

PRINCESS IDA

OR

CASTLE ADAMANT

Written by

W. S. Gilbert

Composed by

Arthur Sullivan

First Produced at the Savoy Theatre, 5 January 1884

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING HILDEBRAND
HILARION (*his Son*)

Hilarion's friends:

CYRIL
FLORIAN

KING GAMA

His Sons:

ARAC
GURON
SCYNTHIUS

PRINCESS IDA (*Gama's Daughter*)
LADY BLANCHE (*Professor of Abstract Science*)
LADY PSYCHE (*Professor of Humanities*)
MELISSA (*Lady Blanche's Daughter*)

Girl Graduates:

SACHARISSA
CHLOE
ADA

Soldiers, Courtiers, "Girl Graduates," "Daughters of the Plough," etc.

ACT I

Pavilion in King Hildebrand's Palace

ACT II

Gardens of Castle Adamant

ACT III

Courtyard of Castle Adamant

Princess Ida

ACT I.

SCENE: – *Pavilion attached to KING HILDEBRAND'S Palace. Soldiers and courtiers discovered looking out through opera-glasses, telescopes, etc., FLORIAN leading.*

CHORUS.

Search throughout the panorama
For a sign of royal Gama,
Who to-day should cross the water
With his fascinating daughter –
Ida is her name.

Some misfortune evidently
Has detained them – consequently
Search throughout the panorama
For the daughter of King Gama,
Prince Hilarion's flame!

SOLO.

FLORIAN. Will Prince Hilarion's hopes be sadly blighted?
CHORUS. Who can tell? Who can tell?
FLORIAN. Will Ida break the vows that she has plighted?
CHORUS. Who can tell? Who can tell?
FLORIAN. Will she back out, and say she did not mean them?
CHORUS. Who can tell?
FLORIAN. If so, there'll be the deuce to pay between them!

CHORUS. No, no – we'll not despair, we'll not despair,
For Gama would not dare
To make a deadly foe
Of Hildebrand, and so,
Search through the panorama, etc.

(Enter KING HILDEBRAND, with CYRIL.)

HILD. See you no sign of Gama?
FLOR. None, my liege!
HILD. It's very odd indeed. If Gama fail
To put in an appearance at our Court
Before the sun has set in yonder west,
And fail to bring the Princess Ida here

Princess Ida

To whom our son Hilarion was betrothed
At the extremely early age of one,
There's war between King Gama and ourselves!
(*aside to CYRIL*) Oh, Cyril, how I dread this interview!
It's twenty years since he and I have met.
He was a twisted monster – all awry –
As though Dame Nature, angry with her work,
Had crumpled it in fitful petulance!

CYRIL. But, sir, a twisted and ungainly trunk
Often bears goodly fruit. Perhaps he was
A kind, well-spoken gentleman?

HILD. Oh, no!
For, adder-like, his sting lay in his tongue.
(His 'sting' is present, though his 'stung' is past.)

FLOR. (*looking through glass*) But stay, my liege; o'er yonder mountain's brow
Comes a small body, bearing Gama's arms;
And now I look more closely at it, sir,
I see attached to it King Gama's legs;
From which I gather this corollary
That that small body must be Gama's own!

HILD. Ha! Is the Princess with him?

FLOR. Well, my liege,
Unless her highness is full six feet high,
And wears mustachios too – and smokes cigars –
And rides *en cavalier* in coat of steel –
I do not think she is.

HILD. One never knows.
She's a strange girl, I've heard, and does odd things!
Come, bustle there!
For Gama place the richest robes we own –
For Gama place the coarsest prison dress –
For Gama let our best spare bed be aired –
For Gama let our deepest dungeon yawn –
For Gama lay the costliest banquet out –
For Gama place cold water and dry bread!
For as King Gama brings the Princess here,
Or brings her not, so shall King Gama have
Much more than everything – much less than nothing!

SONG – HILDEBRAND *and* CHORUS.

HILD. Now hearken to my strict command
On every hand, on every hand –

CHORUS. To your command,
On every hand,

Princess Ida

We dutifully bow.

HILD. If Gama bring the Princess here,
Give him good cheer, give him good cheer.

CHORUS. If she come here
We'll give him a cheer,
And we will show you how.
Hip, hip, hurrah! hip, hip, hurrah!
Hip, hip, hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!
We'll shout and sing
Long live the King,
And his daughter, too, I trow!
Then shout ha! ha! hip, hip, hurrah!
Hip, hip, hip, hip, hurrah!
For the fair Princess and her good papa,
Hurrah, hurrah!

HILD. But if he fail to keep his troth,
Upon our oath, we'll trounce them both!

CHORUS. He'll trounce them both,
Upon his oath,
As sure as quarter-day!

HILD. We'll shut him up in a dungeon cell,
And toll his knell on a funeral bell.

CHORUS. From his dungeon cell,
His funeral knell
Shall strike him with dismay!
Hip, hip, hurrah! hip, hip, hurrah!
Hip, hip, hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!
As up we string
The faithless King,
In the old familiar way!
We'll shout ha! ha! hip, hip, hurrah!
Hip, hip, hip, hip, hurrah!
As we make an end of her false papa,
Hurrah, hurrah!

Exeunt all. Enter HILARION.

RECITATIVE – HILARION.

To-day we meet, my baby bride and I –

Princess Ida

But ah, my hopes are balanc'd by my fears!
What transmutations have been conjur'd by
The silent alchemy of twenty years!

BALLAD – HILARION'

Ida was a twelve-month old,
Twenty years ago!
I was twice her age, I'm told,
Twenty years ago!
Husband twice as old as wife
Argues ill for married life
Baleful prophecies were rife,
Twenty years ago,

Still, I was a tiny prince
Twenty years ago.
She has gained upon me, since
Twenty years ago.
Though she's twenty-one, it's true,
I am barely twenty-two –
False and foolish prophets you
Twenty years ago,

Enter HILDEBRAND.

HIL. Well, father, is there news for me at last?

HILD. King Gama is in sight, but much I fear
With no Princess!

HIL. Alas, my liege, I've heard,
That Princess Ida has forsworn the world,
And, with a band of women, shut herself
Within a lonely country house, and there
Devotes herself to stern philosophies!

HILD. Then I should say the loss of such a wife
Is one to which a reasonable man
Would easily be reconciled.

HIL. Oh, no!
Or I am not a reasonable man.
She is my wife – has been for twenty years!
(*Holding glass*) I think I see her now.

HILD. Ha! Let me look!

HIL. In my mind's eye, I mean – a blushing bride
All bib and tucker, frill and furbelow!
How exquisite she looked as she was borne,
Recumbent, in her foster-mother's arms!

Princess Ida

How the bride wept – nor would be comforted
Until the hireling mother-for-the-nonce
Administered refreshment in the vestry.
And I remember feeling much annoyed
That she should weep at marrying with me.
But then I thought, “These brides are all alike.
You cry at marrying me? How much more cause
You’d have to cry if it were broken off!”
These were my thoughts; I kept them to myself,
For at that age I had not learnt to speak.

Exeunt HILDEBRAND *and* HILARION. *Enter* Courtiers.

CHORUS.

From the distant panorama
Come the sons of royal Gama.
They are heralds evidently,
And are sacred consequently,
Sons of Gama, hail! oh, hail!

Enter ARAC, GURON, *and* SCYNTHIUS.

SONG – ARAC.

We are warriors three,
Sons of Gama, Rex,
Like most sons are we,
Masculine in sex.

ALL THREE. Yes, yes, yes,
 Masculine in sex.

ARAC. Politics we bar,
 They are not our bent;
On the whole we are
Not intelligent.

ALL THREE. No, no, no,
 Not intelligent.

ARAC. But with doughty heart,
 And with trusty blade
We can play our part –
Fighting is our trade.

Princess Ida

ALL THREE.

Yes, yes, yes,
Fighting is our trade.

ALL THREE.

Bold and fierce, and strong, ha! ha!
For a war we burn,
With its right or wrong, ha! ha!
We have no concern.
Order comes to fight, ha! ha!
Order is obeyed,
We are men of might, ha! ha!
Fighting is our trade.
Yes, yes, yes,
Fighting is our trade, ha! ha!

CHORUS.

They are men of might, ha! ha!
Fighting is their trade.
Order comes to fight, ha! ha!
Order is obeyed!
Fighting is their trade.

Enter KING GAMA.

SONG – GAMA.

If you give me your attention, I will tell you what I am:
I'm a genuine philanthropist – all other kinds are sham.
Each little fault of temper and each social defect
In my erring fellow-creatures, I endeavour to correct.
To all their little weaknesses I open people's eyes;
And little plans to snub the self-sufficient I devise;
I love my fellow creatures – I do all the good I can –
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why!

To compliments inflated I've a withering reply;
And vanity I always do my best to mortify;
A charitable action I can skillfully dissect;
And interested motives I'm delighted to detect;
I know everybody's income and what everybody earns;
And I carefully compare it with the income-tax returns;
But to benefit humanity however much I plan,
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why!

Princess Ida

I'm sure I'm no ascetic; I'm as pleasant as can be;
You'll always find me ready with a crushing repartee,
I've an irritating chuckle, I've a celebrated sneer,
I've an entertaining snigger, I've a fascinating leer.
To everybody's prejudice I know a thing or two;
I can tell a woman's age in half a minute – and I do.
But although I try to make myself as pleasant as I can,
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why!

CHORUS. He can't think why!

Enter HILDEBRAND, HILARION, CYRIL and FLORIAN.

GAMA. So this is Castle Hildebrand? Well, well!
Dame Rumour whispered that the place was grand;
She told me that your taste was exquisite,
Superb, unparalleled!

HILD. (*gratified*) Oh, really, King!

GAMA. But she's a liar! Why, how old you've grown!
Is this Hilarion? Why, you've changed too –
You were a singularly handsome child!

(*To FLOR.*) Are you a courtier? Come, then, ply your trade,
Tell me some lies. How do you like your King?
Vile rumour says he's all but imbecile.
Now, that's not true?

FLOR. My lord, we love our King.
His wise remarks are valued by his court
As precious stones.

GAMA. And for the self-same cause.
Like precious stones, his sensible remarks
Derive their value from their scarcity!
Come now, be honest, tell the truth for once!
Tell it of me. Come, come, I'll harm you not.
This leg is crooked – this foot is ill-designed –
This shoulder wears a hump! Come, out with it!
Look, here's my face! Now, am I not the worst
Of Nature's blunders?

CYR. Nature never errs.
To those who know the workings of your mind,
Your face and figure, sir, suggest a book
Appropriately bound.

GAMA. (*enraged*) Why, harkye, sir,
How dare you bandy words with me?

CYR. No need
To bandy aught that appertains to you.

Princess Ida

GAMA. (*furiously*) Do you permit this, King?

HILD. We are in doubt
Whether to treat you as an honoured guest
Or as a traitor knave who plights his word
And breaks it.

GAMA. (*quickly*) If the casting vote's with me,
I give it for the former!

HILD. We shall see.
By the terms of our contract, signed and sealed,
You're bound to bring the Princess here to-day:
Why is she not with you?

GAMA. Answer me this:
What think you of a wealthy purse-proud man,
Who, when he calls upon a starving friend,
Pulls out his gold and flourishes his notes,
And flashes diamonds in the pauper's eyes?
What name have you for such an one?

HILD. A snob.

GAMA. Just so. The girl has beauty, virtue, wit,
Grace, humour, wisdom, charity and pluck.
Would it be kindly, think you, to parade
These brilliant qualities before *your* eyes?
Oh no, King Hildebrand, I am no snob!

HILD. (*furiously*) Stop that tongue,
Or you shall lose the monkey head that holds it!

GAMA. Bravo! Your King deprives me of my head,
That he and I may meet on equal terms!

HILD. Where is she now?

GAMA. In Castle Adamant,
One of my many country houses. There
She rules a woman's University,
With full a hundred girls, who learn of her.

CYR. A hundred girls! A hundred ecstasies!

GAMA. But no mere girls, my good young gentleman;
With all the college learning that you boast,
The youngest there will prove a match for *you*.

CYR. With all my heart, if she's the prettiest!

(*To FLOR.*) Fancy, a hundred matches – all alight! –
That's if I strike them as I hope to do!

GAMA. Despair your hope; their hearts are dead to men.
He who desires to gain their favour must
Be qualified to strike their teeming brains,
And not their hearts. They're safety matches, sir,
And they light only on the knowledge box –
So *you've* no chance!

FLOR. And there are no males whatever in those walls?

Princess Ida

GAMA. None, gentlemen, excepting letter mails –
And they are driven (as males often are
In other large communities) by women.
Why, bless my heart, she's so particular
She'll hardly suffer Dr. Watts's hymns –
And all the animals she owns are "hers"!
The ladies rise at cockcrow every morn –

CYR. Ah, then they have male poultry?

GAMA. Not at all,
(*confidentially*) The crowing's done by an accomplished hen!

DUET – GAMA *and* HILDEBRAND.

GAMA. P'raps if you address the lady
Most politely, most politely –
Flatter and impress the lady,
Most politely, most politely –
Humbly beg and humbly sue--
She may deign to look on you,
But your doing you must do
Most politely, most politely, most politely!

CHORUS. Humbly beg and humbly sue, etc.

HILD. Go you and inform the lady,
Most politely, most politely,
If she don't, we'll storm the lady
Most politely, most politely!
(*To GAMA.*) You'll remain as hostage here;
Should Hillarion disappear,
We will hang you, never fear,
Most politely, most politely, most politely!

CHORUS. You'll remain as hostage here, etc.

GAMA, ARAC, GURON *and* SCYNTHIUS *are marched off in custody*, HILDEBRAND *following*.

RECITATIVE – HILARION.

Come, Cyril, Florian, our course is plain,
To-morrow morn fair Ida we'll engage;
But we will use no force her love to gain,
Nature has armed us for the war we wage!

Princess Ida

TRIO – HILARION, CYRIL, *and* FLORIAN.

HIL. Expressive glances
Shall be our lances,
 And pops of Sillery
 Our light artillery.
We'll storm their bowers
With scented showers
Of fairest flowers
 That we can buy!

CHORUS. Oh, dainty triolet!
Oh, fragrant violet!
Oh, gentle heigho-let!
 (Or little sigh).
On sweet urbanity,
Through mere inanity,
To touch their vanity
 We will rely!

CYRIL. When day is fading,
With serenading
 And such frivolity
 We'll prove our quality.
A sweet profusion
Of soft allusion
This bold intrusion
 Shall justify.

CHORUS. Oh, dainty triolet, etc.

FLOR. We'll charm their senses
With verbal fences,
 With ballads amatory
 And declamatory.
Little heeding
Their pretty pleading,
Our love exceeding
 We'll justify!

CHORUS. Oh, dainty triolet, etc.

Re-enter GAMA, ARAC, GURON, *and* SCYNTHIUS *heavily ironed, followed by* HILDEBRAND.

Princess Ida

RECITATIVE.

GAMA. Must we, till then, in prison cell be thrust?

HILD. You must!

GAMA. This seems unnecessarily severe!

ARAC, GURON & SCYNTHIUS. Hear, hear!

TRIO – ARAC, GURON *and* SCYNTHIUS.

For a month to dwell
In a dungeon cell:
 Growing thin and wizen
 In a solitary prison,
Is a poor look out
For a soldier stout,
 Who is longing for the rattle
 Of a complicated battle –
For the rum-tum-tum
Of the military drum
 And the guns that go boom! boom!

ALL. The rum-tum-tum
Of the military drum, etc.

HILD. When Hilarion's bride
Has at length complied
 With the just conditions
 Of our requisitions,
You may go in haste
And indulge your taste
 For the fascinating rattle
 Of a complicated battle –
For the rum- tum-tum,
Of the military drum,
 And the guns that go boom! boom!

ALL. The the rum- tum-tum,
Of the military drum,

ALL. But till that time you'll/we'll here remain,
And bail we/they will not entertain,
Should she our/his mandate disobey,
Your/Our lives the penalty will pay!

GAMA, ARAC, GURON, *and* SCYNTHIUS *are marched off.*

END OF ACT I

ACT II.

SCENE.— *Gardens in Castle Adamant. A river runs across the back of the stage, crossed by a rustic bridge. Castle Adamant in the distance. Girl Graduates discovered seated at the feet of Lady Psyche.*

CHORUS.

Towards the empyrean heights
Of every kind of lore,
We've taken several easy flights,
And mean to take some more.
In trying to achieve success
No envy racks our heart,
And all the knowledge we possess,
We mutually impart.

SOLO – MELISSA.

Pray, what authors should she read
Who in Classics would succeed?

SOLO – PSYCHE.

If you'd climb the Helicon,
You should read Anacreon,
Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,
Likewise Aristophanes,
And the works of Juvenal:
These are worth attention, all;
But, if you will be advised,
You will get them Bowdlerized!

CHORUS.

Ah! we will get them Bowdlerized!

SOLO – SACHARISSA.

Pray you, tell us, if you can,
What's the thing that's known as Man?

SOLO – PSYCHE

Man will swear and man will storm –
Man is not at all good form –

Princess Ida

Man is of no kind of use –
Man's a donkey – Man's a goose –
Man is coarse and Man is plain –
Man is more or less insane –
Man's a ribald – Man's a rake,
Man is Nature's sole mistake!

CHORUS.

We'll a memorandum make--
Man is Nature's sole mistake!

And thus to empyrean height
Of every kind of lore,
In search of wisdom's pure delight,
Ambitiously we soar.
In trying to achieve success
No envy racks our heart,
For all we know and all we guess
We mutually impart!
And all the knowledge we possess,
We mutually impart!

Enter LADY BLANCHE. All stand up demurely.

- BLAN. Attention, ladies, while I read to you
The Princess Ida's list of punishments.
The first is Sacharissa. She's expelled!
- ALL. Expelled!
- BLAN. Expelled, because although she knew
No man of any kind may pass our walls,
She dared to bring a set of chessmen here!
- SACH. (*crying*) I meant no harm; they're only men of wood!
- BLAN. They're men with whom you give each other mate,
And that's enough! The next is Chloe.
- CHLOE. Ah!
- BLAN. Chloe will lose three terms, for yesterday,
When looking through her drawing-book, I found
A sketch of a perambulator!
- ALL. (*horrified*) Oh!
- BLAN. *Double* perambulator, shameless girl!
That's all at present. Now, attention, pray;
Your Principal the Princess comes to give
Her usual inaugural address
To those young ladies who joined yesterday.

Princess Ida

CHORUS.

Mighty maiden with a mission,
Paragon of common sense,
Running fount of erudition,
Miracle of eloquence,
We are blind and we would see;
We are bound, and would be free;
We are dumb, and we would talk;
We are lame, and we would walk.

Enter the PRINCESS.

Mighty maiden with a mission –
Paragon of common sense;
Running found of erudition –
Miracle of eloquence!

RECITATIVE and ARIA – PRINCESS.

Minerva! Minerva! Oh, hear me!

Oh, goddess wise
That lovest light
Endow with sight
Their unillumined eyes.

At this my call,
A fervent few
Have come to woo
The rays that from thee fall.

Let fervent words and fervent thoughts be mine,
That I may lead them to thy sacred shrine!

PRINCESS. Women of Adamant, fair Neophytes –
Who thirst for such instruction as we give,
Attend, while I unfold a parable.
The elephant is mightier than Man,
Yet Man subdues him. Why? The elephant
Is elephantine everywhere but here, (*tapping her forehead*)
And Man, whose brain is to the elephant's
As Woman's brain to Man's - (that's rule of three), –
Conquers the foolish giant of the woods,
As Woman, in her turn, shall conquer Man.
In Mathematics, Woman leads the way;
The narrow-minded pedant still believes
That two and two make four! Why, we can prove,

Princess Ida

We women – household drudges as we are –
That two and two make five – or three – or seven;
Or five-and-twenty, if the case demands!
Diplomacy? The wiliest diplomat
Is absolutely helpless in our hands.
He wheedles monarchs – Woman wheedles him!
Logic? Why, tyrant Man himself admits
It's a waste of time to argue with a woman!
Then we excel in social qualities:
Though man professes that he holds our sex
In utter scorn, I venture to believe
He'd rather pass the day with one of you,
Than with five hundred of his fellow-men!
In all things we excel. Believing this,
A hundred maidens here have sworn to place
Their feet upon his neck. If we succeed,
We'll treat him better than he treated us:
But if we fail, why, then let hope fail too!
Let no one care a penny how she looks –
Let red be worn with yellow – blue with green –
Crimson with scarlet – violet with blue!
Let all your things misfit, and you yourselves
At inconvenient moments come undone!
Let hair-pins lose their virtue: let the hook
Disdain the fascination of the eye –
The bashful button modestly evade
The soft embraces of the button-hole!
Let old associations all dissolve,
Let Swan secede from Edgar – Gask from Gask,
Sewell from Cross – Lewis from Allenby!
In other words, let Chaos come again!

(coming down) Who lectures in the Hall of Arts to-day?

BLAN. I, madam, on Abstract Philosophy.
There I propose considering, at length,
Three points – The Is, the Might Be, and the Must.
Whether the Is, from being actual fact,
Is more important than the vague Might Be,
Or the Might Be, from taking wider scope,
Is for that reason greater than the Is:
And lastly, how the Is and Might Be stand
Compared with the inevitable Must!

PRIN. The subject's deep – how do you treat it, pray?

BLAN. Madam, I take three possibilities,
And strike a balance, then, between the three:
As thus: The Princess Ida Is our head,
the Lady Psyche Might Be, – Lady Blanche,

Princess Ida

Neglected Blanche, inevitably Must.
Given these three hypotheses – to find
The actual betting against each of them!

PRIN. Your theme's ambitious: pray you bear in mind
Who highest soar fall farthest. Fare you well,
You and your pupils! Maidens, follow me.

Exeunt PRINCESS and Maidens sing ing a refrain of chorus 'And thus to empyrean heights,' etc.
Manet LADY BLANCHE.

BLAN. I should command here – I was born to rule,
But do I rule? I don't. Why? I don't know.
I shall some day. Not yet, I bide my time.
I once was Some One – and the Was Will Be.
The Present as we speak becomes the Past,
The Past repeats itself, and so is Future!
This sounds involved. It's not. It's right enough.

SONG – LADY BLANCHE.

Come mighty Must!
Inevitable Shall!
In thee I trust.
Time weaves my coronal!
Go, mocking Is!
Go, disappointing Was!
That I am this
Ye are the cursèd cause!
Yet humble second shall be first,
I wean
And dead and buried be the curst
Has Been!

Oh, weak Might Be!
Oh, May, Might, Could, Would, Should!
How powerless ye
For evil or for good!
In every sense
Your moods I cheerless call,
Whate'er your tense
Ye are Imperfect all!
Ye have deceived the trust I've shown
In ye!
Away! The Mighty Must alone
Shall be!

Princess Ida

Exit LADY BLANCHE.

Enter HILARION, CYRIL, and FLORIAN, *climbing over wall, and creeping cautiously among the trees and rocks at the back of the stage.*

TRIO – HILARION, CYRIL *and* FLORIAN.

ALL. Gently, gently,
Evidently
We are safe so far,
After scaling
Fence and paling,
Here, at last, we are!

FLOR. In this college,
Useful knowledge
Everywhere one finds,
And already,
Growing steady,
We've enlarged our minds

CYR. We learnt that prickly cactus
Has power to attract us
When we fall.
When we fall!

HIL. *and* FLOR.
HIL. That nothing man unsettles
Like a bed of stinging nettles,
Short or tall.
Short or tall!

CYR. *and* FLOR.
FLOR. That bull-dogs feed on throttles –
That we don't like broken bottles
On a wall.
On a wall!

HIL. *and* CYR.
HIL. That spring-guns breathe defiance!
And that burglary's a science
After all!
After all!

CYR. *and* FLOR. After all!
After all!

RECITATIVE – FLORIAN.

A Woman's college! maddest folly going!
What can girls learn within its walls worth knowing?
I'll lay a crown (the Princess shall decide it)
I'll teach them twice as much in half-an-hour outside it.

Princess Ida

HILARION.

Hush, scoffer; ere you sound your puny thunder,
List to their aims, and bow your head in wonder!

HIL. They intend to send a wire
 To the moon –
CYR. *and* FLOR. To the moon;
HIL. And they'll set the Thames on fire
 Very soon –
CYR. *and* FLOR. Very soon;
HIL. Then they'll learn to make silk purses
 With their rigs –
CYR. *and* FLOR. With their rigs,
HIL. From the ears of Lady Circe's
 Piggy-wigs –
CYR. *and* FLOR. Piggy-wigs.
HIL. And weasels at their slumbers
 They trepan –
CYR. *and* FLOR. They trepan;
HIL. To get sunbeams from cucumbers
 They've a plan –
CYR. *and* FLOR. They've a plan.
HIL. They've a firmly rooted notion
 They can cross the Polar Ocean,
 And they'll find Perpetual Motion,
 If they can –
ALL. If they can.

 These are the phenomena
 That ev'ry pretty domina
 Is hoping at her Universitee
 We shall see!

CYR. As for fashion, they forswear it,
 So they say –
HIL. & FLOR. So they say;
CYR. And the circle – they will square it
 Some fine day –
HIL. & FLOR. Some fine day;
CYR. Then the little pigs they're teaching
 For to fly –
HIL. & FLOR. For to fly;

Princess Ida

CYR. And the niggers they'll be bleaching,¹
By and by –
HIL. & FLOR. By and by!
CYR. Each newly joined aspirant
To the clan –
HIL. & FLOR. To the clan
CYR. Must repudiate the tyrant
Known as Man –
HIL. & FLOR. Known as Man.
CYR. They'll mock at him and flout him,
For they do not care about him
And they're "going to do without him"
If they can –
ALL. If they can!

These are the phenomena, etc.

In this college
Useful knowledge
Everywhere one finds,
And already,
Growing steady,
We've enlarged our minds.

HIL. So that's the Princess Ida's castle! Well,
They must be lovely girls, indeed, if it requires
Such walls as those to keep intruders off!
CYR. To keep men off is only half their charge,
And that the easier half. I much suspect
The object of these walls is not so much
To keep men off as keep the maidens in!
FLOR. But what are these? (*Examining some Collegiate robes.*)
HIL. (*looking at them*) Why, Academic robes,
Worn by the lady undergraduates
When they matriculate. Let's try them on. (*They do so.*)
Why, see – we're covered to the very toes.
Three lovely lady undergraduates
Who, weary of the world and all its wooing –
FLOR. And penitent for deeds there's no undoing –
CYR. Looked at askance by well-conducted maids –
ALL. Seek sanctuary in these classic shades!

¹ In the 1954 D'Oyly Carte revival of the opera, this line was replaced with "And they'll practise what they're preaching"

Princess Ida

TRIO – CYRIL, HILARION *and* FLORIAN.

HIL. I am a maiden, cold and stately,
Heartless I, with face divine.
What do I want with a heart, innately?
Every heart I meet is mine!

ALL. Haughty, humble, coy, or free,
Little care I what maid may be.
So that a maid is fair to see,
Every maid is the maid for me! (*Dance.*)

CYR. I am a maiden, frank and simple,
Brimming with joyous roguery;
Merriment lurks in every dimple
Nobody breaks more hearts than I!

ALL. Haughty, humble, coy, or free, etc.

FLOR. I am a maiden coyly blushing,
Timid am I as a startled hind;
Every suitor sets me flushing,
I am the maid that wins mankind!

ALL. Haughty, humble, coy, or free, etc.

Enter the PRINCESS, reading. She does not see them.

FLOR. But who comes here? The Princess, as I live!
What shall we do?

HIL. (*aside*) Why, we must brave it out!
(*aloud*) Madam, accept our humblest reverence.

They bow, then suddenly recollecting themselves, curtsey.

PRIN. (*surprised*) We greet you, ladies. What would you with us?

HIL. (*aside*) What shall I say? (*aloud*) We are three students, ma'am,
Three well-born maids of liberal estate,
Who wish to join this University.

HILARION *and* FLORIAN *curtsey again. CYRIL bows extravagantly, then, being recalled to himself by FLORIAN, curtseys.*

PRIN. If, as you say, you wish to join our ranks,
And will subscribe to all our rules, 'tis well.

FLOR. To all your rules we cheerfully subscribe.

Princess Ida

- PRIN. You say you're noblewomen. Well, you'll find
No sham degrees for noblewomen here.
You'll find no sizars here, or servitors,
Or other cruel distinctions, meant to draw
A line 'twixt rich and poor; you'll find no tufts
To mark nobility, except such tufts
As indicate nobility of brain.
As for your fellow-students, mark me well:
There are a hundred maids within these walls,
All good, all learned, and all beautiful:
They are prepared to love you: will you swear
To give the fullness of your love to them?
- HIL. Upon our words and honours, Ma'am, we will!
- PRIN. But we go further: Will you undertake
That you will never marry any man?
- FLOR. Indeed we never will!
- PRIN. Consider well,
You must prefer our maids to all mankind!
- HIL. To all mankind we much prefer your maids!
- CYR. We should be dolts indeed, if we did not,
Seeing how fair –
- HIL. (*aside to CYRIL*) Take care – that's rather strong!
- PRIN. But have you left no lovers at your home
Who may pursue you here?
- HIL. No, madam, none.
We're homely ladies, as no doubt you see,
And we have never fished for lover's love.
We smile at girls who deck themselves with gems,
False hair and meretricious ornament,
To chain the fleeting fancy of a man,
But do not imitate them. What we have
Of hair, is all our own. Our colour, too,
Unladylike, but not unwomanly,
Is Nature's handiwork, and man has learnt
To reckon Nature an impertinence.
- PRIN. Well, beauty counts for naught within these walls;
If all you say is true, you'll pass with us
A happy, happy time!
- CYR. If, as you say,
A hundred lovely maidens wait within,
To welcome us with smiles and open arms,
I think there's very little doubt we shall!

Princess Ida

QUARTET – PRINCESS, CYRIL, HILARION *and* FLORIAN.

PRIN. The world is but a broken toy,
 Its pleasure hollow – false its joy,
 Unreal its loveliest hue,
 Alas!
 Its pains alone are true,
 Alas!
 Its pains alone are true.

HIL. The world is everything you say,
 The world we think has had its day.
 Its merriment is slow.
 Alas!
 We've tried it, and we know,
 Alas!
 We've tried it and we know.

ALL. Unreal its loveliest hue,
 Its pains alone are true,
 Alas!
 The world is but a broken toy,
 Its pleasure hollow – false its joy,
 Unreal its loveliest hue,
 Alas!
 Its pains alone are true,
 Alas!
 Its pains alone are true!

Exit PRINCESS. The three gentlemen watch her off. LADY PSYCHE enters, and regards them with amazement.

HIL. I'faith, the plunge is taken, gentlemen!
 For, willy-nilly, we are maidens now,
 And maids against our will we must remain. *(All laugh heartily.)*

PSY. *(aside)* These ladies are unseemly in their mirth.

The gentlemen see her, and, in confusion, resume their modest demeanour.

FLOR. *(aside)* Here's a catastrophe, Hilarion!
 This is my sister! She'll remember me,
 Though years have passed since she and I have met!

HIL. *(aside to FLORIAN)* Then make a virtue of necessity,
 And trust our secret to her gentle care.

FLOR. *(to PSYCHE, who has watched CYRIL in amazement)*
 Psyche! Why, don't you know me? Florian!

Princess Ida

PSY. (*amazed*) Why, Florian!

FLOR. My sister! (*Embraces her.*)

PSY. Oh, my dear!
What are you doing here – and who are these?

HIL. I am that Prince Hilarion to whom
Your Princess is betrothed. I come to claim
Her plighted love. Your brother Florian
And Cyril came to see me safely through.

PSY. The Prince Hilarion? Cyril too? How strange!
My earliest playfellows!

HIL. Why, let me look!
Are you that learned little Psyche who
At school alarmed her mates because she called
A buttercup “*ranunculus bulbosus*”?

CYR. Are you indeed that Lady Psyche, who
At children’s parties, drove the conjuror wild,
Explaining all his tricks before he did them?

HIL. Are you that learned little Psyche, who
At dinner parties, brought in to dessert,
Would tackle visitors with “You don’t know
Who first determined longitude – I do –
Hipparchus ’twas – B. C. one sixty-three!”
Are you indeed that small phenomenon?

PSY. That small phenomenon indeed am I!
But gentlemen, ’tis death to enter here:
We have all promised to renounce mankind!

FLOR. Renounce mankind? On what ground do you base
This senseless resolution?

PSY. Senseless? No.
We are all taught, and, being taught, believe
That Man, sprung from an Ape, is Ape at heart.

CYR. That’s rather strong.

PSY. The truth is always strong!

SONG – LADY PSYCHE.

A Lady fair, of lineage high,
Was loved by an Ape, in the days gone by.
The Maid was radiant as the sun,
The Ape was a most unsightly one –
So it would not do –
His scheme fell through,
For the Maid, when his love took formal shape,
Expressed such terror
At his monstrous error,
That he stammered an apology and made his ’scape,

Princess Ida

The picture of a disconcerted Ape.

With a view to rise in the social scale,
He shaved his bristles and he docked his tail,
He grew mustachios, and he took his tub,
And he paid a guinea to a toilet club –
 But it would not do,
 The scheme fell through –
For the Maid was Beauty's fairest Queen,
 With golden tresses,
 Like a real princess's,
While the Ape, despite his razor keen,
Was the apiest Ape that ever was seen!

He bought white ties, and he bought dress suits,
He crammed his feet into bright tight boots –
And to start in life on a brand-new plan,
He christened himself Darwinian Man!
 But it would not do,
 The scheme fell through –
For the Maiden fair, whom the monkey craved,
 Was a radiant Being,
 With brain far-seeing –
While Darwinian Man, though well-behaved,²
At best is only a monkey shaved!

ALL. For the Maiden fair, etc.

During this, MELISSA has entered unobserved; she looks on in amazement.

MEL. (*coming down*) Oh, Lady Psyche!

PSY. (*terrified*) What! You heard us then?

Oh, all is lost!

MEL. Not so! I'll breathe no word! (*Advancing in astonishment to FLORIAN.*)

How marvelously strange! and are you then

Indeed young men?

FLOR. Well, yes, just now we are –

But hope by dint of study to become,

In course of time, young women.

MEL. (*eagerly*) No, no, no –

Oh, don't do that! Is this indeed a man?

I've often heard of them, but, till to-day,

Never set eyes on one. They told me men

² This line read "While a man, however well-behaved" in the first edition of the libretto and this version of the line is often used in performance. The vocal score, however, has the line as printed in the main text.

Princess Ida

Were hideous, idiotic, and deformed!
They are quite as beautiful as women are!
As beautiful, they're infinitely more so!
Their cheeks have not that pulpy softness which
One gets so weary of in womankind:
Their features are more marked – and – oh, their chins! (*Feeling Florian's chin.*)
How curious!

FLOR. I fear it's rather rough.

MEL. (*eagerly*) Oh, don't apologize – I like it so!

QUINTET – PSYCHE, MELISSA, CYRIL, HILARION *and* FLORIAN.

PSY. The woman of the wisest wit
May sometimes be mistaken, O!
In Ida's views, I must admit,
My faith is somewhat shaken O!

CYR. On every other point than this
Her learning is untainted, O!
But Man's a theme with which she is
Entirely unacquainted, O!
– acquainted, O!
– acquainted, O!
Entirely unacquainted, O!

ALL. Then jump for joy and gaily bound,
The truth is found – the truth is found!
Set bells a-ringing through the air –
Ring here and there and everywhere –
And echo forth the joyous sound,
The truth is found – the truth is found! (*Dance.*)

MEL. My natural instinct teaches me
(And instinct is important, O!)
You're ev'rything you ought to be,
And nothing that you oughtn't, O!

HIL. That fact was seen at once by you
In casual conversation, O!
Which is most creditable to
Your powers of observation, O!
– servation, O!
– servation, O!
Your powers of observation, O!

ALL. Then jump for joy and gaily bound, etc.

Exeunt PSYCHE, HILARION, CYRIL *and* FLORIAN, MELISSA *going.* *Enter* LADY BLANCHE.

Princess Ida

BLAN. Melissa!

MEL. (*returning*) Mother!

BLAN. Here – a word with you.

Those are the three new students?

MEL. (*confused*) Yes, they are.

They're charming girls.

BLAN. Particularly so.

So graceful, and so very womanly!

So skilled in all a girl's accomplishments!

MEL. (*confused*) Yes – very skilled.

BLAN. They sing so nicely too!

MEL. They *do* sing nicely!

BLAN. Humph! It's very odd.

Two are tenors, one is a baritone!

MEL. (*much agitated*) They've all got colds!

BLAN. Colds! Bah! D'ye think I'm blind?

These 'girls' are men disguised!

MEL. Oh no – indeed!

You wrong these gentlemen – I mean – why, see,

Here is an *étui* dropped by one of them (*picking up an etui.*)

Containing scissors, needles, and –

BLAN. (*opening it*) Cigars!

Why, these *are* men! And you knew this, you minx!

MEL. Oh, spare them – they are gentlemen indeed.

The Prince Hilarion (married years ago

To Princess Ida) with two trusted friends!

Consider, mother, he's her husband now,

And has been, twenty years! Consider, too,

You're only second here – you should be first.

Assist the Prince's plan, and when he gains

The Princess Ida, why, you will be first.

You will design the fashions – think of that –

And always serve out all the punishments!

The scheme is harmless, mother – wink at it!

BLAN. (*aside*) The prospect's tempting! Well, well, well, I'll try –

Though I've not winked at anything for years!

'Tis but one step towards my destiny –

The mighty Must! the inevitable Shall!

DUET – MELISSA *and* LADY BLANCHE.

MEL. Now wouldn't you like to rule the roast

And guide this University?

BLAN. I must agree,

'Twould pleasant be,

(Sing hey, a Proper Pride!)

Princess Ida

- MEL. And wouldn't you like to clear the coast,
 Of malice and perversity?
- BLAN. Without a doubt,
 I'll bundle 'em out,
 (Sing hey, when I preside!)
- BOTH. Sing hey! Sing hoity toity! Sorry for some!
 Sing marry, come up, and her/my day will come!
 Sing Proper Pride
 Is the horse to ride,
 And Happy-go-lucky, my Lady, O!
- BLAN. For years I've writhed beneath her sneers,
 Although a born Plantagenet!
- MEL. You're much too meek,
 Or you would speak
 (Sing hey, I'll say no more!)
- BLAN. Her elder I, by several years,
 Although you'd ne'er imagine it.
- MEL. Sing, so I've heard
 But never a word
 Have I e'er believ'd before!
- BOTH. Sing hey! Sing hoity toity! Sorry for some!
 Sing marry, come up, and her/my day will come!
 Sing, she shall learn
 That a worm will turn.
 Sing Happy-go-lucky, my Lady, O!

Exit LADY BLANCHE.

- MEL. Saved for a time, at least!

Enter FLORIAN, *on tiptoe.*

- FLOR. (*whispering*) Melissa – come!
- MEL. Oh, sir! you must away from this at once –
 My mother guessed your sex! It was my fault –
 I blushed and stammered so that she exclaimed,
 “Can these be men?” Then, seeing this, “Why these –
 “*Are men*”, she would have added, but “*are men*”
 Stuck in her throat! She keeps your secret, sir,
 For reasons of her own – but fly from this
 And take me with you – that is – no – not that!
- FLOR. I'll go, but not without you! (*Bell.*) Why, what's that?
- MEL. The luncheon bell.

Princess Ida

FLOR. I'll wait for luncheon then!

Enter HILARION with PRINCESS, CYRIL with PSYCHE, LADY BLANCHE and LADIES. Also 'Daughters of the Plough' bearing luncheon.

CHORUS.

Merrily ring the luncheon bell!
Here in meadow of asphodel,
Feast we body and mind as well,
Merrily ring the luncheon bell!

SOLO – BLANCHE.

Hunger, I beg to state,
Is highly indelicate.
This is a fact profoundly true,
So learn your appetites to subdue.

CHORUS.

Yes, yes,
We'll learn our appetites to subdue!

SOLO – CYRIL.

Madam, your words so wise,
Nobody should despise,
Cursed with appetite keen I am
And I'll subdue it –
I'll subdue it –
I'll subdue it with cold roast lamb!

CHORUS.

Yes – yes –
We'll subdue it with cold roast lamb!
Merrily ring, etc.

PRIN. You say you know the court of Hildebrand?
There is a Prince there – I forget his name –

HIL. Hilarion?

PRIN. Exactly – is he well?

HIL. If it be well to droop and pine and mope,
To sigh 'Oh, Ida! Ida!' all day long,
'Ida! my love! my life! Oh, come to me!'
If it be well, I say, to do all this,
Then Prince Hilarion is very well.

PRIN. He breathes *our* name? Well, it's a common one!
And is the booby comely?

HIL. Pretty well.

Princess Ida

I've heard it said that if I dressed myself
In Prince Hilarion's clothes (supposing this
Consisted with my maiden modesty),
I might be taken for Hilarion's self.

But what is this to you or me, who think
Of all mankind with undisguised contempt?

PRIN. Contempt? Why, damsel, when I think of man,
Contempt is not the word.

CYR. (*getting tipsy*) I'm sure of that,
Or if it is, it surely should not be!

HIL. (*aside to CYRIL*) Be quiet, idiot, or they'll find us out.

CYR. The Prince Hilarion's a goodly lad!

PRIN. You know him then?

CYR. (*tipsily*) I rather think I do!
We are inseparables!

PRIN. Why, what's this?
You love him then?

CYR. We do indeed – all three!

HIL. Madam, she jests! (*aside to CYRIL*) Remember where you are!

CYR. Jest? Not at all! Why, bless my heart alive,
You and Hilarion, when at the Court,
Rode the same horse!

PRIN. (*horrified*) Astride?

CYR. Of course! Why not?
Wore the same clothes – and once or twice, I think,
Got tipsy in the same good company!

PRIN. Well, these are nice young ladies, on my word!

CYR. (*tipsy*) Don't you remember that old kissing-song
He'd sing to blushing Mistress Lalage,
The hostess of the Pigeons? Thus it ran:

SONG – CYRIL.

During symphony HILARION and FLORIAN try to stop CYRIL. He shakes them off angrily.

Would you know the kind of maid
Sets my heart aflame-a?
Eyes must be downcast and staid,
Cheeks must flush for shame-a!
She may neither dance nor sing,
But, demure in everything,
Hang her head in modest way,
With pouting lips that seem to say,
“Oh kiss me, kiss me, kiss me, kiss me,
Though I die of shame-a!”

Princess Ida

Please you, that's the kind of maid
Sets my heart aflame-a!

When a maid is bold and gay,
With a tongue goes clang-a,
Flaunting it in brave array,
Maiden may go hang-a!
Sunflower gay and holly-hock
Never shall my garden stock;
Mine the blushing rose of May,
With pouting lips that seem to say,
"Oh kiss me, kiss me, kiss me, kiss me,
Though I die for shame-a!"
Please you, that's the kind of maid
Sets my heart aflame-a!

PRIN. Infamous creature, get you hence away!

HILARION, *who has been with difficulty restrained by FLORIAN during this song, breaks from him and strikes CYRIL furiously on the breast.*

HIL. Dog! There is something more to sing about!

CYR. (*sobered*) Hilarion, are you mad?

PRIN. (*horrified*) Hilarion? Help!

Why, these are men! Lost! lost! betrayed, undone! (*Running on to bridge.*)

Girls, get you hence! Man-monsters, if you dare

Approach one step, I – Ah! (*Loses her balance and falls into the stream.*)

PSY. Oh! Save her, sir!

BLAN. It's useless, sir – you'll only catch your death! (*HILARION springs in.*)

SACH. He catches her!

MEL. And now he lets her go!

Again she's in his grasp –

PSY. And now she's not,

He seizes her back hair!

BLAN. (*not looking*) And it comes off!

PSY. No, no! She's saved! – she's saved! – she's saved! – she's saved!

FINALE.

CHORUS OF LADIES

Oh joy! our chief is saved
And by Hilarion's hand;
The torrent fierce he braved,
And brought her safe to land!
For his intrusion we must own

Princess Ida

This doughty deed may well atone!

PRIN. Stand forth ye three,
 Whoe'er ye be,
 And hearken to our stern decree!

HIL., CYR. & FLOR. Have mercy, O Lady – disregard your oaths!

PRIN. I know not mercy, men in women's clothes!
 The man whose sacrilegious eyes
 Invade our strict seclusion, dies.
 Arrest these coarse intruding spies!

They are arrested by the 'Daughters of the Plough'.

LADIES. Have mercy, O Lady, – disregard your oaths.
PRIN. I know not mercy, men in women's clothes!

CYRIL & FLORIAN are bound.

SONG – HILARION.

Whom thou has chained must wear his chain,
 Thou canst not set him free,
He wrestles with his bonds in vain
 Who lives by loving thee!
If heart of stone for heart of fire,
 Be all thou hast to give,
If dead to my heart's desire,
Why should I wish to live?

CYR., FLOR. & LADIES. Have mercy, O Lady!

No word of thine – no stern command
 Can teach my heart to rove,
Then rather perish by thy hand,
 Than live without thy love!
A loveless life apart from thee
 Were hopeless slavery,
If kindly death will set me free,
 Why should I fear to die?

LADIES. Have mercy! Have mercy!

He is bound by two of the attendants, the three gentlemen are marched off.

Princess Ida

Enter MELISSA.

MEL. Madam, without the castle walls
An armèd band
Demand admittance to our halls
For Hildebrand!

ALL. Oh, horror!

PRIN. Deny them!
We will defy them!

ALL. Too late – too late!
The castle gate
Is battered by them!

The gate yields. SOLDIERS rush in. ARAC, GURON, and SCYNTHIUS are with them, but with their hands handcuffed.

ENSEMBLE.

GIRLS.
Rend the air with wailing,
Shed the shameful tear!
Walls are unavailing,
Man has entered here!
Shame and desecration³
Are his staunch allies,
Let your lamentation
Echo to the skies!

MEN.
Walls and fences scaling,
Promptly we appear;
Walls are unavailing,
We have entered here.
Female execration
Stifle if you're wise.
Stop your lamentation,
Dry your pretty eyes!

Enter HILDEBRAND.

RECITATIVE.

PRIN. Audacious tyrant, do you dare
To beard a maiden in her lair?

HILD. Since you inquire,
We've no desire
To beard a maiden here, or anywhere!

SOLDIERS. No, no. We've no desire
To beard a maiden here or anywhere!

³ Sullivan did not set the last four lines of this verse.

Princess Ida

SOLO – HILDEBRAND.

Some years ago,
No doubt you know
(And if you don't I'll tell you so)
You gave your troth
Upon your oath
To Hilarion my son.
A vow you make
You must not break,
(If you think you may, it's a great mistake),
For a bride's a bride
Though the knot were tied
At the early age of one!
And I'm a peppery kind of King,
Who's indisposed for parleying
To fit the wit of a bit of chit,
And that's the long and the short of it!

SOLDIERS.

For he's a peppery kind of King, etc.

If you decide
To pocket your pride
And let Hilarion claim his bride,
Why, well and good,
It's understood
We'll let bygones go by –
But if you choose
To sulk in the blues
I'll make the whole of you shake in your shoes.
I'll storm your walls,
And level your halls,
In the winking of an eye!
For I'm a peppery Potentate,
Who's little inclined his claim to bate,
To fit the wit of a bit of a chit,
And that's the long and the short of it!

SOLDIERS.

For he's a peppery Potentate, etc.

TRIO – ARAC, GURON *and* SCYNTHIUS.

We may remark, though nothing can
Dismay us,
That if you thwart this gentleman,

Princess Ida

He'll slay us.
We don't fear death, of course – we're taught
To shame it;
But still upon the whole we thought
We'd name it.
(*To each other.*) Yes, yes, yes, better perhaps to name it.

Our interests we would not press
With chatter,
Three hulking brothers more or less
Don't matter;
If you'd pooh-pooh this monarch's plan
Pooh-pooh it,
But when he says he'll hang a man,
He'll do it.
(*To each other.*) Yes, yes, yes, devil doubt he'll do it.

PRIN. (*recit.*) Be reassured, nor fear his anger blind,
His menaces are idle as the wind.
He dares not kill you – vengeance lurks behind!

ARAC, GUR. & SCYN. We rather think he dares, but never mind!
No, no, no, – never, never mind!

HILD. I rather think I dare, but never, never mind!
Enough of parley, as a special boon,
We give you till tomorrow afternoon;
Release Hilarion, then, and be his bride
Or you'll incur the guilt of fratricide!

ENSEMBLE.

PRINCESS.
To yield at once to such a foe
With shame were rife;
So quick! away with him, although
He saved my life!
That he is fair, and strong, and tall
Is very evident to all,
Yet I will die, before I call
Myself his wife!

THE OTHERS.
Oh, yield at once, 'twere better so,
Than risk a strife!
And let the Prince Hilarion go –
He saved thy life!
Hilarion's fair, and strong, and tall –
A worse misfortune might befall –
It's not so dreadful after all,
To be his wife!

SOLO – PRINCESS.

Though I am but a girl,
Defiance thus I hurl,

Princess Ida

MELISSA.

But 'twould be an error
To confess our terror,
So in Ida's name,
Boldly we exclaim:

CHORUS.

Death to the invader!
Strike a deadly blow,
As an old Crusader
Struck his Paynim foe!

Flourish. Enter PRINCESS, armed, attended by BLANCHE and PSYCHE.

PRIN. I like your spirit, girls! We have to meet
Stern bearded warriors in fight to-day;
Wear naught but what is necessary to
Preserve your dignity before their eyes,
And give your limbs full play.

BLAN. One moment, ma'am,
Here is a paradox we should not pass
Without inquiry. We are prone to say
'This thing is Needful – that, Superfluous' –
Yet they invariably co-exist!
We find the Needful comprehended in
The circle of the grand Superfluous,
Yet the Superfluous cannot be bought
Unless you're amply furnished with the Needful.
These singular considerations are –

PRIN. Superfluous, yet not Needful – so you see
The terms may independently exist.

(*To Ladies*) Women of Adamant, we have to show
That Woman, educated to the task,
Can meet Man, face to face, on his own ground,
And beat him there. Now, let us set to work;
Where is our lady surgeon?

SACH. Madam, here!

PRIN. We shall require your skill to heal the wounds
Of those that fall.

SACH. (*alarmed*) What, heal the wounded?

PRIN. Yes!

SACH. And cut off real live legs and arms?

PRIN. Of course!

SACH. I wouldn't do it for a thousand pounds!

Princess Ida

- PRIN. Why, how is this? Are you faint-hearted, girl?
You've often cut them off in theory!
- SACH. In theory I'll cut them off again
With pleasure, and as often as you like,
But not in practice.
- PRIN. Coward! Get you hence,
I've craft enough for that, and courage too,
I'll do your work! My fusiliers, advance!
Why, you are armed with axes! Gilded toys!
Where are your rifles, pray?
- CHLOE. Why, please you, ma'am,
We left them in the armoury, for fear
That in the heat and turmoil of the fight,
They might go off!
- PRIN. 'They might!' Oh, craven souls!
Go off yourselves! Thank heaven I have a heart
That quails not at the thought of meeting men;
I will discharge your rifles! Off with you! (*Exit CHLOE.*)
Where's my bandmistress?
- ADA. Please you, ma'am, the band
Do not feel well, and can't come out today!
- PRIN. Why, this is flat rebellion! I've no time
To talk to them just now. But, happily,
I can play several instruments at once,
And I will drown the shrieks of those that fall
With trumpet music, such as soldiers love!
How stand we with respect to gunpowder?
My Lady Psyche – you who superintend
Our lab'ratory – are you well prepared
To blow these bearded rascals into shreds?
- PSY. Why, madam –
- PRIN. Well?
- PSY. Let us try gentler means.
We can dispense with fulminating grains
While we have eyes with which to flash our rage!
We can dispense with villainous saltpetre
While we have tongues with which to blow them up!
We can dispense, in short, with all the arts
That brutalize the practical polemist!
- PRIN. (*contemptuously*) I never knew a more dispensing chemist!
Away, away – I'll meet these men alone
Since all my women have deserted me!

Exeunt all but PRINCESS, singing refrain of 'Please you, do not hurt us', pianissimo.

- PRIN. So fail my cherished plans – so fails my faith –

Princess Ida

And with it hope, and all that comes of hope!

SONG – PRINCESS.

I built upon a rock,
But ere Destruction's hand
Dealt equal lot
To Court and cot,
My rock had turned to sand!
I leant upon an oak,
But in the hour of need,
Alack-a-day,
My trusted stay
Was but a bruised reed!
Ah faithless rock,
My simple faith to mock!
Ah trait'rous oak,
Thy worthlessness to cloak!

I drew a sword of steel
But when to home and hearth
The battle's breath
Bore fire and death,
My sword was but a lath!
I lit a beacon fire,
But on a stormy day
Of frost and rime,
In wintertime,
My fire had died away!
Ah, coward steel,
That fear can unanneal!
False fire indeed,
To fail me in my need!

PRINCESS *sinks upon a rock. Enter CHLOE and all the ladies.*

CHLOE. Madam, your father and your brothers claim
An audience!
PRIN. What do they do here?
CHLOE. They come
To fight for you!
PRIN. Admit them!
BLAN. Infamous!
One's brothers, ma'am, are men!
PRIN. So I have heard.
But all my women seem to fail me when

Princess Ida

I need them most. In this emergency,
Even one's brothers may be turned to use.

Enter GAMA, quite pale and unnerved.

GAMA. My daughter!
PRIN. Father! Thou art free!
GAMA. Aye, free!
Free as a tethered ass! I come to thee
With words from Hildebrand. Those duly given
I must return to blank captivity.
I'm free so far.
PRIN. Your message.
GAMA. Hildebrand
Is loth to war with women. Pit my sons,
My three brave sons, against these popinjays,
These tufted jack-a-dandy featherheads,
And on the issue let thy hand depend!
PRIN. Insult on insult's head! Are we a stake
For fighting men? What fiend possesses thee,
That thou has come with offers such as these
From such as he to such an one as I?
GAMA. I am possessed
By the pale devil of a shaking heart!
My stubborn will is bent. I dare not face
That devilish monarch's black malignity!
He tortures me with torments worse than death,
I haven't anything to grumble at!
He finds out what particular meats I love,
And gives me them. The very choicest wines,
The costliest robes – the richest rooms are mine.
He suffers none to thwart my simplest plan,
And gives strict orders none should contradict me!
He's made my life a curse! (*weeps*)
PRIN. My tortured father!

SONG – GAMA.

Whene'er I spoke
Sarcastic joke
Replete with malice spiteful,
This people mild
Politely smiled,
And voted me delightful!
Now, when a wight
Sits up all night

Princess Ida

Ill-natured jokes devising,
And all his wiles
Are met with smiles
It's hard, there's no disguising! Ah!
Oh, don't the days seem lank and long
When all goes right and nothing goes wrong,
And isn't your life extremely flat
With nothing whatever to grumble at!

CHORUS.

Oh, isn't your life, etc.

When German bands
From music stands
Played Wagner *imperfectly* –
I bade them go –
They didn't say no,
But off they went directly!
The organ boys
They stopped their noise,
With readiness surprising,
And grinning herds
Of hurdy-gurds
Retired apologising! Ah!
Oh, don't the days seem lank and long
When all goes right and nothing goes wrong,
And isn't your life extremely flat
With nothing whatever to grumble at!

CHORUS.

Oh, isn't your life, etc.

I offered gold
In sums untold
To all who'd contradict me –
I said I'd pay
A pound a day
To any one who kicked me –
I bribed with toys
Great vulgar boys
To utter something spiteful,
But, bless you, no!
They *would* be so
Confoundedly politeful! Ah!
In short, these aggravating lads,
They tickle my tastes, they feed my fads,
They give me this and they give me that,
And I've nothing whatever to grumble at!

Princess Ida

CHORUS. Oh, isn't your life, etc.

He bursts into tears and falls sobbing on a seat.

PRIN. My poor old father! How he must have suffered!
Well, well, I yield!

GAMA. (*hysterically*) She yields! I'm saved, I'm saved! (*Exit.*)

PRIN. Open the gates – admit these warriors,
Then get you all within the castle walls. (*Exit.*)

The gates are opened and the girls mount the battlements as the soldiers enter. ARAC, GURON and SCYNTHIUS also enter.

CHORUS OF SOLDIERS.

When anger spread his wing,
And all seems dark as night for it,
There's nothing but to fight for it,
But ere you pitch your ring,
Select a pretty site for it,
(This spot is suited quite for it,)
And then you gaily sing,

“Oh I love the jolly rattle
Of an ordeal by battle,
There's an end of tittle-tattle,
When your enemy is dead.
It's an arrant molly-coddle
Fears a crack upon his noddle
And he's only fit to swaddle
In a downy feather-bed!

ENSEMBLE.

GIRLS.
For a fight's a kind of thing
That I love to look upon,
So let us sing,
Long live the King,
And his son Hilarion!⁴

MEN.
Oh, I love the jolly rattle, etc.

During this, HILARION, FLORIAN, and CYRIL are brought out by the 'Daughters of the Plough'. They are still bound and wear the robes. Enter GAMA.

⁴There is a tradition dating to before the 1930 of placing Arac' song "This helmet, I suppose" immediately after this chorus.

Princess Ida

GAMA. Hilarion! Cyril! Florian! dressed as women!
Is this indeed Hilarion?

HIL. Yes, it is!

GAMA. Why, you look handsome in your women's clothes!
Stick to 'em! Men's attire becomes you not!

(to CYRIL and FLORIAN) And you, young ladies, will you please to pray
King Hildebrand to set me free again?
Hang on his neck and gaze into his eyes,
He never could resist a pretty face!

HIL. You dog, you'll find, though I wear woman's garb,
My sword is long and sharp!

GAMA. Hush, pretty one!
Here's a virago! Here's a termagant!
If length and sharpness go for anything,
You'll want no sword while you can wag your tongue!

CYR. What need to waste your words on such as he?
He's old and crippled.

GAMA. Aye, but I've three sons,
Fine fellows, young, and muscular, and brave,
They're well worth talking to! Come, what d'ye say?

ARAC. Aye, pretty ones, engage yourselves with us,
If three rude warriors affright you not!

HIL. Old as you are, I'd wring your shrivelled neck
If you were not the Princess Ida's father.

GAMA. If I were not the Princess Ida's father,
And so had not her brothers for my sons,
No doubt you'd wring my neck – in safety too!
Come, come, Hilarion, begin, begin!
Give them no quarter – they will give you none.
You've this advantage over warriors
Who kill their country's enemies for pay, –
You know what you are fighting for – look there!

(Pointing to Ladies on the battlements.)

Exit GAMA. HILARION, FLORIAN, and CYRIL are led off.

SONG – ARAC.

This helmet, I suppose,
Was meant to ward off blows,
It's very hot
And weighs a lot,
As many a guardsman knows,
So off, so off that helmet goes.

Princess Ida

ALL. Yes, yes, yes,
So off that helmet goes! (*Giving their helmets to attendants.*)

ARAC. This tight-fitting cuirass
Is but a useless mass,
 It's made of steel,
 And weighs a deal,
A man is but an ass
Who fights in a cuirass,
So off, so off goes that cuirass.

ALL. Yes, yes, yes,
So off goes that cuirass! (*Removing cuirasses.*)

ARAC. These brassets, truth to tell,
May look uncommon well,
 But in a fight
 They're much too tight,
They're like a lobster shell!

ALL. Yes, yes, yes,
They're like a lobster shell. (*Removing their brassets.*)

ARAC. These things I treat the same (*indicating leg pieces.*)
(I quite forget their name.)
 They turn one's legs
 To cribbage pegs –
Their aid I thus disclaim,
Though I forget their name!

ALL. Yes, yes, yes,
Their aid we/they thus disclaim!

They remove their leg pieces and wear close-fitting shape suits.

Enter HILARION, FLORIAN, and CYRIL. Desperate fight between the three Princes and the three Knights, during which the Ladies on the battlements and the Soldiers on the stage sing the following chorus:

CHORUS.

This is our duty plain towards
Our Princess all immaculate,
We ought to bless her brothers' swords,
And piously ejaculate:
Oh, Hungary!

Princess Ida

Oh, Hungary!
Oh, doughty sons of Hungary!
May all success
Attend and bless
Your warlike ironmongery!
Hilarion! Hilarion! Hilarion!

By this time, ARAC, GURON, and SCYNTHIUS are on the ground, wounded – HILARION, CYRIL and FLORIAN stand over them.

- PRIN. *(Entering through gate and followed by Ladies, HILDEBRAND, and GAMA.)*
Hold! stay your hands! – we yield ourselves to you!
Ladies, my brothers all lie bleeding there!
Bind up their wounds – but look the other way.
(Coming down.) Is this the end? *(Bitterly to Lady Blanche.)* How say you, Lady Blanche –
Can I with dignity my post resign?
And if I do, will you then take my place?
- BLAN. To answer this, it's meet that we consult
The great Potential Mysteries; I mean
The five Subjunctive Possibilities –
The May, the Might, the Would, the Could, the Should.
Can you resign? The Prince May claim you; if
He Might, you Could – and if you Should, I Would!
- PRIN. I thought as much! Then to my fate I yield –
So ends my cherished scheme! Oh, I had hoped
To band all women with my maiden throng,
And make them all abjure tyrannic Man!
- HILD. A noble aim!
- PRIN. You ridicule it now;
But if I carried out this glorious scheme,
At my exalted name Posterity
Would bow in gratitude!
- HILD. But pray reflect –
If you enlist all women in your cause,
And make them all abjure tyrannic Man,
The obvious question then arises, 'How
Is this Posterity to be provided?'
- PRIN. I never thought of that! My Lady Blanche,
How do you solve the riddle?
- BLAN. Don't ask me –
Abstract Philosophy won't answer it.
Take him – he is your Shall. Give in to Fate!
- PRIN. And you desert me. I alone am staunch!
- HIL. Madam, you placed your trust in Woman – well,
Woman has failed you utterly – try Man,
Give him one chance, it's only fair – besides,

Princess Ida

Women are far too precious, too divine,
To try unproven theories upon.
Experiments, the proverb says, are made
On humble subjects – try our grosser clay,
And mould it as you will!

CYR. Remember, too
Dear Madam, if at any time you feel
A-weary of the Prince, you can return
To Castle Adamant, and rule your girls
As heretofore, you know.

PRIN. And shall I find
The Lady Psyche here?

PSY. If Cyril, ma'am,
Does not behave himself, I think you will.

PRIN. And you Melissa, shall I find *you* here?

MEL. Madam, however Florian turns out,
Unhesitatingly I answer, No!

GAMA. Consider this, my love, if your mama
Had looked on matters from your point of view
(I wish she had), why where would you have been?

BLAN. There's an unbounded field of speculation,
On which I could discourse for hours!

PRIN. No doubt!
We will not trouble you. Hilarion,
I have been wrong – I see my error now.
Take me, Hilarion – “We will walk this world
Yoked in all exercise of noble end!
And so through those dark gates across the wild
That no one knows!” Indeed, I love thee – Come!

FINALE.

PRIN. With joy abiding,
Together gliding
Through life's variety,
In sweet society,
And thus enthroning
The love I'm owning,
On this atoning
I will rely!

CHORUS. It were profanity
For poor humanity
To treat as vanity
The sway of Love.
In no locality

Princess Ida

Or principality
Is our mortality
 It's sway above!

HIL.

When day is fading,
With serenading
 And such frivolity
 Of tender quality –
With scented showers
Of fairest flowers,
The happy hours
 Will gaily fly!

CHORUS.

It were profanity, etc.

CURTAIN.