

ROYAL ENGLISH OPERA,
COVENT GARDEN.

BIANCA,
THE
BRAVO'S BRIDE:

A Grand Original Legendary Opera,
IN FOUR ACTS,

THE MUSIC BY
M. W. BALFE,

THE WORDS BY
J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON:

FIRST PRODUCED AT
THE ROYAL ENGLISH OPERA, COVENT GARDEN,
UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF
MISS LOUISA PYNE AND MR. W. HARRISON.

SOLE LESSEES,
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6TH, 1860.

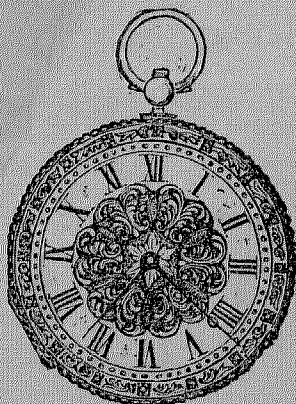
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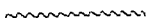
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ROYAL ENGLISH OPERA,

December 6th, 1860.

Dramatis Personæ.



MATTEO VISCONTI (<i>Duke of Milan</i>)	MR. ALBERTO LAWRENCE.		
COUNT MALESPINA (<i>Chief of Conspirators</i>)				MR. HENRY WHARTON.		
MEMMINO (<i>A Young Nobleman</i>)		...		MR. HENRY CORRI.		
BEPPO (<i>Attached to the Duke's Household</i>)				MR. A. ST. ALBYN.		
CONTABINI	}	(<i>Conspirators</i>)	...	...	{	MR. CHARLES LYALL.
MONTALTO						MR. WALLWORTH.
SALVIATI	}	(<i>Friends and Counsellors of</i> <i>the Duke</i>)	...	...	{	MR. FRIEND.
MONTREALE						MR. CHAPMAN.
MICHELE (<i>A Russian in the Service of</i> <i>Malespina</i>)			...	...	}	MR. GRATTAN KELLY.
HERALD OF MILAN			...	...		MR. THEODORE DISTIN.

AND

PORTESPADA (*The Bravo*) MR. W. HARRISON.

Captain of the Guards, Heralds, Conspirators, Nobles, Ladies, Monks
Guards, Servants, People, Citizens, and Citizens' Wives, &c.

BIANCA (*Daughter of the Duke*) MISS LOUISA PYNE.
ZEFFIRINA (*Attached to her Service*) MISS THIRLWALL.

BIANCA.

UNDER the rule of Matteo Visconti, Duke of Milan, a notorious Bravo, of the name of Fortespada, has become the terror of the whole city. Count Malespina, a powerful noble, desirous of dethroning the Duke, and of avenging himself for the rejection of his proffered love by the Duke's daughter, Bianca, has planned a conspiracy, for the furtherance of which he has been in communication with the noted Bravo. At a meeting of the Conspirators, Fortespada appears, and offers to join them, on condition that he is to be considered as their chief. He overhears, at the same time, the plan of Malespina for the murder of Bianca, by Michele, a ruffian in his pay, and when the assignation is on the point of being completed, in a shrine attached to the Cathedral of Milan, where Bianca is in prayer, saves her life, in the disguise of a beggar, by stabbing the ruffian. He declares himself, however, to the alarmed Bianca as the terrible Bravo, and, in return for his service, claims her as his bride.

The position of Bianca is complicated by her love for Odoardo, a young warrior of unknown birth, and the desire of her father that she should wed his powerful ally, the Prince of Ferrara. Alarmed at the threats of the Bravo, the Duke is desirous of hastening the nuptials of his daughter, in spite of her entreaties, and, to his consternation, is visited, in his chamber, by the Bravo himself, who offers to betray the names and plans of the conspirators, upon the condition of receiving Bianca as his bride. His proposal is treated with scorn. The Duke summons his guards to seize the miscreant; but Fortespada escapes; and, to complete the general terror, Beppo, a former servant of the Prince of Ferrara, brings the information that his master has fallen by the dagger of the Bravo.

The young warrior, Odoardo, the object of Bianca's affection, is announced as having returned to Milan from the army, and appears to his beloved in the person, but not in the aspect of Fortespada. The Duke surprises the lovers, but, after a struggle with his pride, consents to their union, on the condition that Odoardo should deliver the Bravo into his hands.

At a great ball, given by the Duke, the festivities are arrested by the appearance of Odoardo, to fulfil his promise. He then divulges that he and the Bravo are one. Orders are given for his seizure, but he declares the guards to be in his pay, and announces the intended fall of the Duke. At the moment of the supposed triumph of Malespina and the Conspirators, he directs the guards to arrest them. He explains that, as Odoardo, he had routed the real Bravo, had learned from him, when dying, the purpose of the conspirators, and, having assumed the disguise of the Bravo, had thwarted their plans. He avows, moreover, that he is the Prince of Ferrara, who, as Odoardo, had sought to win the love of Bianca for himself alone, having employed his faithful agent Beppo to assist him in his schemes. Bianca finds herself, with joy, in truth "The Bravo's Bride."

BIANCA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—The Cathedral Square of Milan. Cathedral in profile; with steps leading up to the Great Entrance.

[At the rise of the Curtain groups of PENITENTS are kneeling on the steps of the Cathedral and in various parts of the Stage. Groups of People in the Market Square.]

INTRODUCTION.

(Organ in the Cathedral.)

PEN. To thee above our hearts we raise,
Thy sacred name devoutly praise;
When ills our path of life invade,
Look down, look down, and grant us aid!

[A tumultuous CROWD OF PEOPLE, CITIZENS and CITIZENS' WIVES, enters behind from various sides. A HERALD appears behind at c., with a proclamation, attended by Guards and Trumpeters. Flourish of Trumpets. The CROWD gives way.]

HER. In the name of the high and puissant Matteo Visconti, Duke of Milan,—
Whereas sundry fearful assassinations have been committed by the hand of the notorious bravo, Fortespada,
Whereas he has become the terror of the city of Milan, and the whole country round,
And whereas it has become imperative that a stop should be put to these iniquities:

A reward of five hundred ducats is offered to whosoever shall discover the retreat of the Bravo, and deliver him up alive or dead!

Long live the Duke!

[Flourish of trumpets, the Herald and Attendants disappear.]

CHO.

What man so bold, as e'er should dare

The proffer'd large reward to claim?

The stoutest heart alone would scare,

The terror of the Bravo's name.

MEN.

Before his aspect wild the boldest fly;

WOMEN

I cannot sleep for dread!

OTHER WOMEN.

Nor I!

ALL THE WOMEN.

Nor I!

CHORUS REPEATED.

Enter MEMMINO, c., through the croud.

MEM.

Who talks of dread of Fortespada? Pooh!

Enter BEPPO, c., through the crowd.

BEP.

Signor Memmino, 'tis of course not you!

MEM.

I? with contempt I treat the notion—Pah!

BEP.

Behold him!

MEM. (*in terror*) Heav'n's! where? where? (*runs away*)

ALL. (*laughing*)

Ha! ha! ha! ha!

BEP.

'Tis Odoardo's arm alone can save

The state from danger—

MEM.

He! a base-born knave—

A low adventurer?

BEP.

Your malice damp

Signor! (*threatens.*)

MEM. (*alarmed*) No! no! a noble soul! (*aside*) a scamp!

CHO.

Our hero general—

WOM.

So handsome—young—

MEM.

So bold!—so brave!

ALL.

Though from the people sprung

BEP.

But, with the army he is far away;

And Fortespada still maintains his sway—

The Bravo's fearful deeds though rumour swells,
More awful still the tale the legend tells!

CHO. A legend—speak—we would the legend hear—
Yes, yes, although it chill our hearts with fear!

BEP. The demon of darkness, see!

In lurid glare,
Behold him there,
A burden in his talons bear!
He chuckles in terrible glee,
With spiteful frown,
As he lays it down,
Before the gates of Milan town!
What has he brought upon earth?
What fearful ban
Has he laid on man?
To work above all the ill he can?
'Tis his own son, in whose birth
He spies a curse
For the universe,
To make its lot of ill yet worse!
That demon baby child
Is now the Bravo wild!
'Tis Fortespada!

CHO.

Fortespada!

BEP.

Oh, yes! if not the devil,
His offspring he must be!
The cause of every evil
In Milan town is he!
He's a finger in the pie,
In all the mischief here—
If e'er a mortal die
'Tis by his hand, 'tis clear!
If ever there's a fire
'Tis lit by him—the Turk
And that last earthquake dire
I'm sure was all his work

CHO. (*repeating*) Oh yes! if not the devil,
His offspring he must be!

The cause of ev'ry evil
In Milan town is he!

CHO. At gloom of eve to roam forbear,
When deeds of blood his power proclaim—
His murd'rous hand of wrath beware—

For fearful is the Bravo's name!

[MONKS appear at the gate and on steps of Cathedral.

MON. As Guardians of the Sacred Shrine

We bid you hence away—

For Milan's duke his daughter brings

Before the shrine to pray;

The hour draws nigh—the gates we close,

This eve of holy-day.

Our sacred rites we would prepare;

Profane, away! away!

CHO. (*retiring*) The hour draws nigh—the gates they close,

This eve of holy-day,

Their sacred rites they would prepare—

Let us away, away!

[The Chorus dies away, diminuendo. The Crowd gradually disperses at back.

END OF INTRODUCTION.

SCENE II.—Handsome apartment in the house of MEMMINO, entrance door c., side doors E. and L. Table, with flasks of wine and goblets.

Enter MONTALTO, following MEMMINO, from R.

RECITATIVE.

MON. Signor Memmino, stay! your presence, as you know, is
needed here,

MEM. Oh yes, I know. (*Aside*) Would I could get away!

MON. It is the hour when all the noble chiefs
Of our conspiracy assemble here—the spot of all Milan
Least open to suspicion.

MEM. Yes! Oh what a virtue prudence is, good friend!

MON. Our wrongs demand that Milan's duke, our foe,
Matteo di Visconti fall,
That his too liberal rule in sterner hands be placed.
To work our ends—your house is ours.

MEM. (*laughing nervously*) You don't say so!

MON. (*severely*) No jest
Is this.

MEM. I'm far from jesting, I protest.

MON. But you have sworn your noble cause to aid—

MEM. I know I did. (*Aside*) They frightened me with threats.

MON. Your wealth in this great service is engaged—

MEM. My wealth—Oh yes! It was for that. (*Aside*) Oh dear!

MON. Ten thousand ducats you have promised.

MEM. Ten—ten thousand—(*hesitating*)—yes!

(*Aside*) Ten thousand drops of blood!

MON. Ten thousand! 'twas your oath—your oath.

MEM. I know, my oath. Don't speak so gruff—pray don't.

MON. 'Tis in a glorious cause.

MEM. Oh, yes; 'tis a fine thing, such a conspiracy—

When it succeeds—but if it don't—oh, lor'!

MON. Peace, peace, I say, weak man! No more of this.

MEM. (*to himself*) Yes, that's the way they treat me;

They half snap off my nose;

And then they threat to beat me,

If I their plot disclose.

(*Assuming boldness*) What if I boldly swagger,

And strut, and stamp, and swear,

And, like them, be a bragger?

I'd show them—(*movement without*),

(*Alarmed*)—Heavens! who's there?

MON. They come! it is our chief; 'tis Malespina with his
friends.

MALESPINA enters with MICHELE and CONSPIRATORS.

MON. Welcome, most noble Count.

MEM. (*cringing*) Most noble Count—I am enchanted—I—

MAL. Enough!

MEM. (*drawing back*) Oh, yes! of course.

MAL. Are all assembled now—the daring heads of our complot?

MEM. The daring ones—oh, yes!

MAL. (*looking round*) But Contarini fails.

MON. He surely will be here anon.

MAL. 'Tis well. All prospers for our cause:

The ducal guard is bribed;

The church is zealous for our good;

The Emperor approves. When once the blow is struck,

His troops will hasten to support us—and, meanwhile,

We must be zealous, bold.

OTHERS. (*except MEMMINO*) All! All!

[MALESPINA looks sharply at MEMMINO.]

MEM. (*feebly*) Oh, yes—of course—all! all!

MON. The Duke's prime counsellors must be dispatched—
Montereale—Salviati.

MEM. (*aside*) There go two!

MAL. For that I have provided. In my pay
I have the Bravo of Milan—his dagger will be sure.

OTHERS. The Bravo of Milan!

MAL. Yes, Fortespada.

OTHERS. Fortespada! Ah!

MEM. The devil!—I mean, he's just the man—

MAL. Scarce had I breathed the wish to gain his arm,
For our great cause; when, in my chamber, by my side,
I found this missive strange. See here!

[Gives paper to MONTALTO.]

MON. (*reading*) "Ye, who need my dagger, seek me; ye shall
find—

"Ye, who blood would shed, shall see it—shed around—

"When you meet, wherever gathered—there behold

"The Bravo Fortespada!"

MEM. (*alarmed*) Should he be coming here. I faint with fright!

- MAL. Mysterious man—all powerful he seems—
 MEM. No wonder, when he is the—what I've said.
 MAL. But first must perish that adventurer base,
 The favourite of the Duke—the peoples' idol hero—he
 Whom most I hate and fear—young Odoardo.
 MEM. (*aside*) Now, there goes another—
 MAL. Bianca, the Duke's daughter, as I fear,
 Looks kindly on him—*me* she has rejected ;
 Despised me ; but her doom is fixed—she too must die !
 MEM. Another now ! Pray Heaven, I'm not the first,
 From very fear—
 MAL. The afflicted Duke then falls an easy prey—
 This very eve his daughter dies.
 ALL. (*but MICHELE*) This very eve ?
 MAL. This very eve she comes to pray, at the Cathedral shrine,
 Alone, as is her wont. And, as a monk disguised,
 My vassal here, Michele, will lay wait, and deal the blow.
 MIC. Fear not, my arm is firm (*shows dagger*).
 ALL. This very eve !

AIR—MALESPINA.

- MAL. Yes, proud Bianca, soon thou'lt learn to know
 How far the pow'r of slighted love can go.
 When cruel scorn and cold disdain
 A loving heart have crush'd,
 By weakling minds the bitter pain
 May be in pardon hush'd.
 But o'er the soul when passion wild
 Its thunder-blast has blown,
 The heart by pity ne'er beguil'd,
 For vengeance breathes alone.
 Yes, thou and lover too,
 Ye both shall fall,
 To satisfy my hate !
 The fatal hour of woe

Shall sound for all,
 Beneath the stroke of fate !
 In deadly shroud,
 See o'er them loom
 The vengeance-cloud
 That bears their doom !
 The lightning flash,
 In with'ring blow,
 To earth shall dash
 Each hated foe !
 All is prepar'd—this destin'd hand
 Of one bold injur'd man
 Holds rich reward—dishonour's brand—
 Life, death, within its span !
 Yes ! Yes !
 In deadly shroud,
 &c., &c. (*Da Capo*).

[Enter CONTARINI, F.E.L., hurriedly.

RECITATIVE.

ALL. 'Tis Contarini ! Why this strange alarm ? speak—say !
 CON. One moment—give me breath !
 MAL. Speak quickly !
 CON. As I fear, we are betrayed !
 ALL. Betrayed !
 MEM. Betrayed ! where shall I run ?
 ALL. Betrayed !
 CON. The usual guard has been removed—our firm allies—
 And, in their place, young Odoardo's troops the palace
 fill—
 MAL. Unlucky chance ! but courage—courage still !

FINALE.

MAL. Friends ! we must act without delay—
 OTHERS. Yes ! act without delay !

MEM. How shall I get away ?
 MAL. Our courage and our zeal display—
 OTHERS. Our courage we'll display !
 MEM. I tremble with dismay !
 MAL. 'Tis Odoardo first must die !
 OTHERS. 'Tis he who first must die !
 MEM. With terror I shall die,
 MAL. On whose bold arm shall we rely ?
 OTHERS. On whom shall we rely ?
 MEM. I could'nt do't ! Not I !
 MAL. Hear me, my friends ! To fate we will confide
 The task of choice. The lot shall now decide
 Who strikes the blow—

OTHERS. Yes ! let the lot decide
 Who strikes the blow ? by that we will abide !

[During the following, MALESPINA seizes MEMMINO's hat in spite of him, and puts it on the table. The others then write their names on slips of paper, which MICHELLE gives. MEMMINO tries to avoid the lot, by dodging round the table—but MALESPINA catches hold of him, and forces him to write his name.

MAL. This hat shall be the fatal urn, (*Takes MEMMINO's hat.*)
 OTHERS. Behold the fatal urn !
 MEM. My hat he makes the urn !
 MAL. Let each his name inscribe in turn. [*They write.*]
 OTHERS. Each write his name in turn !
 MEM. I can't—I freeze—I burn. [*Dodges away.*]
 MAL. May fortune now assist the brave !
 OTHERS. Good fortune aid the brave !
 MEM. To go away I crave. [*Tries to escape.*]
 MAL. Nor shall escape one traitor knave [*He has caught MEM.*]
 OTHERS. No ! die the traitor knave !
 MEM. They call me traitor knave !

[MEMMINO is forced to write, and place his name in the hat.
 MALESPINA is about to draw the lot, when a violent knock is heard on the secret door, L.C. All start in surprise.
 MEMMINO terrified.]

ALL. What's that?

MEM. The guard! We're all caught in the snare!

ALL. Again!

[A heavy knock again.]

MEM. Undone!

ALL. Speak out! Who's there? who's there

VOICE (*without*) Fortespada.

ALL (*with surprise*) Fortespada!

[The door c. is thrown violently open. FORTESPADA enters in the dress of a bravo; his hair long and shaggy; black beard; bushy eye-brows; his face marked with scars and patches—his whole appearance fearful.]

FOR. (*at the door*) Fortespada!

[*He advances.*]

(*Reckless and gay*) Sweet gentlemen, your slave!

You know, my word I gave

Wherever you were gathered to appear.

You want a few friends dead,

And blood is to be shed—

You call on Fortespada! He is here!

ALL The bravo!

MEM. What a fright! Oh, I shall die!

MAL. What would you?

FOR. 'Tis *you* seek me—you, not I.

In what pray can I serve you?—is it my sword?

ALL Your dagger.

FOR. At your service, on my word;

But terms I have to make—

To slight them or to take

On my honour as a bravo, you are free.

Of all this pretty plot,

Or else he serves you not,

Your chief must Fortespada ever be.

MAL. You, you our chief!

ALL. Our chief! No, never—no!

FOR. My terms you don't accept? Well, then I'll go

And call upon the Duke—all one to me!

Sweet gentlemen, farewell.

[*Going up centre.*]

MAL. (*Placing himself before door, with drawn sword*) Think not to flee.

Draw all and strike; the villain's in our pow'r!

FOR. Your pow'r! Ha! ha! ha! ha! Pray, what's the hour?

[Seats himself carelessly at table.]

ALL. This insolence!

FOR. I've on my table lay'd

A scroll, in which your plans are all betray'd:

If eight the hour should chime,

And I'm not home in time,

The Duke will have the packet, on my word.

And now you know what fate

Will your treachery await.

If you'd stab me, I myself will lend the sword.

[The CONSPIRATORS draw back and speak among themselves.
Chimes heard without.]

FOR. It is the half-hour sounds!

MEM. It makes me quake.

Sweet bravo, go.

FOR. My offer do you take?

ALL. We do—we do.

FOR. (*rising*) 'Tis well; your chief am I!

And by my hand the foes of right shall die!

Now, first your list of names—

MAL. No, never!

ALL. No!

FOR. (*sitting down*) Then here I sit—

MEM. Consent—and let him go

MAL. (*aside*) Oh rage! (*Aloud*) 'Tis there!

[Gives a paper.]

FOR. (*taking it, and turning to go*) All right! Adieu!

MAL. Forbear!

The solemn oath, that binds us, you must swear!

FOR. In the matter of an oath,

More or less, I'm nothing loth,

And delighted if our views should correspond.

To me it is all one

If oath I take or none,

For my word is as good as my bond !

MAL.

Swear !

ALL.

Swear !

[They all draw their swords, and cross them during the oath.
 1. FORTESPADA draws his sword likewise. MEMMINO very unwillingly.

ENSEMBLE.

ALL.

Upon this trusty blade I swear,

By all most dear below,

And holiest above,

All ill to risk and all to dare,

And faithful to my vow

Through every danger prove,

Till prostrate at my feet my foes I see,

And Milan from its hated tyrants free.

FOR.

Yes—yes—I swear,

By Heav'n above

That all I dare,

And faithful prove

Till prostrate at my feet, my foes I see,

And Milan from its traitor tyrants free.

MEM. (*during this*)

Of course I swear—

'Tis vain I know—

I ne'er shall dare

To take the vow—

I neither hear nor see—

Oh, could I but get free !

Now, pray, sweet bravo, go.

FOR.

No, first a cup of wine.

And you shall pledge your chief.

(*They show unwillingness*) How's this? Do you decline?
Oh, very well. [Going up.]

ALL. No! No!

MAL. (*aside*) My veins I'd open tear
With rage.

FOR. A cup of wine, I say.

MEM. (*Thrusting a goblet into his hand*) Be quick. There! there

FOR. Glorious wine!

Liquor divine!

Thou art the sun on hearts to shine!

Bright sparkling stream,

How dost thou gleam—

A vision of Heaven—a Paradise dream!

Souls to excite,

Spirits invite

To revel in joy is thy delight.

Goblet in hand,

Who can withstand

Woman's fond smile, or man's command?

So pledge me fair in glorious wine;

And all to hail your chief combine.

ALL. We pledge thee fair in glorious wine;

And all to hail our chief combine.

Hail! Fortespada, hail!

[As FORTESPADA goes up to refill his goblet, MALRSPINA takes
MICHELE aside.]

MAL. Thy hand is firm for this night's work?

MIC. Ne'er did it fail.

Bianca dies!

FOR. (*coming down between them*)

You said?

MAL. 'Twas naught. (*Aside*) He made me quail.

[FORTESPADA looks at them a moment, then goes up again.]

MAL. (*low, to CONTARINI*)

You follow—watch.

FOR. (*turning quickly on CONTARINI*) Ha! is it so?
The first who stirs is lost!

MEM. Pray, let him go.

FOR. Sweet gentlemen, your slave!
Your pardon I must crave,
If so roughly your attendance I repel.
When murder's in the case,
Politeness must give place;
And briefly Fortespada bids farewell.

OTHERS. (*during this*)

He goes, and broken thus the spell—
We breathe once more. He bids farewell.

FOR. Farewell!

[FORTESPADA going by the c. door.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I. An Aisle of the Cathedral of Milan, leading to a Chapel, occupies R. of stage.—Entrance to chapel F. E. R., with illuminated window above.—Cloisters occupy L. of stage.—The Shrine of the Saint C. in front of division of the stage—steps lead up to it—At further end of the Aisle Gates opening upon the Cathedral-square—Evening.

LADIES (attendants upon BIANCA) enter by gates at back.

CHORUS—LADIES.

As slowly fades the light of day,
Alone, at holy shrine to pray,
Designs our mistress fair.
'Tis sweet, with pure and simple mind,
The heart's best balm, content, to find
In true and fervent pray'r.

At the end of chorus, enter BIANCA, then NOBLES, OFFICERS,
and GUARDS—Flourish—Enter DUKE MATTEO VISCONTI.—
Later, MALESPINA, CONTARINI, MONTALTO and MICHELE.

DUKE. (*who holds a paper in his hand—in agitation*)

'Tis insolence unparallel'd !

BIA. My sire,

What agitates you thus ? why this strange ire ?

DUKE. This moment, in the crowd, this paper wild
Was thrust into my hand—read ! read ! my child.

BIA. (*reading*):

“ I have heard your proclamation, Duke of Milan ;

“ Five hundred ducats you have offer'd for my head—

“ Five thousand more to him can seize me I will give :

“ The Bravo Fortespada.”

The Bravo Fortespada, ah !

[*Lets fall the scroll.*]

MAL.

Unheard

Audacity !

CON.

'Tis insolence absurd !

BIA.

My father, ah ! of that dread man the name
Alone seems death ! a tremor through my frame
Ran darkly as that fearful scroll I read.

DUKE.

Fear not ! the glaive of justice o'er his head
Will quickly fall ! Be calm ! Within this shrine
The church protects thee with her pow'r divine.
No more of this ! Thy foolish fears deride.
When ended thy devotions, to thy side
I will return.

BIA.

My fears, see, I dispel,
And smile again.

DUKE.

One kiss, my child, farewell !

[The DUKE salutes MALESPINA and CONSPIRATORS with cordiality, and goes up with OFFICERS, GUARDS, &c.—As the DUKE and Train exeunt c., an OLD BEGGAR presses through the crowd, and hides behind the shrine as the others exeunt—During the ensuing chorus MALESPINA speaks aside to his friends who go out.—He then confers alone with MICHELE.

CHORUS—LADIES.

As slowly fades the light of day, &c., &c.

RECITATIVE.

MAL. (*to Michele*) One last appeal to that proud heart I'll make—
Let her but smile on me, I spare her yet,
But if again she scorn, complete thy work.

[Michele bows and goes up.

(*Aloud to Bianca*) Fair lady !BIA (*aside*) He still here—that hated man.

MAL. Will't deign to grant me one short interview ?

BIA. Count Malespina, I forbade your presence.

'Twere best we spoke no more,

- MAL. Bianca, list! one moment—but one word,
And hear me, as though death between us stood;
This word my last to thee.
- BIA. Importunate! To such appeal 'twere base to close
my ear.
For the last time I'll hear thee,—'tis the last—the last.
- [BIANCA makes a sign to her LADIES, who retire into Chapel.
- MAL. (*to himself*)
Perchance the last, indeed! Proud beauty, ay!
For death thy lot, shouldst thou my suit defy!

DUET.

- MAL. Although with cold disdain
My ardent love you have repell'd,—
- BIA. Forbear! No more that strain!
Yet ne'er has been the passion quell'd.
- MAL. Then pity show.
- BIA. No more!
My feelings spare;
- MAL. My heart you break,
That pity I implore—
Ay, mark me well! for thine own sake!
Reject not my appeal,
Nor coldly spurn. [*Kneels.*
- BIA. Ah! vainly would you kneel,
Hear me in turn!
'Tis not with cold disdain,
Your ardent love I would repel—
- MAL. My pleading yet was vain—
- BIA. My heart yields to another spell—
Another's love—
- MAL. No more!
My soul you rouse.

BIA.	In wrath you part:	
	Forbearance I implore—	
	No longer mine to give, my heart!	} Together.
MAL.	In vain would she implore,	
	'Gainst ev'ry pray'r is steel'd my heart!	
MAL.	This lover bold proclaim!	
	His name, I say—his name!	
BIA.	No—no! From every eye,	
	My secret dead must lie!	
MAL. (<i>aside</i>)	'Tis done! my last hope flies!	
	Her doom is seal'd—she dies!	

ENSEMBLE.

MAL.	Vain is my appeal!
	Soon the deadly steel,
	Shall my vengeance deal,
	Maiden proud, on thee!
	Darkly o'er my soul
	Fearful visions roll!
	Nearly looms the goal
	Of deep revenge to me!
BIA.	Vain is his appeal!
	And his looks of steel
	Fearfully reveal
	Terrors new for me!
	Darkly o'er my soul
	Gath'ring tremors roll!
	From fears without control
	My mind I cannot free!
MAL.	My love can change to hate!
BIA.	No more! no more, I pray!
MAL.	Proud woman, meet thy fate!
BIA.	Go! leave me—hence away!

ENSEMBLE *da capo*.

MAL. Vain is my appeal!

&c. &c.

BIA. Vain is his appeal!

&c. &c.

[MALESPINA goes up, makes apart a sign to MICHELLE to complete his purpose, and exit. The gates are closed behind him. MICHELLE watches a moment, and during the following, enters the Chapel, R.

RECITATIVE.

BIA. Forebodings sad come creeping o'er my mind ;
 He went in anger and with threat'ning mien.
 My Odoardo, where art thou ?
 Fresh courage to my heart thy love would give.
 Alas ! far, far away is he ! No more of this
 In solitary prayer, the soul's best solace,
 Holy Saint, to thee my vows I bring.

FINALE.

[The scene is now gloomy. The OLD BEGGAR appears from behind the Shrine, and approaches BIANCA kneeling. He is in loose tattered garments, with a long white beard
 Leans on staff.

BEG. Alas ! alas !

BIA. (*turning*) Who's there ? That plaintive tone !

BEG. Will no one aid a poor old man ?

BIA. (*rising and going to him*) Alone

I little can—but, father, lean on me.

BEG. Alas ! my poor old limbs ! I faint—I fall

[*Totters and falls.*

BIA. See—see !

This essence may revive thee. [*Offers smelling bottle.*

BEG. Lady dear,

Thanks ! thanks ! you're kind—

BIA. (*supporting his head*) Could I thy spirit cheer.

BEG. Good lady—you—unless my eyesight fail,
The Duke's fair daughter?

BIA. Yes.

BEG. Then hear my tale.

(Changing manner, with sudden energy, in her ear)

Start not—your life's in danger!

BIA. My life!

BEG. But nothing fear.

BIA. *(starting up)* Ah me; who art thou, stranger?

BEG. To guard thee I am here,
From every ill.

[Seizes her hands.]

BIA. I tremble.

Unhand me—let me fly.

BEG. No, no. Your fears dissemble.

Be silent, or you die!

[The OLD BEGGAR hides rapidly behind the Shrine, as MICHELE enters disguised as a monk from Chapel, R. BIANCA flies to MICHELE.]

BIA. Good monk, your aid,

MIC. She falls an easy prey!

Alone! it is the time! *[He seizes BIANCA.]*

BIA. *(Alarmed.)* What would you, say?

That fearful look,

MIC. *(dragging her towards shrine)* In vain you strive,

BIA. Ah! me,

MIC. The death blow falls! *[He lifts his dagger to stab her.]*

BEG. *(rushing between them and stabbing MICHELE)*

It falls on thee! on thee!

[MICHELE falls dead. BIANCA staggers, fainting with fright. The BEGGAR catches her in his arms, and holds her sinking form. Organ, and Prayer, in Chapel.]

BEG. Look up, look up, my dearest,
 Thy life is saved by me ;
 What is't thou longer fearest ?
 'Tis love supports thee,—see !
 By gratitude requited,
 My heart and soul are thine !
 Our fates are now united—
 For ever art thou mine !

BIA. (*faintly*) Good heavens ! thine ?

BEG. For ever mine ! (*Holding up the dagger.*)

I swear it by this blood for thee I've shed,
 I swear it by this heart to others dead,
 I swear it by this kiss—what'er betide
 Thou art *my* bride alone—the Bravo's Bride.

BIA. (*struggling*) Release me, fearful man. Ah woe !
 Away !

BEG. So be't ; but ere I go—
 Dost know who kiss'd thy cheek—who press'd thy hand ?
 Dost know who on thy heart has stamp'd his brand ?
 Go tell thy father, on his throne of pride,
 'Twas Fortespada—thou the Bravo's Bride !

BIA. (*screaming with terror*) Ah ! Fortespada ! Come to aid !
 Help ! help ! Protect me, wretched maid !

[FORTESPADA throws off his beggar's dress and appears as a
 Monk. He pulls the cowl over his face and hides for a
 moment. Organ ceases—Ladies rush out from the Chapel
 in terror and confusion. The doors behind are broken open
 and the Crowd pours in with torches—Officers, Guards,
 &c.—Monks hurry in. Afterwards the DUKE and Atten-
 dants pierce through the tumult.

ALL. What voice of terror calls to aid ?
 This way ; this way. The shrine invade.
 What have we here ?
 Ah ! sight of fear.

[The MONKS raise the body of MICHELE.

DUKE. (*coming down*) My child, my child, why this despair?

ALL. By terror chill'd, behold her stare!

DUKE. Speak, speak my child, what dost thou fear?

ALL. (*pointing to corpse*) Behold a monk lies murd'ed here!

DUKE. Speak—speak!

BIA. (*faintly*) A beggar—

DUKE. Search around!

ALL. Yes, search, and be the miscreant found!

[As all search, FORTESPADA, as Monk, approaches BIANCA, who lies cowering in front.

FOR. (*low to her*) Remember!

BIA. (*springing up*) Ah!

FOR. Wouldst thou betray

The man who saved thy life this day?

BIA. No, no! Go; save thyself and fly!

FOR. (*as Monk*) My blessing, daughter fair,

BIA. I die!

[FORTESPADA disappears as they all come forward. BIANCA is supported by the DUKE.

CHO. Ah, myst'ry strange! About, around,
The murd'rer vile is nowhere found!

BIA. (*wildly*) Those fearful words! Whate'er betide,
Thou'rt mine—thou art the Bravo's Bride!

DUKE My child! those words!

BIA. Where shall I hide

My doomed head? The Bravo's Bride!

See, see! he hovers by my side,

He claims me as the Bravo's Bride!

DUKE Bianca, in my heart confide!

Why these strange words, "The Bravo's Bride?"

CHO. A myst'ry strange her terrors hide,

In those wild words "The Bravo's Bride."

[BIANCA faints. Tableau of consternation. Curtain.

END OF ACT TWO.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—Apartment of BIANCA, open at back.—Doors R. and L.

[Groups of Dancers are practising steps for the Masque.
ZEFFIRINA with a lute (old-fashioned guitar) directs the
movements.]

INTRODUCTION.—ENSEMBLE.

- ZEF. One, two, three, sliding now
 In *pas* sublime ;
 One, two, three, biding now
 One bar for time ;
 One, two, three, cutting now
 High in the air ;
 One, two, three, strutting now
 With a grace rare.
- CHO. We'll practice well our *pas* sublime,
 And carefully we'll count our time ;
 Untir'd all with zealous care,
 To-morrow's masque, see, we prepare !
- ZEF. A grander masque no one has seen who lives,
 Than that to-morrow eve his Highness gives.
 Myself and other beauties of the Court
 Appear as Goddesses. 'Twill be rare sport !
 I'm charming in a masque.
- CHO. (*laughing*) A mask, no doubt !
- ZEF. Last year, as Venus, no one found me out.
- CHO. (*as before*) In such disguise no wonder !

ZEF.

Ah ! 'twas rare!

When I unmask'd, ye pow'rs, how they did stare!

Oh ! had you seen me dance of yore

My choicest *pas*,

The times gone by how you'd deplore.

CHO. (*laughing to each other*) Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !ZEF. (*dancing*) With measur'd step—in stately pride—

With now a sink—and now a slide—

Slow turn of hands—and grave *chasses*—

And curtseys low that grace display—

In gorgeous peacock train,

When I swam by, there's not a man

Whose heart did not enchain

My graces in the proud Pavan.

CHO. (*as before*) Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

ZEF. But still I can unbend—To-morrow night

How think you, I appear, for your delight ?

CHO. Perhaps Medusa—of the Furies three'

The chief—

ZEF.

Oh, no ! A Siren I shall be !

In dress divine,

Oh ! I shall shine !

With glitt'ring bells,

And cockle-shells,

And sea-weed green,

The brightest seen—

And coral fair

All down my hair !

A comb in this hand I shall hold—

In this a mirror all of gold ;

And then, of course, as is the rule,

I figure in a brisk *pas-seul*.(*Dancing and singing*) La ! la ! la ! la ! la ! la ! &c.CHO. (*Laughing*)

Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! &c.

ZEF. But you forget yourselves
 In idleness perverse—
 Come, come, my fairy elves,
 Your steps you must rehearse.

ENSEMBLE *repeated.*

ZEF. One—two—three—sliding now, &c., &c., &c.

CHO. We'll practise well our *pas* sublime, &c., &c., &c.

[Beppo peeps in, L. D.]

BEP. Signora! May I venture to appear?

ZEF. (*to others*)

Ah! Signor Beppo 'tis—our new page here.

BEP. (*tenderly*)

Delighted at his lot to meet you thus.

ZEF. (*as before*)

By young Ferrara's Prince transfer'd to us.

BEP.

As he your lady's bridegroom soon will be,
 Between us two there's sympathy, you see!

ZEF.

Ferrara's Prince her bridegroom! who can tell?

BEP.

It is her father's will!

ZEF.

I know that well!

[Turns up.]

BEP. (*aside*)

Oh! what a cruel notion
 On me this task to set,
 To feign a soft emotion,
 And court this old coquette!
 The secrets to discover,
 Of lady's heart I've sworn,
 And from her unknown lover,
 Her constancy to turn!

But my young prince's scheme I must fulfil!

(*To Zef.*) Could I your graces see without a thrill?

ZEF.

Hast seen me dance?

BEP.

Oh! rapture! yes!

ZEF.

Where? where?

BEP.

In my dreams only!

ZEF.

Pretty! I declare! (*turns coquettishly.*)

BEP. (*aside*) Oh! what a cruel notion!

&c., &c. (*repeated.*)

(*To ZEF., coming down*) A place, as dancer, you've reserved for me,
A Triton to your Siren I shall be!
Your lesson I attend as humble slave.
(*Aside*) Now then to sift her!

ZEF. Mind how you behave!

Hold up your head, turn out your toes!

BEP. To your sweet swain, I pray, disclose
How stands your pretty mistress, love!

ZEF. You never will a dancer prove,
If thus you stand!

BEP. Say! does her heart
Ferrara's Prince some hope impart?

ZEF. Don't talk of hearts, but mind your gait—

BEP. But say, at least, she does not hate?

ZEF. Attention! or to me

No partner you shall be!

BEP. My every thought is thine,
My siren maid divine!

ENSEMBLE.

BEP. (*Aside*) If with such idle prate,
She drives me desperate,
Her confidence to gain,
I thus shall strive in vain.

ZEF. If in such woeful state
Your head you don't hold straight,
My purpose to attain
I thus shall strive in vain.

CHO. She's in a woeful state—
His head he won't hold straight—
Her purpose to attain
See thus she strives in vain.

BEP. (*to himself.*)

What step to take?

ZEF. (*teaching.*)

What step? Why, this.

BEP. (*as before*)

For learn I must.

ZEF.

If thus remiss,

You'll never learn,—

BEP. (*aside*)

It must be done.

(*Aloud*) Your lady's heart is not yet won ;

ZEF. (*teaching*)

Yes, one—and two—

BEP.

Have you essay'd

The Prince's hopes of love to aid ?

ZEF.

I've spared no pains—

BEP. (*eagerly*)

Her heart to reach

In his behalf?

ZEF.

No, you to teach ;

But for the dance you've not

The slightest genius got.

BEP. (*aside*)

'Tis really quite absurd,

I can't extract a word.

ENSEMBLE.

BEP. (*aside*)

In such a hopeless case

I only earn disgrace ;

Her confidence to gain,

Alas ! I strive in vain.

ZEF.

In such a hopeless case,

My efforts I misplace ;

My purpose to attain,

Alas ! I strive in vain.

CHO.

That 'tis a hopeless case,

Reveals her sad grimace ;

Her purpose to attain,

'Tis clear she strives in vain.

ZEF. But hark ! my lady comes.

BEP. I take my leave.

Ah ! lovely Siren, to depart I grieve—
On that sweet hand let me imprint a kiss.

[Kisses her hand.

Oh, joy ! And, on that taper finger, this,
Sent by Ferrara's Prince—

[Places a ring on her finger.

ZEF. I do declare,

A diamond ring !

BEP. And to your lady fair

One word for him you'll say. (*Aside*) Now all to tell
That I have done. Farewell, my dove—

ZEF. (*coquettishly*)

Farewell !

[Exit B, L. D.

CHO.

With fervour rare,
And homage meet,
Our lady fair,
We love to greet.
A sunlight beam
On ev'ry heart,
In golden gleam
Her charms impart !

No brighter vision from the sky
E'er cheer'd with hope the raptur'd eye !

Enter BIANCA, C. D.

BIA. "The Bravo's Bride !" How lingers in mine ear
That dreadful threat. On ev'ry side is fear.
But these alarms I must dispel. See there—
My Zeffirina—

ZEF.

Yes, we all prepare

For the grand *fête*—at which Ferrara's Prince

Will present be—

[Looks at the ring.

BIA.

That name !

ZEF. (*aside*)

I've made her wince—

(*Aloud*) Your father wills that you should be his bride—

BIA. His bride? no—never—no! Whate'er betide—

ZEF. (*Aside*) As I divin'd, another's in her head—

(*Aloud*) Your nuptials will be soon—

BIA. You'll see me dead

Before I yield—

ZEF. Oh! what a sad mistake,

When he's a Prince—why not your bridegroom take?

Should choice be such a bother,

One's lovers all among;

One man is worth another,

When he's a bridegroom young.

I should be loath to praise,

[Looks at the ring.

But he's a noble prince,

And has such pretty ways,

Your reason to convince.

BIA. No more such foolish talk. My heart to one

Is bound for ever—ay, to him alone.

ZEF. But should the Duke your passion learn, his will

Might force you to accept the young Prince still.

I should be loath to praise,

But he's a noble Prince;

And has such pretty ways

Your reason to convince.

BIA. No, no! My father I will see—reveal

My secret love, and to his heart appeal.

[Makes sign to ZEFFIRINI and Ladies to go. They exeunt.

BALLAD.

In vain I strove to teach my heart,

'Spite yearnings of regret,

The task, beyond poor woman's art,

The sad task—to forget.

For while, with ardour, every day,
 'Gainst my own heart I fought,
 To drive the thought of him away,
 'Twas he my only thought.

In vain I bade him hence depart,
 When for my love he pray'd,
 And frown'd on him with breaking heart—
 Then wept when he obey'd.
 For when, in duty's cold debate,
 My heart I would have taught,
 Instead of love to foster hate,
 'Twas he my only thought.

[Exit R.]

SCENE III.—The Chamber of the DUKE OF MILAN.—A vast gloomy room.
 —High up in back flat, three openings in a slanting direction, indicating the
 existence of a descending passage above.—Window L., and balcony.—A large
 picture reaching to the ground in C. R.—Doors R. and L.

[The DUKE sits at a table writing.—Taper burning,—He takes
 up a paper.]

SOLO.

DUKE. A warning scroll; "Be on your guard," it says;
 A foul conspiracy—and on my days
 A murderous attempt; I'll not believe
 The lie. 'Twas sent me but my heart to grieve. [Rises
 Oh, crown of pow'r! ambition's dream!
 What vision bright and fair art thou?
 How glittering do thy glories seem,
 To dazzled eye on princely brow!
 But ah! how tear the throbbing brain
 The thorns, beneath thy circlet set—
 The racking cares—the doubts of pain
 That aye the fiend Mistrust beget.

If treach'ry base
 Be lurking nigh,
 It hides its face
 From every eye,
 In friendship's mask
 It blandly smiles,
 With cunning task
 The heart beguiles,
 And seeks in falsehood's gloom
 It's secret to entomb.
 Ah, crown of pow'r! ambition's dream,
 &c., &c. (*da capo.*)

The DUKE seats himself again, wearily, at table. Enter BIANCA,
 R.D., silently.—A pause.

RECITATIVE.

DUKE. (*startled*) Who's there? who's there?

BIA. Your child.

DUKE. Bianca; at this hour, what dost thou here?

BIA. I sought thee, father, for my heart is sore,
 With troubled thoughts. Hast thou not ever bid me
 seek

Thy heart, for mine to commune with in grief?

DUKE. True, true. What ails thee, then, my child?
 Speak—to thy father, speak.

DUET.

BIA. From my childhood, didst thou pray me
 In thy heart to seek, my father,
 Should a false world e'er betray me,
 That pure love, which ne'er betrays;
 And my sorrow I have brought thee
 In affliction weak, my father.
 Thee I seek now as I sought thee,
 In my early childhood's days.

DUKE.

Say on, my child,
 In spirit mild
 I hear thee.
 Thy grief of heart
 Here, here impart—
 Nor fear thee.

BIA.

In my childhood, ay, I swore thee
 To respect thy will, my father,
 And my spirit bowed before thee,
 As a loving child obeys ;
 But my heart has now betray'd thee,
 Nor bows 'fore thee still, my father,
 With the same love that obey'd thee
 In my early childhood's days.

DUKE.

Speak out, my child,
 What fancy wild
 Comes o'er thee ?
 To calm his fears,
 Thy father's tears
 Implore thee !

BIA.

It is thy will, Ferrara's Prince I wed,
 Ne'er can I yield to this command

DUKE.

Know'st what disgrace thou bringst upon my head ?
 To him is pledg'd, as bride, thy hand !
 When troubles dire are gath'ring round my throne,
 In him a firm ally I find—
 'Tis will'd—

BIA.

And me thou'd'st sacrifice alone !

Canst thou be thus to pity blind ?

DUKE.

The Bravo's threat my will has fixed.

DLA. (*shuddering*)

Oh, fear !

At that foul thought !

DUKE.

For all prepare,

This very eve, perchance, the Prince is here !

BIA.

This very eve ? Oh spare me—spare !

It ne'er can be—

- DUKE. No more,
That thou his bride, I swore !
- BIA. No more can I my feelings smother !
Alas ! I love—I love another !
- DUKE. Another !
- BIA. Father—Yes !
My secret I confess !
- DUKE. The villain traitor's name discover !
- BIA. No villain traitor is my lover !
Hear me !
His manly form—his beaming eye,
First, all unknown, my spirit moved ;
His graceful air—his courtesy
Then won my heart : and lo ! I lov'd !
But, when his deeds of courage rare
Were graven on his country's roll,
And fame he grasp'd beyond compare,
Then his alone my inmost soul.
- DUKE. Of Odoardo you would speak ?
- BIA. To him, alas ! my heart was weak—
- DUKE. A vassal, from the people sprung—
- BIA. His deeds the theme of ev'ry tongue.
- DUKE. Of lineage base, obscure his name—
- BIA. Endear'd to all his noble fame—
- DUKE. His birth, his parentage unknown—
- BIA. Than his renown no prouder throne !
- DUKE. No more, I pray, no more !
- BIA. Can'st to his worth be blind ?
- DUKE. You chafe my spirit sore,
- BIA. Ah ! cruel and unkind.

ENSEMBLE.

- DUKE. Degenerate child, far from mine eyes !
Nor to my sight henceforth appear,
Until this love, I must despise,
Thou'st learn'd from out thy heart to tear,

BIA. Degenerate child, in his proud eyes,
 Must I alas ! henceforth appear ;
 But ne'er the love I fondly prize
 Can I from out my bosom tear.

BIA. Yet hear me still, I pray,

DUKE. No ! far from me away ;
 (*Aside*) Let now my ducal pride
 The father's weakness hide !

ENSEMBLE repeated.

DUKE. Degenerate child, far from mine eyes,
 &c. &c.

BIA. Degenerate child, in his proud eyes,
 &c. &c.

[At the conclusion of the Duet, BIANCA is going out sorrowfully
 —she turns to look at her father—he waves her away. Exit,
 R. D., BIANCA looking back.]

RECITATIVE.

DUKE. Ah, cruel girl ! more anguish to my tortured heart
 Thou givest,
 Yet were I not in honour pledged
 To proud Ferrara, in young Odoardo I had found
 A fitting hand to which I could confide
 The destinies of Milan's throne.
 His courage firm, his bold address,
 Were towers of strength—'tis he alone can cope
 With that bold reckless man whose insolence has dared
 To claim my daughter as his bride, "The Bravo's Bride !"

FINALE.

[Mysterious Music—The DUKE sits again at table writing.]
 DUKE. As demon, more than man, this Bravo dread
 The vulgar mind of man dismays with fear !
 Where'er he will, with fiend-like craft, 'tis said,
 Beyond the pow'r's of nature, he'll appear

[FORTESPADA enters from panel, C.L.]

But from mine eye he shrinks, this miscreant bold—
And yet fain would I see him once.

FOR. (*touching the DUKE on the shoulder*) Behold!

DUKE. Who's there?

[Starts up in alarm.]

FOR. To gratify your wish I'm here—
The Bravo you would see.—Well! I appear!

DUKE. (*staggered*) Who art thou?

FOR. Dost not see?

'Tis few who doubt of me.

DUKE. Who art thou, fearful man?

FOR. I pray, my features scan.

The Bravo of Milan see!

Whom mortal eye

Can ne'er descry.

Unless myself I will it—I!

Your guest of to-night in me

Is the man, my friend,

On whose arm depend

The pow'rs to spare, or life to end—

By silly legend styl'd

The Demon-Bravo wild—

I'm Fortespada!

DUKE.

Fortespada!

Ah miscreant! Ho! within there! Help! help here!

FOR.

Hold! not so fast! you are constrain'd, I fear,

My conversation to endure awhile—

Your guards are all remov'd!

DUKE.

Ah! traitor vile!

FOR.

And in my pow'r art thou!

DUKE.

Then strike, and end

The shame I feel.

FOR.

Pray, be compos'd, my friend,

Thine hour has not yet toll'd.

DUKE. Ah! insolence too bold!
 My feelings how restrain?

FOR. Say! why this proud disdain?
 'Tis not purple and gold that ennoble the man,
 Nor the baubles the vulgar revere;
 'Tis the heart that can feel—'tis the head that can plan—
 'Tis the soul that no danger can fear!
 The stateliest garment may cover a cheat,
 And of jewels may false be the shine;
 While 'neath coarsest attire of beggar may beat
 A stout heart as ennobled as thine.

DUKE. Strange man! if glory 'tis you seek, in time
 Renounce this foul career of blood and crime!
 Abjure your fearful trade! depart!

FOR. No! no!
 Why that? What do I fear from thee (*laughing*) Ho! ho!
 I dread not Milan—'tis I, Milan's dread.
 Shrink not! I come to serve thee. O'er thy head
 The sword of death. A band of traitors bold
 Thy life would menace—see! the list I hold:
 Grant me one boon—that list is thine—
 A villain's tongue should I believe?
 No! thou would'st dupe by foul design—
 Upon my soul, my heart you grieve—
 The Bravo's friend and firm ally,
 u've nought to fear—your foes may brave—
 To calumny ne'er list will I!

DUKE. You scorn me, when I come to save.

ENSEMBLE.

FOR. When thus my alliance I proffer,
 'Tis hard to be treated with scorn—
 But, shortly, thyself thou shalt offer
 The boon to refuse thou hast sworn.

And although thou reject now my warning,
 And dare thus my power to brave,
 Ere long thou shalt cease all thy scorning,
 And reward for the life I shall save.

DUKE. Thy insolent offer,
 I treat with scorn!
 Thy presence, scoffers,
 Too long I've borne!
 From me all warning
 My life to save,
 Meets only scorning—
 Thy threats I brave!

FOR. But if to thee I friendship vow,
 By one condition bound art thou!
 I charge thee by the blood for her I shed,
 When cruel death was hov'ring o'er her head—
 I charge thee by her life—spite ducal pride—
 Thou makest thy daughter mine—the Bravo's Bride!

DUKE. Ah! insolent! Affianced she
 To young Ferrara's prince—

FOR. Then I
 Another task before me see—
 By this bold hand the Prince shall die!

DUKE. Has heav'n no bolts to crush this fiend?

FOR. (*laughing*) Ho! ho!

[The DUKE, frantic with rage, hastens L.D.]

DUKE. Guards, guards! within, I say!

FOR. Ah! say you so?

[He strikes out the light.]

DUKE. Ha! miscreant, lights!

[FORTESPADA has rushed up to the picture, c.f., and touched a spring. The picture flies away—He passes through the aperture.]

FOR. My absence you compel —
 Father-in-law! I grieve to say "Farewell."

[FORTESPADA disappears by the picture, which closes. The Captain of the Guards, and Guards rush in, L. D.—Attendants with lights. The stage remains light, afterwards.

DUKE. Ah ! seize the villain ! seize !

GUA. Seize whom ?

We no one see in all the room—

[They search.

DUKE. Ah ! traitors ! you have let him 'scape !

GUA. No soul has pass'd in human shape !

DUKE. No soul has passed ?

GUA. And no one here

No traces of a man appear.

DUKE. My brain turns round ! Ah, surely, he

A fiend in mortal form must be !

ENSEMBLE.

DUKE. No delusion

His intrusion,

On my presence can have been !

With eyes blighted,

And affrighted,

The dark vision have I seen !

GUA. All's confusion !

What intrusion

On his Highness has there been ?

See him 'frighted,

And excited !

What dark vision has he seen ?

[Enter BIANCA, hastily, R. D., followed by Female Attendants—then Ladies, in consternation. Afterwards, Nobles and Courtiers.

BIA. Why this alarm so dire ?

DUKE. My child !

E'en now was here the Bravo wild !

With daring threats before me stood.

BIA. Ah ! shield us now, all angels' good !

DUKE (*to CAPT.*)

My trusty counsellors go seek—

[Exit CAPTAIN OF GUARDS, L.D.]

This instant fly! And vengeance wreak

Will I upon this villain knave!

BIA. May heaven us from this demon save!

ENSEMBLE *repeated.*

BIA.

Of delusion,

The confusion

Strikes my brain with terror keen,

Senses blighted,

Soul excited,

By the monster I have seen.

DUKE.

No delusion,

&c., &c.

GUA.

A delusion,

This intrusion

To his senses must have been;

He excited

And affrighted,

Dreams the Bravo he has seen.

CHO.

What confusion!

Strange delusion!

Can the Bravo here have been?

Thus excited

And affrighted,

Sure, some vision he has seen!

BEP. (*without*) Where is the Duke?

DUKE.

What new alarm?

Enter BEPPO hastily, L. D.

BEP.

My Lord!

The Prince! ah, stricken by that fiend abhorr'd!

DUKE.

What would you say?

BEP. Just come, he bleeding lies,
By Fortespada's hand—and, murder'd, dies!

ALL. Good Heavens!

'Twas so

ALL. The monster's threat!

Ah! night of woe,

And wild regret!

Enter CAPTAIN OF GUARDS hastily, L. D.

CAP. My lord, your noble friends are nowhere found—
Their chambers void.

DUKE. Both gone?

CAP. And on the ground

This scroll—

DUKE. [Gives paper.
Give here (*reads*) "The Bravo's words recall.
"If me thou scorn'st, thy dearest friends shall fall."

[He lets fall the paper.

ALL. Ah! night of woe,
And terror wild!
Accurs'd our foe—
By all revil'd!

[FORTESPADA appears at open picture C. F.

FOR. 'Tis thus that perish Fortespada's foes!

[He flings down a dagger.

ALL. 'Tis he! ah! seize the wretch!

FOR. Not yet—here goes!

[He springs over the balcony, L, and disappears. Several rush
up in confusion to the balcony.]

SOME. Seize! seize!

OTHERS. (*coming back*) Escap'd! his form night's shadows hide!

VOICE OF FOR. (*without*) Farewell, my bride!

BIA. (*hiding her face*)

Oh! shame!

VOICE. (*without*)

The Bravo's Bride!

ENSEMBLE.

CHO. Oh ! night of woe
 And terror wild !
 Yet 'scapes our foe
 By all revil'd!
 All mortal pow'r he dares outbrave—
 And Heav'n alone from fiends can save !

BIA. AND DUKE. What pow'r below
 Can aid bestow ?
 Where shall I crave
 For help to save ?

BIA. Beneath that demon pow'r
 That thunders o'er my head,
 With strick'n soul I cow'r,
 And faint with terror dread ?
 The fiend is ever nigh !
 My fate in vain I fly .

[BIANCA clings round her father's neck, and hides her face.

CHO. (*repeated*) Ah ! night of woe !
 &c., &c.

[Tableau of confusion and consternation. Curtain falls.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Arcade Gallery in the Palace.

[Military music without and shouts. Tumultuous cry
"Odoardo, Odoardo."]

Enter BIANCA, R., wildly, but full of joy.

BIA. Those shouts proclaim my lover's advent here ;
He's safe ; he lives. Begone all anxious fear.

AIR.—BIANCA.

Yes, I shall see him once again.

My throbbing heart, ah ! how restrain ?

But no ; the bounding tumult of my soul

Must I, alas ! control—

My father's stern commands before my eyes,

In warning vision rise.

Ah ! cruel task, in sorrow to conceal

The tears that dim the eye ;

Forbear the inward anguish to reveal,

And quell the bursting sigh.

But, ah ! the joy of loving hearts to hide,

Beneath cold, dreary mask—

The secret to no kindred soul confide,

Is yet more cruel task.

And, ah ! to him how coldness feign,

From his dear eyes my joy retain.

Ah !

As torrent roaming

O'er the height,

In deluge foaming

Takes its flight,

Onward bounding,
 Far resounding,
 Through the darkness of the night—
 The heart's devotion,
 Fetters vain,
 In wild emotion
 Breaks its chain,
 Trammels tearing,
 Boldly daring
 Secret darkness to disdain.
 Beyond concealing,
 My tender feeling,
 Of love the eye
 Must all descry!
 Ah!

As torrent roaming, &c., &c. (*Da capo.*)

[Enter FORTESPADA, J., as ODOARDO, with the appearance and in the armed costume of a young and handsome warrior.]

RECITATIVE.

BIA. (*aside*)

'Tis he! be calm, my heart.

FORT. (*aside*)

She's there, beloved one. Alas! sweet maid,
 Soon would the roses on that lovely cheek grow pale,
 Did'st know in me the Bravo so abhorr'd.
 (*Aloud*) Accept my homage, lady fair.

BIA. (*embarrassed*)

Signor, you're kind to give a thought to me
 So soon on your return,

(*Aside*) How hard this coldness to dissemble.

FORT. Give you a thought, Signora! Since I hence departed,
 No other has been mine, by day or night.

BIA,

No more of this, I do entreat—
 I cannot, must not, hear it.

FOR. 'Tis your will—I must obey. (*Aside*) I'll try her now.
 BIA. You would not give me such offence !
 FOR. Ah, no ! and from this hour I will offend no more.

DUET, BALLAD, TRIO, &c.,

FOR. One only boon on earth I priz'd,
 That boon I begg'd on bended knee,
 Rejected 'twas—my suit despis'd—
 BIA. (*aside*) He little dreams how hard to me—
 He little knows, when most severe,
 How wildly did my heart rebel.
 FOR. Before thee, if I dare appear,
 'Tis but to bid a last farewell.
 BIA. A last farewell !
 FOR. A last farewell.
 Yes, yes !

BALLAD.

Once more upon the path of life
 I wander forth alone,
 To battle on in weary strife
 Where none shall hear my moan ;
 Of all most dear on earth bereft,
 And doom'd to wild regret,
 One hope alone to me is left ;
 The hope, I may forget !
 As onward thus I darkly stray,
 Where'er my path may be,
 My dearest task will be to pray
 For happiness to thee !
 Yet for myself till death be nigh,
 His hand on me to set,
 One pray'r alone my soul shall sigh,
 The pray'r, I may forget,

BIA. Would you then leave your proud career,
Your glory, fame, friends, country, all ?
FOR. All, all !
BIA. The hearts that hold you dear ?
FOR. One word—and me you yet recall !
That word will you pronounce ?
BIA. No ! no !
(*Aside*) Ah ! anguish more than tongue can tell !
(*Aloud*) Go ! leave me—I command.
FOR. I go—
’Tis done ! accept my last farewell !
[Bows, and retires, sadly.
BIA. Ah ! struggle sore !
I can no more !
All false restraint away !
Stay, Odoardo, stay !
I love thee ! I am thine !
FOR. Bianca ! Thou art mine ?
BIA. Thine ! Thine !
FOR. Mine ! Mine !

[They embrace.

ENSEMBLE.

BIA. and FOR. What thrilling joy,
When each fond loving heart,
Without alloy,
Its secret can impart !
When kindred soul
The kindred soul can greet,
Without control,
In fond embrace can meet !
FOR. Oh, joy, beyond compare !
The heart I prize is mine !
BIA. Yes ! fondly hear me swear—
My heart and soul are thine !

BOTH. Oh, joy, beyond compare !
&c. &c. (*Da capo.*)

[FORTESPADA kneels at the feet of BIANCA, who bends fondly over him. Enter DUKE MATTEO VISCONTE, R.]

DUKE. What do I see ? thus disobeyed !

BIA. My father ! woe !

DUKE. Is thus my confidence betrayed ?

(*To FOR.*) Ah, traitor !

FOR. No ;

DUKE. Let me not see such foul disgrace !

[Turns to go.]

BIA. Stay, father, stay !

DUKE. What pardon for such treach'ry base ?

FOR. One word I pray !

If I to love have dar'd,

The crime is all my own !

Ah ! let your wrath be spar'd,

Or fall on me alone !

If noble fame I've sought

A lowly birth to hide,

I own, 'twas with one thought—

To win her as my bride !

DUKE (*to FORTESPADA*)

An unknown youth ! Bianca thine ?

BIA. (*Slinging her arms around the neck of her father.*) I pray
forbear !

FOR. (*to DUKE.*)

Does birth alone the heart refine !

BIA. (*to FORTESPADA*)

My father spare !

DUKE. (*to BIANCA*)

In vain thy duty to impart have I then striv'n ?

BIA. For ever giv'n to him my heart !

ALL THREE.

For ever giv'n !

ENSEMBLE.

- FOR. Yes ! if to love I've dar'd,
 The crime is all my own !
 Then let your wrath be spar'd,
 Or fall on me alone !
 When noble fame I've sought,
 My lowly birth to hide,
 I own 'twas with one thought,
 To win her as my bride !
- DUKE Yes ! both to love have dar'd,
 And my command disown !
 Must my just wrath be spared,
 And pity now be shown ?
 Ah, vainly have I sought
 To bend them to my pride,
 And tear from them the thought,
 That she can be his bride.
- BIA. But if to love I've dared,
 The crime is all my own ;
 Then let your wrath be spar'd,
 Or fall on me alone ;
 Though vainly have I sought,
 My secret love to hide,
 And tear from him the thought,
 That I could be his bride.
- DUKE (*to FORTESPADA*) My daughter's hand would you deserve ?
- FOR. Deserve her ? ay ! I proudly swear !
- DUKE. Nor weakly from my purpose swerve ?
- FOR. For her all perils will I dare !
- DUKE. Then mark me !
 If the assassin vile—the murd'rer dread
 Of all my friends—when chimes the midnight hour,
 This Bravo of Milan—alive or dead—
 Here, to my feet, you give into my pow'r,

To grant my daughter fair,
As your reward—I swear!

FOR. You swear?

DUKE. I swear!

FOR. (*uneasy*) Must it then be?

BIA. No, no, forbear

This hated fiend to seek—

FOR. (*anxiously*) No more!

So hated he? Yes! all I dare,

Since thee to grant thy father swore!

(*To DUKE.*) Then hear me!

Yes! this assassin vile—this murd'rer dread—

This hated fiend—when chimes the midnight hour,

This Bravo of Milan—alive or dead—

Here, at your feet I'll give into your pow'r!

But then your daughter fair

Shall be my bride you swear!

DUKE. I swear!

I swear!

FOR. At midnight hour, when all in revels here

Think to prolong the festive dance till morn,

The signal that the Bravo shall appear,

Myself I'll give—a sound upon my horn!

DUKE and BIA. A sound upon his horn!

DUKE. But how?

FOR. Ask not? I must away.

BIA. (*going to FOR.*) But should this Bravo—

FOR. Have no fear

BIA. Oh! should his hand my lover slay!

FOR. Fear not, sweet maid.

BIA. But heav'n above

Will hear my prayer.

FOR. Alarm discard.

BIA. We meet again.

FOR. Yes, yes, dear love.

BOTH. Good angels keep thee in their guard.

ENSEMBLE.

FOR. & BIA. Good angels guard thee, dearest love,
 When peril's hour is nigh;
 With shel'ring pinions, from above,
 To guard thee hither fly.
 Good angels from above
 Watch o'er and guard thee, love.

DUKE. Good angels our best guardian prove,
 For peril's hour is nigh;
 May watchful spirits, from above,
 To shield us hither fly.
 Good angels from above,
 Protect us with your love!

[FORTESPADA kisses the hand of BIANCA, and exit, L. The DUKE leads off BIANCA, R.

SCENE II.—Fantastically decorated halls, brilliantly illuminated with various devices, and opening, at back, upon moonlit gardens, to the extreme depth of the stage.

[Nobles, Ladies, Guests, &c., upon the stage.

CHORUS.

While twinkling stars and moonbeams pale
 Grow dim before the torches' light,
 'Midst balmy flow'rs
 We pass the hours,
 And tell of joy the merry tale
 In dances gay the live-long night!

[During the above, ZEFFIRINA has entered, fantastically dressed as a Siren, with a comb in one hand, and a mirror in the other. Then BEPPO, costumed as a Triton.

ZEF. Of Sirens, I'm the pearl!
 My head is in a whirl
 Before my raptur'd eyes
 A charming vision flies,

Of cupids, coloured lights,
 And other pretty sights,
 Of cockle-shells and masks—
 While ev'ry mortal asks,
 Whoe'er on earth may be
 The charming Siren, she?
 My head is in a whirl,
 Of Sirens I'm the pearl!

Is it because the bud is fair,
 No charm can have the full-blown rose?
 Though sweet the breath of morning air,
 Yet full-tide noon with beauty glows.

BEP. Fair Siren, all's prepar'd,
 And hither I've repair'd,
 As Triton, see! I'm dress'd!

ZEF. Well, it must be confess'd
 No prettier dress was seen.
 That beard of bright sea-green—
 Those weeds and rushes rare,
 Are lovely, I declare.

BEP. But what can e'er compare
 With such a Siren fair?

ZEF. You naughty Triton, hush!
 I swear you make me blush.

BEP. 'Tis well Ulysses liv'd not now,
 For vain his ears clos'd to the spell;
 To Siren such as you, I vow,
 He must have clos'd his eyes as well.

BOTH. Yes, yes.

ENSEMBLE.

BEP. Of sirens you're the pearl!
 My heart is in a whirl,
 When 'fore my raptur'd eyes
 So fair a vision flies.

ZEF. Ah! it must be confess'd,
 As lovely Siren dress'd,
 In that sweet tint of green,
 No lovelier maid I've seen.
 All wonder who can be
 The charming Siren she!
 With such a goddess rare
 Ah! who can now compare?
 Of sirens I'm the pearl!
 My head is in a whirl,
 When 'fore my raptur'd eyes
 So bright a vision flies.
 Well, it must be confess'd,
 As loving Triton dress'd,
 With that sweet beard of green,
 No prettier man I've seen.
 He vows there cannot be
 A Siren fair as me;
 And thus to hear him swear
 Is charming, I declare!

[BEPPLO leads ZEFFIRINA, with mock gallantry, among the Dancers. During the above, MEMMINO, CONTARINI, MONTALTI, and Conspirators, have entered among the crowd.]

CON. (to MONTALTI) Didst mark how blandly Duke Visconti smil'd
 On Malespina?

MON. Yes. In calm beguil'd,
 'Tis clear he nought suspects—

CON. (to MONTALTI) Where now your fears,
 Memmino brave?

MEM. Ha! ha! I'd give my ears
 The time were come—I feel so bold, I vow.

[MALESPINA advances among the group.]

(Startled) Who's there?

MAL. Be silent, fool ! All's ready now !

At midnight hour, when all in festive joys
 Dream to prolong their revels gay till morn,
 The signal of the onslaught on our foes,
 The Bravo gives a sound upon his horn.

ALL. A sound upon his horn.

[MALESPINA makes a sign to them to disperse. The Conspirators go up.

CHORUS (*repeated.*)

While twinkling stars, and moonbeams pale,
 &c., &c., &c.

[The Guests, &c., &c., disperse among the gardens. MALESPINA returns to the front of the stage.

RECITATIVE.

MAL. Revenge is nigh—
 The victor I !
 My potent sway
 All friends obey.

With glitt'ring hopes of honour some cajol'd—
 Whilst most have bow'd beneath the pow'r of gold.

BALLAD.

Chiefs, on might relying,
 All the world defying—
 Banner fair,
 High in air,
 Proud unfurl'd—
 Grasp, on glory's pinion,
 Boldly world's dominion !
 But, of old,
 Ay, 'tis gold
 Wins the world.
 Chiefs themselves implore it,
 Bow the knee before it.

For, of old,
 Ay, 'tis gold
 Wins the world !
 All before it yielding,
 Deadly pow'r wielding,
 Yes ! 'tis gold,
 Yes ! 'tis gold
 Wins the world !

Monarchs honour scatt'ring,
 Knaves with title flatt'ring—

Freedom's cry
 To defy,

Gauntlet hur'l'd—

Dream, by slaves ensnaring,
 All to rule they're daring !

Yet, of old,

Ay, 'tis gold

Rules the world !

Courtiers, all, with craving,
 Seek for gold's enslaving ;

For, of old,

Ay, 'tis gold

Rules the world !

Chains more potent weaving,
 Bolder still deceiving,

Yes, 'tis gold,

Yes, 'tis gold

Rules the world !

[MALESPINA goes up and mingles in the crowd.]

FINALE.

[Festive Music. Enter from back, DUKE MATTEO VISCONTI,
 with BIANCA, Nobles, Ladies, &c. MALESPINA, MEMMINO,
 CONTARINI, MONTALTI, and Conspirators form a group apart.
 ZEFFIRINA, BEPPO, and Dancers return. Grand Ballet. At

end of Ballet, just as ZEFFIRINA advances to execute her *pas-seul*, midnight tolls. Then a violent blast upon a horn. All start with anxiety or surprise. A movement of confusion.

CHO. What sound is that ?

DUKE. BIA. & CON. The signal horn !

The hour of { peril } now is come !
 { vengeance }

MAL. (*aside*)

Now, tyrant Duke, thy pow'r I scorn !

CHO. Why falls on all this fearful gloom ?

[The Crowd gives way in confusion. The gardens are discovered filled with Guards.

CHO. Guards ! Guards ! What means this strange array ?

CON. (*apart*)

Can aught have chanc'd our plot betray ?

DUKE. (*rising*)

For you my friends, there's nought to fear—

But know, before you will appear,

The Bravo Fortespada !

ALL.

The Bravo Fortespada !

FOR. (*without*)

Give way !

BIA. & CON. 'Tis Odoardo's voice !

He's safe ! he lives ! escap'd from death !

CON. Are we betray'd ?

BIA. Poor heart, rejoice !

CHO. We trembling wait with bated breath !

[Enter FORTESPADA, through Guards, C., still as ODOARDO.

CHO. (*all*) Yes ! yes ! 'Tis Odoardo, see !

CON. (*apart*)

Ah, treachery ! unscath'd is he !

FOR. 'Tis I, who vow'd that captive here,

This night before you should appear

The Bravo Fortespada !

- CHO. The Bravo Fortespada !
- FOR. Yes ! this assassin vile—this murd'rer dread—
This hated fiend—when chim'd the midnight hour,
To Milan's Duke I vow'd—alive or dead—
For one reward to give into his pow'r—
His child, whom I adore,
To make my bride he swore !
- DUKE. I swore !
I swore !
- FOR. My vow I've kept—within my pow'r he stands !
- CON. (*apart*)
Confusion ! in his pow'r.
- DUKE. Alive or dead, dost give him to my hands !
- FOR. Still living at this hour !
- CON. (*hastily*)
He lives ?
- FOR. (*bowing to them*)
He lives, Signors ! and ready I,
The Bravo wild to show !
- MEM. & } Not here ! not here ! Of thousand fears I die !
WOMEN. }
- ALL. How wond'rous falls the blow !
[FORTESPADA goes up the stage, turning his back.
- FOR. (*calling*)
Ho ! Fortespada ? ho !
- BIA. (*in terror*) Forbear, I pray !
- FOR. (*going up*)
Ho ! Fortespada ! ho !
- BIA. (*following him*) Thou shalt not go !
- FOR. (*still further*)
Ho ! Fortespada ! ho !
- BIA. (*trying to prevent him*) Nay, turn away !
Lest his assassin hand should strike—
[FORTESPADA turns, and appears with the face of the Bravo,
laughing.

FOR.

Ho, ho !

[BIANCA shrinks from him with terror.—Tableau of terror and confusion.

FOR.

Who wish'd to see the Demon Bravo wild ?
 Who sought to know the fiend by all revil'd ?
 He stands before you now, in dauntless pride !
 To claim his promis'd bride—"The Bravo's Bride !"

ENSEMBLE.

CHO.

Seize him ! seize him ! To the scaffold bear him !
 Seize him ! seize him ! Death must be his doom !
 Seize him ! seize him ! From our presence tear him !

Justly punish'd, for him yawns the tomb !

Seize him ! to the scaffold straight !

Seize him ! Death shall be his fate.

cease, whate'er my doom ;

 ; yawning tomb ;

 it,

 my fate !

methought I saw—oh, shame !

as none ;

and bravo are the same,

are one !

im ! to the scaffold bear him,

c. &c.

! no one intercede ?

Count !

Vile man, away !

Kind signor, for me plead ;

word of mercy say.

MEM. I—I—'tis false, I vow—

Ne'er heard of you before,
Nor ever saw your ugly face till now,
Nor wish to see it more.

FOR. What, pity none ?
Not one—not one ?
And silent all
To mercy's call ?
My lot is cast ; well, be it so,
To meet my death resign'd I go.

ENSEMBLE.

FOR. No pitying heart for me can feel,
Ah, wretched man—condemned by all ;
In vain for hope would I appeal,
For deaf all hearts to mercy's call.
Then strike and kill,
My fate fulfil !

BIA. One pitying heart for him can feel,
Poor wretched man, condemn'd by all ;
In vain the pangs would I conceal,
That on my heart with anguish fall.
Against my will
I love him still.

BEP. No pitying heart for him will feel,
By justice doom'd, condemned by all ;
But will he not the truth reveal,
That vengeance on the traitors fall,
And boldly still
His plan fulfil ?

DUKE. MAL. CON. and CHO.

No pitying heart for him can feel,
By justice doom'd—condemned by all !
In vain for hope would he appeal—
On him the glaive of death must fall.

Yes ; strike and kill
His fate fulfil.

[FORTESPADA turns, to go up. BIANCA springs forward and throws herself at the feet of the DUKE.

BIA. Oh, pardon, sire ! for mercy, see, I pray !

FOR. Oh, joy ! for me she pleads !

BIA. To heav'n above its justice leave !

DUKE. Away :

FORT. An angel intercedes :

BIA. For him, she loves, to sue, whate'er he be,

Before thee prostrate lies

Thy child :

FOR. Unmov'd canst thou hear her plead ?

DUKE. From me,

Unworthy girl ; he dies !

CHO. Yes ! yes ; he dies !

[FORTESPADA raises BIANCA, and places her in the arms of her attendants, goes up, and signs to the Guards, who fill the gardens. They rush in, and occupy the whole back space of the hall. All draw back with consternation. The group of Conspirators express their surprise and anxiety.

FOR. (to Guards.)

Advance, my men ! My will obey !

DUKE. Your will obey ?

CHO. His will obey ?

FOR. 'Tis so, indeed. They're in my pay.

DUKE. They're in your pay ?

CHO. They're in his pay ?

FOR. This very night is plann'd thy fall !

DUKE. Is plann'd my fall ?

CHO. Is plann'd his fall ?

FOR. Thou'rt doom'd to lose life, pow'r, all—

DUKE. Life, pow'r, all ?

CHO. Life, pow'r, all ?

FOR. (*to CONSPIRATORS*)

What say you now?

CON.

Then still is ours the game?

We triumph yet!

FOR.

When all my courage braves,
To doubt the good cause wins at last, were shame.
(*To GUARDS*) Advance, I say, and seize—

[*FORTESPADA* begins by pointing at the Duke, but sweeps round with his arm, and points to the Conspirators.

Those traitor knaves!

[*Guards* advance, and surround the Conspirators.

FOR.

Sweet gentlemen, your slave!

[*MALESPINA* and *CONSPIRATORS* are led out, guarded.

ODO.

The Bravo-band I crush'd. Fate led me then,
Where Fortespada, in his brigand den,
On death bed lay—and with his dying breath
Confess'd the foul conspiracy of death.
As bravo, then, disguis'd, I sought to learn
The traitors' plans, and thus their schemes o'erturn.
Montereale, later, served my plan,
And Salviati—

[*MONTEREALE* and *SALVIATI* enter, go to *DUKE*, and kneel before him.

While this trusty man

[*Pointing to BEPPO.*

Within the palace lodg'd, my schemes obey'd,
Some secrets learn'd, and to his lord betray'd.
But how Ferrara's Prince struck down?

DUKE.

ODO.

He lives. At my command, by Beppo, here,
The tale was fram'd.

No fear!

DUKE

But where the Prince? unfold!

ODO.

So be't : in me Ferrara's Prince behold.

PRINCE. I swore my fate to bind to her alone,
 Whose heart of love, unconscious of my throne,
 Should love me for myself—whate'er betide—
 And now my bride I've won—the Bravo's Bride.

ENSEMBLE.

BIA. What sunshine bright,
 Through murky night,
 Upon my wak'ning soul doth glide!
 What heavenly joy,
 Without alloy,
 To own myself the Bravo's Bride.

DUKE Let thousand voices now repeat with pride,
 The Bravo honour'd—bless'd the Bravo's Bride.

CHO. Yes! happy all, we now exclaim with pride,
 Long live the Bravo, and the Bravo's Bride.

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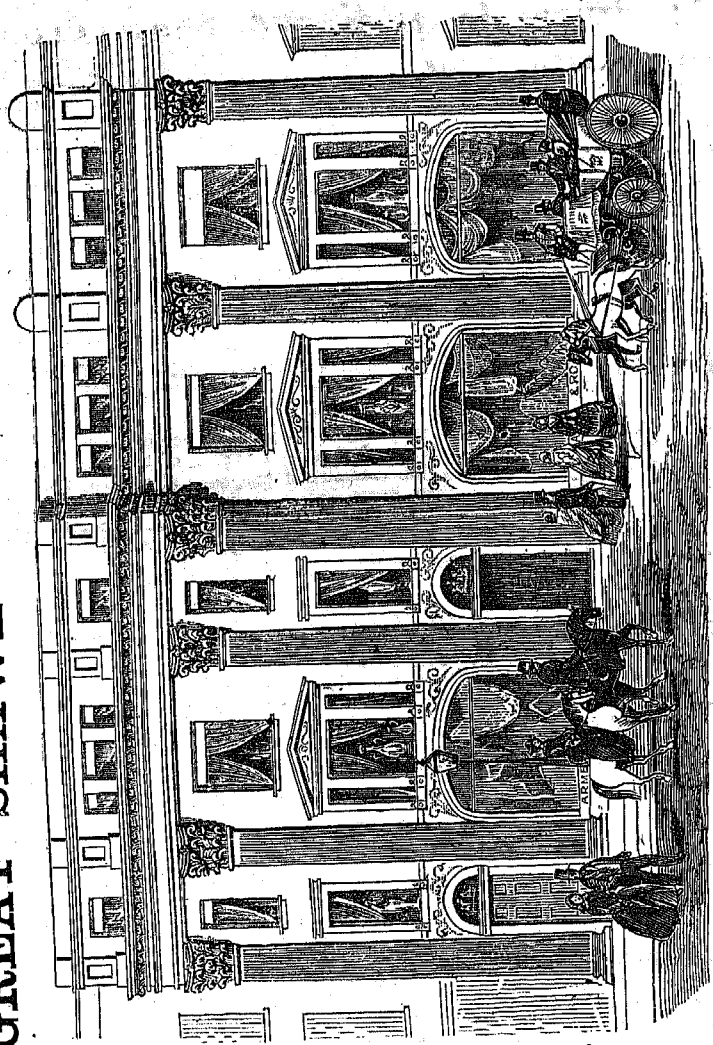
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