lurid light; the Elysian Fields strongly lighted, R., with rivers Styx and Lethe; Pluto's throne, R. 2 E., door, L. 1 E.*

MINOS, RHADAMANTHUS, ÆACUS, and COURTIERS assembled on the stage singing as the curtain rises.

Opening Chorus.—Air, "Monks of Old."

Tales have been told of the gods of old,
What a truculent race they were;
But that is a lie, as it doesn't apply
To the monarch we all revere.
For though he may reign o'er a gloomy domain,
Yet, joyous and gentle his sway,
And who will remark that the face is too dark,
When the heart is as light as the day?

And who, &c.

Enter ASCALAPHUS, L. D., raising his hand to stay the music.

ASCAL. My lords, the king to one and all gives greeting,
But begs you'll break up this harmonic meeting.

MINOS. Our loyalty 'twas prompted us—

ASCAL. No doubt,
Only it need not prompt you quite so loud,
So as the burthen's on his ear a strain
He begs you'll stop, and practice the refrain;
In short, if we may trust to current rumours,
His highness isn't in the best of humours.

MINOS. He out of temper!—then he's altered greatly!

RHADA. So amiable a prince!

ASCAL. He was 'till lately,

Now nothing seems to please him but the thought
Of his approaching marriage.

MINOS. Pluto caught

In Hymen's meshes? He who's stony heart
We deem'd impregnable 'gainst Cupid's dart!

RHADA. And may we then, the Syren's name enquire,
Who kindled this asbestos into fire?

ASCAL. The fire as yet is only laid—not lighted,
'Tis waiting for the match that's to ignite it.

Grown weary of a solitary life,
He to Olympus sent to seek a wife,
With orders for the messenger to carry him,
Any young goddess who's disposed to marry him.
Meantime, keeps raving at his life forlorn,
Swears that his sheets are damp, his wardrobe torn,
Finds holes in every shirt his valet brings him,
His socks undarn'd, his waistcoats with no strings
to 'em.

PLUTO. (*without*) D'ye call this thing a collar?

ASCAL. He's beginning—
'Twas the same yesterday—about his linen;
He's like a prosperous theatre that we knows,
Always prepared to *open* on his clothes.

*Enter PLUTO, L., hastily—endeavouring to finish his toilet,
his neck cloth badly tied and wristbands unbuttoned.*

PLUTO. Friends, pardon this apparent incivility—
Trace to my deshabille my inability
To meet you earlier—only happy husbands
Can make sure of a button to their wristbands.

(*a button flies off*)

They say "things at the worst will mend," if true,
My wardrobe's *very near* as good as new,
For sure it's at the worst—or I foresee
I shall a king of shreds and patches be!

MINOS. Permit your humblest servant to express
A hope your highness slept well—

PLUTO. (*carelessly*) More or less.
Sleep that "knits up the ravelled sleeve of care"
Doesn't sew buttons on that I'm aware;
Besides I'm anxious—

RHADA. Without impropriety,
May I ask what can cause *you*, sire, anxiety?
You, blest with power, honour, youth, health, riches!
PLUTO. Without a wife, who would put on one's stitches
Where most they're needed?

MINOS. You, with all submission,
Proprietor of the famed fields Elysian,
Where rare plants thrive where'er their owner wills
'em,
And blossom without tillage, 'till age kills 'em,
Where corn springs without sowing.

PLUTO. You must own
Bachelor's buttons also come unsewn;
Look at this neckcloth—in a whisp 'tis folded,
Lacking the fairy fingers which should mould it
About our neck—a *wife's* fair fingers, friends,
She's the divinity that shapes their *ends*
Rough-dry them as we may: in short you see
I sue for one who is to sew for me.
As there's no one down here who would be thought one,
We from Olympus shall to day import one.

RHADA. Blest goddess she on whom the choice may fall!
PLUTO. Why, to save time, we have proposed to all.
MINOS. To carry out your matrimonial plan,

You've advertised for *tenders*.

PLUTO. Many a man
Would more fastidious be, but as we're not,
We've fixed our young affections on the lot:
Fully prepared to love and cherish who so
Accords us legal privilege to do so.

*Music.—The three-headed Dog, CERBERUS, runs in, l. c.,
and fawns upon PLUTO.*

Holloa, good Cerberus, what's the matter now!

What's happen'd that you've left your post?

CERBERUS. (*barks*) Bow-wow!
PLUTO. A bark—it must be Charons! well, who's come
in it?

You can be definite, although you're dumb in it:
How many? (*CERBERUS holds up one paw*)

Only one! ah! too well I
 Can comprehend your paws for a reply:
 My messenger alone? (*CERBERUS wags tail*) my
 projects fail;
 I read the interesting moving tail
 Of this my Family Herald! though I presage
 Ill news—hie on, we'll hear him and his message.

Music.—PLUTO takes his seat—CERBERUS runs out, and returns followed by the HERALD, who kneels trembling, c.

Thou comest to use thy tongue, so, quick's the word:
 What ails the knave?—speak out!

EXANG. My gracious lord,
 I should report that which I say I saw,—
 PLUTO. Of course you should—what did we send you for?
 You met the gods in council?

EXANG. I confess, sire,
 I did.

PLUTO. And opened our proposal?

EXANG. Yes, sire.

PLUTO. How did they entertain it?

EXANG. Said none such
 Had ever entertained *them* half so much;
 You had sent, the goddesses observed in chaff,
 To the worst quarter for your better half,
 And though they had no thought to underrate
 The potent love of such a *potentate*,
 Declared the life you're leading much too slow for them!
 The neighbourhood you live in much too low for them!
 Some think your face too dark.

PLUTO. Can they not find
 My visage, like Othello's, in my mind?

EXANG. One said she could.

PLUTO. Ah!

EXANG. Adding with an air
 Of malice, 'twas'nt handsome, even *there*!

PLUTO. (*impatiently*) Go on.

EXANG. In vain I painted you the pattern
 Of princes,—traced your pedigree to Saturn;—
 They answer Styx has washed the pattern out,
 And look on such a great *descent* with doubt.

PLUTO. They slight me, then ?
MINOS. Sire, if we have heard aright,

The insult offered is there anything but slight?

(*PLUTO starts up and paces stage in anger*)

PLUTO. Now, by my mother's son (a person we
Have always understood ourselves to be)—
We are no conjuror to understand
This marvellous display of slight of hand !
Why thus, of gods should we be made the Pariah ?
Has fortune to us than to them been charier ?
Am I deformed ?

MINOS. Sire, even the most dull can
Avouch the contrary.

PLUTO. Yet limping Vulcan
Meets from fair Venus' self a kind reception ;
Rude Boreas marries—so does rough old Neptune.
Am I inconstant, like my brother Jupiter ?
Uglier than Pan—or than Silenus stupider ;
Like Mars, a swaggering bully ; or a sot
As Bacchus is ?

ALL. Great king, we know you're not !

PLUTO. Since, then, in me there's nought to cause aversion,
I'll trust no advocate, but sue in person,—
In human guise make pilgrimage to earth,
To win by merit what I lose by birth !

ASCAL. When does your highness start ?

PLUTO. Without delay :
Cerberus along goes with me.

(*CERBERUS jumps about delighted*)

Stay, boy, stay !

A dog with three heads will seem overdone
Mid people, some of whom can scarce boast *one*,
To understand our compound rule of three,
So, leave two on the watch—and follow me.

(*two of the heads of CERBERUS disappear—he crouches by PLUTO*)

Song and Chorus.—PLUTO and COURTIERS—Air, " Bonnie Dundee."

PLUTO. Since, my lords, my intention I've clearly outspoke,
Ere the sun shall go down I will teach these good folk,

Who dwell in Olympus, more guarded to be,
When slighting the love of a monarch like me.
Then fill up my carpet bag, quick as you can ;
If Jove should insult me, I'll call out my man :
While the gods who condemned me unheard shall agree,
Though I'm dark, I am not so unbonnie to see.

Chorus—Then fill up, &c.

There are ills beyond standing, and jokes beyond mirth :
If there's girls in Olympus, there's girls too on earth ;
And 'mid so many lasses—one, I guarantee,
Will say "aye" to the prayers of a monarch like me.
Then fill up my carpet bag quick as you can ;
And, since it is said that the clothes make the man,
In a new suit no goddess can recognise me ;
And, my honor upon it—they'll bonny done be.

Chorus—Then fill up, &c.

During the Song the SERVANT brings on carpet bag, into which he stuffs PLUTO's linen, hair brushes, razors, &c. PLUTO followed by CERBERUS, who carries his railway wrapper and umbrella in his mouth, exits, L. 1 E. The COURTIERS sink on centre and side traps. The Scene sinks, disclosing

SCENE II.—*Interior of Minerva's Seminary for Young Goddesses, Pallas Court; Minerva's chair, L. c., over which, is thrown her helmet and chlamys, and spear; PROSERPINE, FLORA, AURORA, HEBE, THETIS, and DIANA, discovered engaged in various studies.*

PROSER. Heigho! (*sighing*)

FLORA. Heigho!

DIANA. What do you sigh for, pray?

One might imagine it was cyphering day ;

A penny for your pensive thoughts, young ladies.

PROSER. A penny ! you may penetrate mine gratis ;

What should we be regretting, but the jolly days

We passed before the break up of the holidays ?

When our free laughter met no frown corrective,

And lessons themselves lessened in perspective,

With our own skulls the tide of flattery stemming ;

No longer school-girls deemed, but full-grown women,

In balls and fêtes, the night away was worn,
Until dim chandelier proclaimed the dawn.

AURORA. Then at our feet, obsequious lovers bowed ;
In this dull place no followers are allowed !

FLORA. Now, if we take a walk along the street
In dreary double file, and chance to meet
A friend, we mustn't even look askance at him ;
Heave him a sigh or throw the lightest glance at him !

PROSER. On every hand you'll find the opinion rife,
That marriage is the end of woman's life ;
And being the end, there can be no great sin in
Wishing the end came nearer the beginning.

DIANA. You never weigh a word, dear, you're so wild.

PROSER. You used to call me such a *way-ward* child !

DIANA. Well, to such views I give denial flat,
I'm vowed to single blessedness—

PROSER. What's that ?

'Tis a concoction it takes two to mingle,
Blessedness, like misfortunes, ne'er comes single.

DIANA. My liberty I'd not for anything fence
In with the circle of a wedding ring fence ;
A husband ? No, give me my own field sports
The whole he-race I'll e-rase from my thoughts,
To roam the groves on whose chaste solitude
I'd like to see the man who dared intrude !

FLORA. No doubt, dear, you would like it very much.

DIANA. At that insinuation, miss, I blush.

PROSER. It won't do, Di, we've heard and understand all
About you and Endymion.

DIANA. Vile scandal ;
A pure Platonic friendship.

PROSER. You must own
You met him, dear, by moonlight, and alone.

FLORA. He was found kneeling at your feet, beside—

DIANA. Well, and suppose my sandal came untied,
Must a man be a lover, just because he
Was stooping down to fasten it ?

PROSER. But, *was* he ?

DIANA. (*turning away*) I'm really shocked !

PROSPER. Ingenuous remark,
To feel a shock you must admit a *spark*.

FLORA. In vain a shy timidity she tries.

PROSER. I'd not a penny give for three such shy's.

FLORA. To die an old maid 'twould but rightly serve her.

Quick, to your places, girls; here comes Minerva.

(*they all appear most studiously engaged*)

Enter MINERVA, r., and takes chair, l. c.

MINERVA. First class. (*all the elder girls come forward*)

Young ladies, 'ere we to our tasks proceed,
I must an oft-repeated lecture read;
'Till yesterday, I had imagined none of you
Guilty of conduct, I observed in one of you!
To a stranger too! don't try to look demurely,
Miss Proserpine.

PROSER. I'm not the culprit surely;
You must mistake—of whom, ma'am, are you talking?

MINER. That young male person whom we met out walking,
On whom your eyes were in a manner bent,
Unworthy quite my chaste establishment;
Receiving back a look bold and unshrinking,
A fast look—fast—because it went like winking!

PROSER. Really, ma'am, I—

MINER. Don't interrupt me, miss;
But when you think of love, remember this:
Reason must make the bed that love's to lie in,
Or you may find him in the morning flying;
Lacking the heart which education brings,
To keep him constant and to clip his wings.
Knowledge is power—that maid must fall, no question,
Who hasn't *no—ledge* for her feet to rest on!

DIANA. 'Ere I'd by man be in that manner eyed,
I'd hide myself in-doors until I died!

MINER. (*rises and crosses to DIANA*) She is a pattern—
would I could give orders
To have that pattern worked on all my boarders!
(*to PROSERPINE*) But as for you, miss—

PROSER. How am I to blame?
There's not a girl here but would do the same.

MINER. What? Would Diana from a man receive
A look of love?

PROSER. Not likely, I believe;

But doubtless, if a stolen glance were thrown her,
She'd honestly return it to the owner.

MINERV. To your chamber, miss; you may before you quit,
Find room in it to ruminate a bit.

(PROSERPINE crosses to R.)

And 'till you better your emotions guard,
No more you share our virtuous promenade !

Song.—PROSERPINE.—Air, “Cease your Funning.”

Cease your ire, ma'am,
I'll retire, ma'am,

Though I know not whence this breeze has sprung;
For I'll be sworn, ma'am,

'Ere I was born, ma'am;

You did much the same when young !

Air.—“Sabot Dance.” (no symphony).

So don't be hard on me—

In time, I staid shall be.

MINERV. You shall be stayed in time, if I
Possess an atom of authority !

A fault so grave I cannot blink,
The world is at an end, I think,
When young girls thus at young men wink,
And ogle on the sly !

(the GIRLS accompany the repeat of the air with the
action of the “Sabot Dance,” at back—PROSERPINE
holds up her hands entreatingly, and MINERVA
waves her off to the same action—exit PROSERPINE,
R., and MINERVA sinks exhausted into a chair)

MINERV. From her example learn a useful lesson,
And, when you meet a stranger, have discretion
To veil your eyes by lowering your fall,
For what I said to her applies to all ;
You water nymphs are what is called *too gushing*,
And I don't wonder at Aurora blushing.

(a knock is heard, L.)

A knock!—’tis not the usual day for visitors,
And now their coming is most infelicitous ;—
To your tasks, ladies—bury yourselves right in them,
And smile, as if you took intense delight in them.

A MAID SERVANT enters, L., and hands a visiting card
to MINERVA.

Ceres—by all means shew the lady in;

Exit SERVANT, L.

Castalia, run up stairs for Proserpine.

And, if with tears she's been her beauty *spiling*,

See that she wipes her eyes and comes down smiling.

Exit CASTALIA, R.

(aside) Provoking!—a worse time she could not find
For looking in.

Enter CERES, L.

(to CERES, with change of manner) This visit is most kind!
CERES. It is not very formal, I'm aware!

MINERV. And, therefore, charming! Flora, love—a chair.

(FLORA places chairs for CERES, who crosses to
R. C., and MINERVA, L. C.)

CERES. But where is Proserpine? I do not see her.

MINERV. Reading, up stairs—the studious little dear
Is justly of the hive the busy bee called.

FLORA. (aside) That's what she said I was to pa, when he
called.

CERES. How does she get on?

MINERV. Madam, at such speed
That she's a very forward girl indeed;
I often have to warn our lovely student
Against a course of study scarcely prudent.

Re-enter PROSERPINE and CASTALIA, R.

PROSER. (aside) Mamma here! won't there be a botheration
About that little innocent flirtation.

CERES. Come hither, darling—why this hesitation?

(*kisses her*)

I know the object of your close seclusion.

PROSER. I meant no harm, Ma.

CERES. (to MINERVA) What a sweet confusion!

MINERV. (aside) There is indeed.

PROSER. I feared—

CERES. What should you fear for?

'Tis the sole object that I sent you here for.

(FLORA and THETIS can scarcely restrain their
laughter—MINERVA turns sharply upon them)

MINERV. Young ladies !

FLORA. Something tickled me.

MINERV. Depend.

'Twas that pert, Thetis, your *pert-tickler* friend.

(looks at THETIS menacingly)

PROSER. (aside) Instead of the anticipated squall,

She rather seems to like it, after all.

CERES. Now, dears ; I've come to ask for all a boon—

MINERV. Pray, name it !

CERES. Leave out, for the afternoon.

(GIRLS all jump and come forward)

To day I make my annual inspection

Of the ripe corn-fields under my protection.

Let's take a ramble through the plains of Sicily ;

The men are getting in the harvest busily,

Compared to which all other crops are wee crops—

Like mine, Cecropia, looks in vain to *see crops*.

The Earth, by the hard times of Winter, made

Insolvent, now resumes her thriving trade ;

Before your eyes her treasures are unrolled,

The fields she prodigally tips with gold ;

And, lavishing her wealth with hand unsparing,

The fruit trees have a heaving claim on *Bearing* :

Damsons are worth a plum, and it's surprising

To see how rapidly the stocks are rising :

For any interest in winter lent

The flowers will now return you *scent per scent*.

The firm of Bird and Co. with liberal throats,

From bank and branch issue their country notes ;

The sun and air, grown warm and well to do,

Takes up the mist which yesternight fell dew.

The soil's so rich, that e'en below the furrow, it

Keeps a reserve fund if you choose to *burrow* it,

Burrow however deeply, and you'll own,

That Sicily's so rich it stands *a-loan*,

While of pay-day you needn't be afraid, for

Whate'er it serves you with, it takes *a-s paid for*.

PROSER. A holiday! Oh, how delightful, Flora! (to FLORA)

P'raps we may meet my out-o'door adorer.

PROSPER. and OTHERS, We'll be so good, ma'am, if you'll

let us go.

MINERV. To a request so put I can't say no.

CERES. Then while we two are chatting, your young pupils
Can gather violets, wild roses, blue-bells,
Or study husbandry—

MINERV. No need for haste,

For husbandry girls have a natural taste ;
Fair nature's mould is harrowed and displaced,
That they may cultivate the smallest waist,
And tempted by the flattering name of wife,
Will take a rake past the hey-day of life.

SCENE III.—*Exterior of Minerva's Seminary for Young Ladies. Large gates, c., through which is seen a garden.*

Air.—“A Frog he would a wooing go.”

Enter PLUTO, L., gaily dressed.

PLUTO. I've seen her, and to see is to adore her !

E'en when I first presented me before her,
Her beauty dazzled me, and I was nigh
Struck blind by the bright lightning of her eye ;
I took another glance, more scorched to be,
And caught her eyes which cauterized me,
But why her charms should poor description mangle ?
Euclid could not describe such a *right ankle*! —
And here she dwells : would I dared raise the knocker,
But that might seem too premature and shock her ;
I'll wait till she comes out, my passion quell,
Offer her marriage and *then* ring the belle.

[I feel as many here have felt before
Who've left their first farce at the theatre door,
When all anxiety to learn it's fate,
They tremblingly hand in their card, and wait ;
Meantime the pot-boy, with unconscious lear,
Passes unquestioned with the Gas-man's beer ;
How the young aspirant for dramatic fame,
Longs for the time, when *he* may do the same ;
And as he hears the slamming door of baize,
Veiling stage glories from his stranger's gaze ;
The author's pride is fo r the nonce forgot,
In envy of that happier pot-boy's lot !]*
Why—where's that dog ? (*looks off, L.*)

Here, Cerberus, I say !
And take your nose out of that butcher's tray.

* Lines thus enclosed [] may be omitted in representation.

Enter CERBERUS, L., and crouches by PLUTO, who proceeds to address him, as LAUNCE does his dog in the "Two Gentleman of Verona"

You've yet to learn the notions of propriety,
Observed by dogs in upper-air society ;
So I'll exhibit in a bird's-eye view,
Th' ordeal well-bred puppies must go through ;
Your thoughts you shew too openly—on earth
They oft are saddest, who display most mirth ;
You must by no means growl to mark resentment,
Or wag your tail in token of contentment,
When most you're doing wrong—be most polite,
And ne'er your teeth show less than when you bite,
So may you still enjoy, when youth is past,
The sunshine of your dog-days to the last.

(*the gates are thrown open by SERVANT, and the young Goddesses, DIANA, FLORA, AURORA, THETIS, PROSERPINE, &c., &c., enter in double file and pass off, R.; MINERVA with parasol and camp stool bringing up the rear; PLUTO retires to L. 1 E., and watches them as they pass*)

What's here? unless a haze my sight encumbers
A book of beauty coming out in numbers,
With twenty illustrations, more or less,
Issued I see, by the Minerva press ;
And there's my charmers speaking likeness in it,
A frontispiece that I intend to *vin*—yet ;
Re-reviewed by the fair Editor, who owns
A very lengthy catalogue of *Bones* ;
I'll follow, for a chance, however brief,
'Tis opportunity that makes the thief.

Music.—Exit followed by CERBERUS, R.

SCENE IV.—*The Plains of Enna; the Volcano at back from which a light smoke is seen to ascend; corn fields occupy middle distance, trees, beds of violets, and other flowers in rich profusion; a hedge row extends, R., on which grow honeysuckle, dog roses, &c., &c.*

Enter DIANA, PROSERPINE, AURORA, THETIS, and GOD-

DESSES, laughing and singing, R.; some of the youngest with hoops and skipping ropes.

DIANA. Pallas for once her tightened rein releases,
And we are once more free as mountain breezes.

PROSER. The poor inhabitants of town I pity ;
Who can but boast the freedom of the city !

AURORA. So now we are free, how shall we employ
ourselves ?

With only half an hour to enjoy ourselves —

FLORA. Let's play hunt the slipper.

THETIS. Hide and seek.

CASTALIA. Puss in the corner.*

PROSER. For myself to speak,
The rough sports you approve, I don't admire ; let's
Remain and gather some of those wild violets
And roses, with which this sweet spot abounds.

DIANA. Each to her taste, girls, I'm for hare and hounds.
Since she must mope in solitary state,
Let's leave her to her horticultural fate ;
I'll be the huntsman—you the hounds, and there
Is Flora who will fit us to a hare !

FLORA. Agreed, I'm game ; but grant me, I entreat,
We'll say, five minutes grace before the meet.

DIANA. So be it, the hounds throw off in yonder hollow ;
And, when you think fit break cover, follow !

Song and Chorus.—Air, " Tantivy."

Solo.—PROSERPINE.

Enchanting clearly beams the morn,

Let us a hunting go ;

For daisy picking on the lawn,

I vote extremely slow.

As hounds then to the chase let's throng,

While Flora heads the cry ;

If we're not up with her 'ere long,

I'll know the reason why.

Chorus. } With a heigho chivy,

—GIRLS. } Hark, forward ; hark, forward, tantivy ;

* As performed at the Theatre Royal Haymarket, a Divertissement is here introduced, supported by Miss L. LECLERCQ, Miss F. WRIGHT, and the LADIES—after which the dialogue proceeds as above.

If we're not up with her 'ere long,
I'll know the reason why.

Exit, R. U. E., followed by all but PROSERPINE, who remains gathering the flowers.

Music.—very piano—“Gather ye rosebuds.”

PROSER. What lovely flowers ! I will a wreath entwine
Of roses with the tangled eglantine ;
I shall be in the fashion, and to spare,
Since ladies wear real flowers in their hair.
Violets too—whose delicate perfume
Will make a palace of my little room !
Would I could reach the beautiful dog-rose,
That o'er the summit of that hawthorn grows.

(approaches the hedge-row, R. C. : when CERBERUS jumps through it, barking and fawning upon her —PLUTO follows through the gap ; PROSERPINE utters a little shriek)

Oh, dear—what's that ?

PLUTO. Don't fear, ma'am, he wont bite you :
Or, does my sudden presence here affright you ?

PROSER. (confused) Oh ! not at all—at least—that is to say,
(aside) It is the young man I met yesterday !

(aloud) In trying to reach that dog-rose as you see,
Your dog rose up, sir, and that startled me.

PLUTO. Oh, Proserpine, doubt that the stars are fire,
Truth at the bottom of his well a lyar :
(I'm half inclined to think he must be such,
Or truth would never be pulled up so much ;)
Doubt anything you please, but never doubt
I love you—and—in short—the murder's out !
I'm not good at love-making.

PROSER. I'm afraid
In my heart, sir, your suit is ready made :
Although as a too ready maid you'll twit me.

PLUTO. Why so ? if you beyond all measure fit me—

PROSER. But—but—

PLUTO. Why thus a difficulty moot,
Or tack a needless but-on to the suit ?
That of my birth you may no doubt evince,
Suffice it for the present—I'm a prince :

My territory's neither here—nor there;

(pointing upwards)

(aside) I haven't courage yet to tell her *where*.

PROSPER. But I must know, at least, sir, where you lodge.

PLUTO. (aside) I'll try the popular Claude Melnotte-dodge.

(walks her across the stage, as Claude does Pauline)

If therefore, dearest, you would have me paint

My residence exactly (aside) as it aint,—

(aloud) I would entreat you, Proserpine, to come where
A palace lifting to eternal—somewhere—

Its marble walls invites us—

PROSPER. By-the-bye,

Where is this palace?

PLUTO. (embarrassed) In the Isle of Skye.

Thy days, all cloudless sunshine shall remain,

For on our pleasure we will ne'er draw rein;

At noon we'd sit beneath the vine-arched bowers,

And, losing all our calculating powers,

Think days but minutes—reckoning by ours;

Darkness shall be at once with light replaced,

When my hand lights on that light taper waist;

Our friends should all true constant lovers be,

(So we should not be bored with company);

Love's Entertainments only would we seek,

And, sending up to Mudie's once a week,

No tales that were not Lover's we'd bespeak,

No sentiments in which we were not sharers,

(Think what a host of rubbish that would spare us);

The summer months no milder than the rest are,

For, e'en when winter comes, no cold nor-wester

Shall roughly visit that soft cheek, sweet girl,

No air e'er brush that ere hair out of curl:

Whereof perhaps, the wonder's not so great,

Because their is no heir to the estate.

Dost like the picture, love, or are you bored?

PROSER. Beautiful!

PLUTO. (aside) 'Tis a copy after Claude.

(aloud) Let's seal the bargain with a kiss?

PROSER. Oh, fie!

I set my face against it. (presenting her cheek)

PLUTO. (kissing her) So do I!

Say then, sweet love, you will be mine.

PROSER. Oh, dear! I

At such a question feel a little queery.

(*staggers and lays her head on his shoulder—her veil falls off, and is left upon the stage—he draws her to trap, R. C.*)

PLUTO. She swoons—a swoon's a great pacifier,

And it must come to this, *swooner or later.*

Away, there's nothing to impede our journey
For "facilis descensus est Averni!"

(PLUTO sinks with PROSERPINE, through trap, c.—

CERBERUS crouching at their feet—the sun which
has been slowly declining, sets—and the twilight
gradually deepens as the scene proceeds)

*Re-enter DIANA, FLORA, THETIS, and AURORA, R.,
followed by MINERVA.*

MINERV. Well, where is Proserpine?

DIANA. I only know

We left her here not half an hour ago!

FLORA. Perhaps in sport, she's hiding somewhere near.

MINERV. That seems a most preposterous hide—here (idea).

DIANA. Here is her veil. (*picks it up*)

MINERV. Dropp'd doubtless in her bustle;

I smell a rat of magnitude colossal!

Search the whole spot, some one way, some another;

(they disperse in search)

And Thetis, break it gently to her mother.

Exit THETIS, L.

No doubt she's listen'd to the polished blarney

Of that insinuating Don Giovanni;

I thought she would be glancing once too oft at him,

He looked so *hard* at her, and she *so soft* at him.

To leave her thus alone 'twas really mad o'me—

Here is a scandal on my chaste academy!

The incident will form, if they escape us,

A dainty morsel for the daily papers;

I foresee with what virtuous indignation

They'll touch upon a girl-school education!

*Re-enter THETIS, L., followed by CERES in great agitation, she is choking with grief, tearing the flowers from her hair—
LADIES return.*

CERES. Eloped? with shame and grief I shall go wild;
My Proserpine—I've lost, I've lost my child!

Sings wildly—Air.—“The Lost Child.”

I happened to be strolling by,
With the picturesque in eye,
When suddenly I heard a cry,
Which chilled my very blood.

Part was told me, part I guessed—
I didn't wait to hear the rest—
The truth your half-scared looks attest;
She's gone, as sure as mud!

But now my mother's fears begin to reach
That boiling point, which scarcely leaves me speech;
To sing in metre really quite absurd's
So anyhow to give my sorrows words.
For if I may trust to internal evidence, my heart's about
to break,
I'm gradually growing wild!
I'm ruined if I can't contrive to draw some check on child!
I shouldn't mind the trouble I incurred upon the way;
But a child lost in Enna's plains, is like a needle in a
bottle of hay.
But I'll discover where she's gone,
And though with grief my heart is torn,
I'll catch her yet before the morn.
I've lost, I've lost my child!

Ingrate! to wring her mother's withers dare she go?
My withering curse go with her whithersoe'er she go!

MINERV. Her veil she's dropped, which proves we're on the
trail.

CERES. Think you to cheer me with a *drop of veil*?

MINERV. Be comforted;—she will return.

CERES. No more!

A *comforter* can only be a *bore*.

She will return, you say? and if she should,

'Twill prove more clearly she's not gone for good.

Fall, sympathetic night, my gloom to share,
And with your colour match my dark despair!

(the shades of evening fall, and the fire of Mount Etna becomes visible)

My chariot, ho!—I'll track them day and night!

(the car of CERES brought on to c.—CERES tears off a branch from a pine tree, strips it of leaves, and retires up towards the mountain)

Œtna, will you oblige me with a light?

(a stream of fire descends from the volcano, and illuminates the pine torch of CERES)

This good pine torch may light upon the maid,
Who from me has been tortiously conveyed.

All rest till they're arrested I'll forsake,
Ignoring sleep to follow in their wake!

She mounts the car which moves off during the repeat of the coda, "The Lost Child." Scene closes.

SCENE V.—*The old Ferry House on the Banks of Styx.*

[Enter CHARON from house, L., with a pair of sculls which he rests against the wall and comes forward—lights half down.

CHARON. Another slack day! Not a single obol
Has crossed this palm in payment for my trouble
In rowing parties from the upper earth;
Of passengers there's been a frightful dearth,
Since what they call the Sanitary Committee
Has purified the drainage of the city.
Oh, for the good old times of smoke and sewer,
Of Sundays spent in atmosphere impure,
When public parks were looked upon as fallacies,
And no one dreamed of building Crystal Palaces!
Then how they flocked upon the Stygian shore,
I've known the time when I've run up a score,
And left as many waiting to compete
In the return boat for the vacant seat;
No ghostly likenesses are seen there flitting,
To be from life taken at one short sitting;
Death can't get hold of the sagacious elves,
They live till age, and *get old of* themselves,

Giving a stingy obol when I lands 'em—
 They used to come down young, and come down
 handsome ;
 No gloomy shade for Hades shapes his course,
 Leaving the fatal strand at Charon Cross,
 In short, society's so called advance,
 Don't leave a cove a shadow of a chance.

(voice of PLUTO is heard as from a great distance without)

PLUTO. Boat ahoy ! (speaking trumpet)
 CHARON. Pluto's voice ! Ah ! there's a job'll

Bring me in something better than an obol ;
 An honest obol—I so seldom turn it,
 I'd better hobble off at once, and earn it.

(CHARON takes the sculls, steps into the boat, and pushes it off, L.)]*

Music.—Enter ASCALAPHUS, MINOS, RHADAMANTHUS, AEACUS, and COURTIERS, hastily, L.; they look after the boat.

MINOS. His majesty and bride will soon be here.

ASCAL. (looking off) Already they're put off from old
 Shades pier ;

Prepare your throats to give him loyal greeting,
 And take the cheer from me at the first meeting.

(CHARON appears in his boat, from L., with PLUTO, PROSERPINE, and CERBERUS,—cheers—they disembark amid the homage of the COURTIERS; PROSPERpine gazes about her in bewilderment, and PLUTO appears uneasily conscious of the deception he has practised)

MINOS. Hail to your majesty !

PROSER. (to PLUTO) What gloomy faces
 Are these ? and what's this gloomiest of places—
 A temporary refuge, is it not ?

PLUTO. (to COURTIERS) Say something, somebody,—no
 matter what ;—

(aside) I feel too much one of the swell mob,
 When his hand's found in some one else's fob.

* Charon's speech may be omitted on representation, the scene commencing with the entry of ASCALAPUS.

ASCAL. (*to PROSER.*) Great queen, permit your humblest
of dependents—

PROSER. Is this old quaint 'un one of your acquaintance ?
This mystery is past all understanding ;

What mean these vacant *stares* upon my *landing*.

PLUTO. (*embarrassed*) Pray make yourself at home.

PROSER. A tomb, you mean—
A fitter place for one I've never seen !

ASCAL. Happy the monarch—

PROSER. Whom do you allude to ?

ASCAL. Madam, to our lord and to your's—king Pluto.

PROSER. (*in horror*) The king of—

ASCAL. Yes ; precisely so, great queen.

PLUTO. (*aside*) There's going to be what people call a
bad *blame* scene.

PROSER. (*angrily*) Then I've been cheated, neither more
nor less

PLUTO. It looks a little like it, I confess,
But 'twas my love that prompted the deception,—
A fiction that should be pronounced affection.

PROSER. Affection ! It was cruelty to go
By an illusion to illuse one so,
'Ere into this elopement you cajoled me—

Your name at least you might have earlier told me.

PLUTO. Earlier ! to sport the little French I know,
Knowing me earlier you'd have known *plus tôt*.

PROSER. Have I been so well brought up, with a view
To be brought down so shamefully by you ?

PLUTU. (*aside*) I've made her angry ; what can she desire,
Since having brought her down, I've raised her ire ?

PROSER. (*with bitter mockery*) Is this your palace—this
your sunny isle—
Where nature shall perpetually smile ?
Your " long drawn isle"—yet stay, I pardon, crave
The *isle* may be since I can see the knave !
For such bright colouring thou perjured lover,
The original's too dark.

PLUTO. It's my shade over. (*chef d'œuvre*)
Let's go inside and take a nearer view.

(*offers his hand she turns from him*)

PROSER. Excuse me, I don't co-inside with you !

Fool that I was to think I'd expectations,
 From any of your fancy's rich relations ;
 Real lies, indeed, with no realize-ations ! }

Such doings, one from love to hatred quite turn !

PLUTO. You've had a longish innings, now it's my turn ;
 'Tis you who first in this rough soil implanted
 The seed, which to a passion-flower expanded,
 'Twas a new sense with me.

PROSER. If you've a true sense
 Of honour, you'll at once abate the new sense.

PLUTO. List to my heart's appeal—'tis throbbing, sweet,
 For you—like an appealer on the beat.

PROSER. From words to touch my vanity refrain,
 For flattery I am not in the vein.

PLUTO. Since one you loved, you change your mind and mock
 You seem less in the *vein* than *weathercock*—
 At any rate I see which way the wind is,
 Therefore, to obviate the constant shindies,
 I foresee in our matrimonial life,
 I give you up. (*crosses to c.*)
 (*turning to COURTIERS*) This lady's not my wife !

PROSER. (*alarmed*) You give me up ?

PLUTO. Alas !

PROSER. Without remorse !

PLUTO. You said you wished it.

PROSER. (*piqued*) Wished it ? Oh ! of course.

PLUTO. Since round this loving heart, dear, to entwine you,
 You can't resign *yourself*, I must resign you ;
 My passion I'll heroically smother,
 To-morrow you shall go home to your mother.

PROSER. But—

PLUTO. Meantime my sincerity to prove,
 There's but one course, and that is a remove.

(*to ATTENDANTS*) Conduct this lady to my cottage *ornee*.

Exit an ATTENDANT, L.

In the Elysian fields : (*to PROSERPINE*) it's no great
 journey ;

These fields from Tartarus by a strong partition
 Are *cut off*, and that's why their called *Elysian* ;
 There, dwelling in repose, there's nought to make you
 Uneasy, till your mother comes to take you.

PROSER. (*aside*) Few lovers are so easily deterred :
Who would have thought he'd take me at my word?

Duett and Chorus.—air, "Jolly Waggoner."

PROSER. When first you came a wooing me,

And bid me with you go :

To fill my mother's heart full

Of sorrow, grief, and woe ;

That you were—who you are, sir,

How little did I know.

But, having come below

Things can't be changed, and so

I must prepare to lead the life

My folly's brought me to.

PLUTO.

No, my lady, no !

Pray don't misjudge me so :

To morrow by the morning's light

To your mother you shall go.

(*chorus repeat*)

PLUTO.

Henceforward I'll the passion curb,

That rives this lonely breast,

So adjourn to my pavilion,

And peacefully take rest,

For though you will not be my wife

You shall my honour'd guest ;

So, my lady, so,

Don't thus give way to woe ;

To-morrow by the morning's light

To your mother, you shall go.

(*chorus repeat*)

(PLUTO takes an affectionate leave of PROSERPINE,
whose pride is struggling with her affection—a
litter is brought on and she is carried off upon it,
attended by some of the COURTIERS, R.—exit
PLUTO followed by the rest, L.)

SCENE VI.—*The Waving Corn Fields of Sicily, occupying the extent of the stage; some of the corn is cut; a wagon, R. C., loaded with sheaves; a sheaf, L. C. A merry-making in celebration of the first load; a group discovered, L., lying down under wagon.*

A rustic dance illustrative of "The triumphs of Ceres"

invented and arranged by Mr. LECLERCQ, and supported by Mr. C. LECLERCQ, Mrs. A. LECLERCQ, and the LADIES of the Ballet; at its conclusion, CERES comes down through the corn, c., her hair dishevelled, and her torch extinguished; the DANCERS retire affrighted, as she advances in the midst, glaring wildly.

CERES. A merry-making, ha! so it appears;

You dare make merry when your queen's in tears!

PEASANTS. (*prostrate themselves in terror*) Hail, laughing Ceres!

CERES. (*laughing wildly*) It won't do, my masters,

In me you see a Ceres of disasters;

No longer, laughing Ceres—you will find
That I'm becoming seriously inclined.

PEASANT. (*trembling*) For these great crops, ma'am, we
our gratitude

Were showing, as contented farmers should.

CERES. Contented farmers! ha, ha! that's too good!

PEASANT. We were but dancing on the green.

CERES. Base serf,

I mean to put down gambolling on the turf,
To change this merry-making into snivelling;
Observe this sheaf, to dust and ashes shrivelling!

(*the wheat sheaf withers, the FARMERS gather round it in despair*)

PEASANT. Mere chaff! the prodigy exceeds belief!

CERES. This of my will is evidence in sheaf.

Merry, I think you said? Why, don't you laugh?

I place no *wheat*, O, now upon your chaff;

Why, don't you laugh as I do? Though I'm fain
To own 'tis very much *against the grain*.

On the whole harvest I'll a failure bring,

The corn no more in the light air shall sing;

Its voice shall be all *husky*, and I fear

Except for straw's music have no ear.

Hewers of wood, and tillers of the land,

I'll prove to you I'm *hewers* to command.

The earth, I shortly mean to show each dweller on it,
Is mine—this *vale* and every *man-tiller* on it!

The pasture with its past year's vegetation,

Shall be a pasture past your cultivation.
 From the thick sheaves the grain shall disappear,
 Nor longer tenant be from ear to ear.
 No barley-brews shall mollify sore throats,
 And none shall ask me "*Do I bruise my oats?*"
 Hayforks henceforward you may throw away
 As useless as cracked tuning forks, for they
 Will never give you the *true pitch of A*;
 Your sickles shall grow sickly with decay,
 Your hoes may *hoe*, but won't be found to *pay*.
 Upon the land a withering blight shall fall;

(*all bow their heads*)

And used-up rakes ne'er seek their beds at all;
 Axes fall powerless to lop a twig,
 And spades enjoy their "*otium sine dig,*"
 Your ploughs you may as of no further use bury;
 I'll with the champagne country play old gooseberry,
 'Twill be such *still champagne* that you won't know it,
 In vain you may apply yourselves to *mow it*.
 Now having made these cursory observations,
 To realise your pleasant expectations—
 Poppies! ye Red Republicans, with whom
 I've long waged war, *your hour of triumph's come!*
 Rear your proud heads o'er the surrender'd plain,
 With poisonous kisses choke the golden grain,
 And whisper in the dying ears of corn
 'Till Ceres finds the daughter from her torn!
 The land shall of her sorrows be partaker,
 And every *rod* on the earth's back an *acher*.

(she waves her hand—poppies start up everywhere
*through the corn and choke it, bending over it as in
 triumph—the load of corn becomes a load of
 poppies, and the whole scene is red with a field of
 them—thunder and lightning*)

Song.—CERES.—Air, "*Laughing Chorus.*" *Der Freyschutz.*

My merry men, what means this weeping?
 Unless indeed you think of reaping
 Abundant harvest, so to speak
 From the wee-tears on your cheek.

(*chorus interrupted with groans*) Ha, ha, ha!

You may see around you glancing,
No corn prevents you now from dancing,
Since the *wheat* your hopes betrays,
Take my advice and join the *maize*.

Ha, ha, ha !

Why are thus your spirits sinking ?
'Till your wine is fit for drinking,
Though no malt from barley brewing,
You'll get full measure of *blue ruin*.

Ha, ha ha !

(after which the PEASANTS shriek and retire, CERES
in the centre laughing wildly)

Enter MERCURY, R. U. E.

MERC. Why, how now, Ceres ? you look angerly !

CERES. How should I otherwise than angry be ?

MERC. I know your grief : no longer mourn your loss,
or pine,

For you may yet regain your daughter Proserpine.

CERES. And, 'till I do, to mourn her less you see,

Would neither more nor less than fruitless be ;

But I'll discover yet her heartless captor,

Who meanwhiles, with his mean wiles has entrap'd her.

MERC. But what means, you'll excuse the observation,

This most unusual poppy-lar demonstration ?

Why is the land in execution taken,

Her grassy carpets taken up and shaken ?

CERES. In place of the soft carpet you're deploring,

I've giving it a *desolated* flooring ;

'Till I look once more on my fallen daughter,

Earth shall not see her rising sun. I thought her

A paragon of modesty, most rare,

And now the *pair are gone*—no one knows where !

(crosses to R.)

MERC. The "who and where," to sum in brief narration,
Pluto's *his* name—Hades *her* destination.

CERES. My child in Hades ? ah, if that's the case,
She's literally hel-d from my embrace !

MERC. Not so—

CERES. How ? speak ! I for your sweet words long :
Words must be sweet when *succour's* on the tongue.

MERC. In one word, then, to terminate my mission,
 Your daughter may be yours—but on condition
 That she has touched no food there, not a crust
 To stay her appetite—or stay she must.

CERES. Thanks! a new hope you've to my heart imparted,
 I know she'd a good breakfast 'ere she started.

MERC. Then let's be off, the injury you see,
 May be repaired if you repair with me;
 Freely they'll us to Acheron admit,
 I've got an express order for the pit:
 Here's the pit door—I'll roll the stone a bit,
 And thus act *Roller* for your benefit.

(he removes a huge stone, R. 2 E., and discloses the
 mouth of a gloomy cavern)

Away at once, we can't be long behind them:
 We'll seek well, and must in the sequel find them.

*Music.—MERCURY and CERES go off, through the
 opening, which closes them in.*

SCENE VII.—*Grove of Pomegranates in the Elysian Fields.*

Enter PROSERPINE, in meditation, R.

PROSER. I'd give a trifle if I could but hate him
 As he deserves—in vain I underrate him,
 Recall his falsehoods—how he basely sold me,
 When from the Plains of Enna he cajoled me,
 As most unhandsome of him—all no use is,
 Love for faults found finds readier excuses;
 His conduct though not *handsome* in the main,
 At any rate was an *escape from Plain*;
 I vow I'll think no more of him—and few
 Could think more of him than, I fear, I do.
 The moral schooling I had deem'd so clever
 Results in this—I love him more than ever;
 Can he let me thus easily depart?
 Ah! no, he's here—lie down, my fluttering heart.

*Enter PLUTO, L., he is very melancholy and ceremoniously
 distant and cold.*

PLUTO. Good morning, ma'am.
 PROSER. (aside) How pallid and dejected!
 PLUTO. Your wish has to the letter been respected,

I've made all reparation in my power,
Your mother will be here in half an hour.

(*in a broken tone of voice*)

PROSER. Well, though you have been very much to blame—

PLUTO. Spare your reproaches, I'm o'erwhelm'd with shame,
I'm sensible I've wronged one I adore so !

PROSER. (*aside*) Would that he were less sensible, or more so !

I do believe he means to let me leave him,
If he would only ask me to forgive him ;

(*aloud*) I never can forgive you.

PLUTO. (*taking out pocket handkerchief*) I don't doubt it,
And beg you'll not distress yourself about it ;
Forget me in the arms of your mamma—

PROSER. (*weeping*) As you will me ?

PLUTO. (*bursting out passionately*) Forget you ! ha ! ha ! ha !
Hear that, ye gods ! or any body who
May happen to have nothing else to do ;
Forget her whom I still must prize above
All else—(*relapsing into gloom*) yet no—I'll never tell my love ;

But let concealment, like a mouse i' the cheese,
Feed on my damaged cheek—which by degrees
Shall cultivate that interesting pallor,
Which less romantic folks term dirty yellow.

PROSER. Be comforted.

PLUTO. Of comfort no man speak ;
It better suits my gloomy thoughts to seek
Some horrid topic of discourse.

PROSER. He raves !

PLUTO. Let's have a disquisition upon graves ;
Or sit upon the ground, and, in the damp,
Discuss the probabilities of cramp ;
Or buy the *Times*, and read through the debates ;
Listen with interest to Christmas waits ;
Pot-house harmonic meetings go among, }
'Till we may have, by perseverance, wrung }
Delight from senseless comic songs ill sung ; }
Let's go to parties where you get a cup o'
Cold tea, a little music, and no supper ! }

Where all are strangers, without even so great a
Relief as the acquaintance of the waiter.

In short—I'm led by my sad thoughts, at present,
To say and do whatever's most unpleasant;
Instead of eating, I'll eschew my dinner,
And this poor frame, grown gradually thinner,
Will look with sad complacency upon.

I feel I'd like to be a skeleton—

PROSPER. Gracious! he's lost his senses altogether!

PLUTO. (*meditatively*) 'Twould be so very cool in summer
weather.

Thinner I'll grow, till death reverse my doom,
By making me fall *plump* into the tomb!

PROSPER. Gods are immortal—

PLUTO. True! that's doubtless why,
Lucus a non Lucendo, they're called *Di*.

(*a loud knocking without, at a distance, R.*)
What's that? a knock! with power to burst our locks;
The fellow knocks enough to fell an ox.
She's come for you.

PROSPER. You offer no impediment?

PLUTO. Don't be alarmed, I'll prove that what I said, I meant,
Though of the cup, the sed-i-ment is bitter.

Enter ASCALAPHUS, R.

ASCAL. Great Ceres, sire.

PLUTO. Of course—we know—admit her.

*Enter CERES and MERCURY, R.; she rushes to PROSERPINE
and embraces her.*

CERES. And do I once more strain her to my breast?

PLUTO. Well, it seems like it—but you must know best.

Oh! madam, strain away—it is your due,

She has been so long strayin' away from you;

Although she is so pure, she needs no strainer.

CERES. My child—and do I once more then regain her
From you, the hated cause of this affliction?

PLUTO. The fact's too obvious for contradiction.

CERES. But learn, umbrageous monarch.

PLUTO. Best say, shady,
You know we can't take umbrage from a lady.

CERES. Here's her release. (*presenting a paper*)
 MERC. Stay—don't the terms forget;
 “Provided always that she's nothing eat
 In these dominions”—

PLUTO. } How ?
 PROSER. }

MERC. For she perforce 'll
 Be here detain'd, if she has touched a morsel.

PLUTO. (*aside*) More-sell for me, she hasn't !

PROSER. (*to PLUTO*) Are you glad ?
 Or tell me frankly, do you wish I had ?

PLUTO. Again that question put to one who doats !
 Gods, that down on your reporters notes.

PROSER. Then this will all discussion put an end to.

(she plucks a pomegranate and hastily eats a portion—
 PLUTO and CERES start back astounded)

CERES. What have you done ?

PROSER. Precisely what I meant to—
 (*to PLUTO*) Of my release you'll have no further fears.

CERES. Can I believe my eyes ?

PLUTO. Or I my ears ?
 Why you refused, yesterday !

PROSER. Just so—
 But “no” last night, was “yes” *to-day*, you know.

CERES. Reflect, my child !

PROSER. All argument is vain,
 With him I mizzled, and with him I'll reign !

MERC. Gallantly spoke—I'll lend a helping hand,
 And as your groom's man, at the bridal stand.

CERES. And must she ne'er more glad my longing eyes ?

MERC. Permit me to suggest a compromise
 To end your difference—(*to PLUTO*) grant as a boon,
 With her mamma she spends her honey-moon.

PLUTO. (*reflecting*) Six months upon the earth, down here
 six months ;

True, that must *split the difference* at once.

MERC. Her merited six months of bride well passed,
 She will return.

CERES. (*joyfully*) You've hit a plan at last,

To joy may turn all my *ma-ter-nal* fears !

PLUTO. You're satisfied !

CERES. I must be, it appears :

The wrong I can't revenge I'd best forgive,
And since I'm conquered, let's in concord live.

So now to earth, if your prepared to do so,

For Proserpine must see about her *trousseau* ;

PLUTO. (*interrupting*) True—so she must—

I beg pardon—

CERES. Select her bridesmaids from her fellow pupils.

About the grain too I have several scruples ;

And Nature, which has shared in my distress,
Should be partaker of my happiness ;

We'll rouse her into gladness—come with me,
To let her *a-wake* from her *lethar-gy*,

To greet the happily couple with a smile.

And to do honor to your nuptials, I'll

Raise you a palace 'mid the new-born flowers.

PLUTO. Then we'll to earth, with your *assent*, make *ours* ;

Besides we'd best sing the finale there,

We shall be all much more up in the air.

(*a gauze passes over the stage during the following speech of Ceres*)

CERES. Rise, Nature ! from your drugg'd repose awake !

The poppy's drowsy influence off shake,

Exert your dormant energies again

To drive these flaunting upstarts from the plain.

The corn fields once more shall be rich with gold,

A coinage newly cast from Nature's *mould* :

Yet scarcely current coin yet, I suppose, as

It has to undergo the *milling* process.

While the whole earth a holyday receives ;

The trees have an extension of their leaves :

Poor, blighted lilies, raise your drooping heads

To the warm sunshine. Leave your mossy beds,

Ye timid violets, where from my wrath

Ye shrinking lay—the storm is past—come forth !

With gentle pressure win, like modest worth,

Your silent passage through the yielding earth.

Roses, awake ! the general joy to share,
And shed rich perfume on the summer air.

CERES waves her hand, and the mist disperses disclosing an Allegorical Tableau, illustrating the
AWAKENING OF NATURE TO FERTILITY AND GLADNESS.

Finale.—Air, "Crown Diamonds."

PROSER. The bolt is shot,
Our author's not
A shaft his unstrung bow to fit ;
His aim was high,
He can't deny,
Your favour 'twas he sought to hit.

But, tho' you may,
With justice say
The aim was, like the marksman, wild ;
Critics forbear
Your wrath, and spare
The rod, since you have spoiled the child.

CERES. Your lashes keep,
For ills more deep
And grievances far less unreal ;
Nor waste your might,
To break so slight
A butterfly upon the wheel.

And as a cold
And wintry sky,
Would kill the hardiest butterfly ;
Withhold not quite
The warm sunlight,
Of smiles to glad our humble flight.

(CHORUS repeat last verse)

G R A N D T A B L E A U

AND

Curtain.