

Ruddygore

or, The Witch's Curse!

An Entirely Original Supernatural Opera in Two Acts

Written by W. S. Gilbert

Composed by Arthur Sullivan

**First produced at the Savoy Theatre, London, Saturday 22nd January 1887
under the management of Mr. Richard D'Oyly Carte**

This edition privately published by Ian C. Bond at 2 Kentisview, Kentisbeare, CULLOMPTON. EX15 2BS. © 1995

RUDDYGORE

Of all the Gilbert and Sullivan joint works, RUDDYGORE has been the most unfairly treated.

The initial, rather hostile reception, led the partners to make a number of cuts and changes which, under rather more favourable circumstances, would probably not have been so severe. This gradual dissection continued in the 1920's at the hands of Geoffrey Toye, Harry Norris, Malcolm Sargent and J M Gordon until, by the post-war revival of 1949, RUDDYGORE was, to all intents and purposes, a new work.

It is to be hoped that such a thing could not happen today as I would like to think that we have far too much respect for the works of these two men to allow anyone to take such drastic rewrites upon themselves.

That the original version of the opera works is evidenced by the considerable number of amateur revivals over the past few years that have attempted to return as closely as possible (given the lack of performing material) to a 'first night version' - a trend fuelled by the New Sadler's Wells revival of 1987.

That Gilbert was guilty of one miscalculation is fairly obvious in his placing of "The battle's roar is over" in Act One. The act is long, and this duet does hold up the action at a point where it needs to move on. Unwittingly the old D'Oyly Carte Opera Company came up with the ideal solution during the 'Last Night' performance in London in March 1970, by placing the duet in Act Two, immediately before the entrance of the bridesmaids. It is in this position that I have included the number in this edition of the libretto and, indeed, in which I have placed it in two productions, one in Exeter in 1980 and another in Crediton in 1996. On both occasions it worked extremely well.

The original production ran for 228 performances at the Savoy Theatre, commencing on Saturday 22nd January 1887 with the following cast:

Robin - George Grossmith
Richard - Durward Lely
Sir Despard - Rutland Barrington
Old Adam - Rudolph Lewis
Rose Maybud - Leonora Braham
Mad Margaret - Jessie Bond
Dame Hannah - Rosina Brandram
Zorah - Josephine Findlay
Ruth - Miss Lindsay
Sir Rupert - Mr Price
Sir Jasper - Mr Charles
Sir Lionel - Mr Trevor
Sir Conrad - Mr Burbank
Sir Desmond - Mr Tuer
Sir Gilbert - Mr Wilbraham

Sir Mervyn - Mr Cox
Sir Roderic - Richard Temple

Dramatis Personæ

ROBIN OAKAPPLE, a young farmer

RICHARD DAUNTLESS, his foster brother - a Man-'o-War's-Man

SIR DESPARD MURGATROYD, of Ruddygore - a wicked baronet

OLD ADAM GOODHEART, Robin's faithful servant

ROSE MAYBUD, a village maiden

MAD MARGARET

DAME HANNAH, Rose's aunt

ZORAH, professional bridesmaid

RUTH, professional bridesmaid

Ghosts

SIR RUPERT MURGATROYD, the first baronet

SIR JASPER MURGATROYD, the third baronet

SIR LIONEL MURGATROYD, the sixth baronet

SIR CONRAD MURGATROYD, the twelfth baronet

SIR DESMOND MURGATROYD, the sixteenth baronet

SIR GILBERT MURGATROYD, the eighteenth baronet

SIR MERVYN MURGATROYD, the twentieth baronet

and

SIR RODERIC MURGATROYD, the twenty-first baronet

Chorus:- Officers, Ancestors and Professional Bridesmaids

Act 1:- The Fishing Village of Rederring, in Cornwall

Act 2:- The Picture Gallery in Ruddygore Castle

Time:- Early in the 19th Century

Act One

Scene:- The fishing village of Rederring (in Cornwall). ROSE MAYBUD'S cottage is seen at left.

Enter chorus of Bridesmaid's. They range themselves in front of ROSE's cottage.

No.1. - CHORUS OF BRIDESMAIDS (Solo Soprano, Zorah)

Chorus. Fair is Rose as bright May-Day;
Soft is Rose as warm west-wind;
Sweet is Rose as new-mown hay;
Rose is the queen of maiden-kind!
Rose, all glowing with virgin blushes, say -
Is anybody going to marry you today?

Zorah. Every day, as the days roll on,
Bridesmaid's garb we gaily don,
Sure that a maid so fairly famed
Can't long remain unclaimed.
Hour by hour and day by day
Several months have passed away,
Though she's the fairest flower that blows,
No one has married Rose!

Chorus. Rose, all glowing with virgin blushes, say -
Is anybody going to marry you today?

Zorah. Hour by hour and day by day
Months have passed away.

Chorus. Fair is Rose as bright May-Day;
Soft is Rose as warm west-wind;
Sweet is Rose as new-mown hay;
Rose is the queen of maiden-kind!
Rose, all glowing with virgin blushes, say -
Is anybody going to marry you today?

Fair is Rose -
Soft is Rose -
Rose is the queen of maiden-kind!

Enter DAME HANNAH from cottage.

Hannah. Nay, gentle maidens, you sing well but vainly, for Rose is still heart-free, and looks but coldly on her many suitors.

Zorah. It's very disappointing. Every young man in the village is in love with her, but they are appalled by her beauty and modesty, and won't declare themselves; so, until she makes her own choice, there's no chance for anybody else.

Ruth. This is, perhaps, the only village in the world that possesses an endowed corps of professional bridesmaids who are bound to be on duty every day from ten to four - and it is at least six months since our services were required. The pious charity by which we exist is practically wasted!

Zorah. We shall be disendowed - that will be the end of it! Dame Hannah - you're a nice old person - you could marry if you liked. There's Old Adam - Robin's faithful servant - he loves you with all the frenzy of a boy of fourteen!

Hannah. Nay - that may never be - for I am pledged!

All. To whom?

Hannah. To an eternal maidenhood! Many years ago I was betrothed to a god-like youth who wooed me under an assumed name. But on the very day upon which our wedding was to have been celebrated, I discovered that he was no other than Sir Roderic Murgatroyd, one of the bad baronets of Ruddygore, and the uncle of the man who now bears that title. As a son of that accursed race he was no husband for an honest girl, so madly as I loved him, I left him then and there. He died but ten years since, but I never saw him again.

Zorah. But why should you not marry a bad baronet of Ruddygore?

Ruth. All baronets are bad; but was he worse than other baronets?

Hannah. My child, he was accursed!

Zorah. But who cursed him? Not you I trust!

Hannah. The curse is on all his line and has been, ever since the time of Sir Rupert, the first baronet. Listen, and you shall hear the legend.

No.2. - SONG - (Hannah and Chorus)

Hannah. Sir Rupert Murgatroyd
 His leisure and his riches
 He ruthlessly employed
 In persecuting witches.
 With fear he'd make them quake -
 He's duck them in his lake -
 He'd break their bones
 With sticks and stones,
 And burn them at the stake!

Chorus. This sport he much enjoyed,
 Did Rupert Murgatroyd -
 No sense or shame
 Or pity came
 To Rupert Murgatroyd!

Hannah. Once, on the village green
A palsied hag he roasted,
And what took place, I ween,
Shook his composure boasted,
For, as the torture grim
Seized on each withered limb,
The writhing dame
'Mid fire and flame
Yelled forth this curse on him:

"Each Lord of Ruddygore,
Despite his best endeavour,
Shall do one crime, or more,
Once, every day, for ever!
This doom he can't defy
However he may try,
For should he stay
His hand, that day
In torture he shall die!"

**Chorus.¹ This doom they can't avoid,
These Lords of Murgatroyd -
Both last and first,
You're all accurst
Oh, House of Murgatroyd!**

Hannah. The prophesy came true:
Each heir who held the title
Had, every day, to do
Some crime of import vital;
Until, with guilt o'erplied,
"I'll sin no more!" he cried,
And on the day
He said that say,
In agony he died!

Chorus. And thus, with sinning cloyed,
Has died each Murgatroyd,
And so shall fall,
Both one and all,
Each coming Murgatroyd!

Exit chorus of Bridesmaids. Enter ROSE MAYBUD from cottage, with small basket on her arm.

Hannah. Whither away, dear Rose? On some errand of charity, as is thy wont?

¹ Text shown in blue throughout this edition is taken from pre-production or first night libretti.

Rose. A few gifts, dear aunt, for deserving villagers. Lo, here is some peppermint rock for old Gaffer Gadderby, a set of false teeth for pretty little Ruth Rowbottom, and a pound of snuff for the poor orphan girl on the hill.

Hannah. Ah, Rose, pity that so much goodness should not help to make some gallant youth happy for life! Rose, why dost thou harden that little heart of thine? Is there none hereaway whom thou couldst love?

Rose. And if there were such an one, verily it would ill become me to tell him so.

Hannah. Nay, dear one, where true love is, there is little need of prim formality.

Rose. Hush, dear aunt, for thy words pain me sorely. Hung in a plated dish-cover to the knocker of the workhouse door, with nought that I could call mine own, save a change of baby linen and a book of etiquette, little wonder I have always regarded that work as a voice from a parent's tomb. This hallowed volume (*producing a book of etiquette*), composed, if I may believe the title page, by no less an authority than the wife of a Lord Mayor, has been, through life, my guide and monitor. By its solemn precepts I have learnt to test the moral worth of all who approach me. The man who bites his bread, or eats peas with a knife, I look upon as a lost creature, and he who has not acquired the proper way of entering and leaving a room, is the object of my pitying horror. There are those in this village who bite their nails, dear aunt, and nearly all are wont to use their pocket combs in public places. In truth, I could pursue this painful theme much further, but behold, I have said enough.

Hannah. But is there no one amongst them who is faultless, in thine eyes? For example - young Robin. He combines the manners of a Marquis with the morals of a Methodist. Couldst thou not love him?

Rose. And even if I could, how should I confess it unto him? For lo, he is shy, and sayeth nought!

No.3. - SONG - (Rose)

If somebody there chanced to be
Who loved me in a manner true,
My heart would point him out to me,
And I would point him out to you.

(Referring to book)

But here it says of those who point,
Their manners must be out of joint -
You may not point -
You must not point -
It's manners out of joint to point!
Had I the love of such as he,
Some quiet spot he'd take me to,
Then he could whisper it to me,
And I could whisper it to you.

(Referring to book)

But whispering, I've somewhere met,
Is contrary to etiquette:
Where can it be? *(Searching book)*
Now let me see - *(Finding reference)*
Yes, yes!
It's contrary to etiquette! *(Showing it to Hannah)*

If any well-bred youth I knew,
Polite and gentle, neat and trim,
Then I would hint as much to you,
And you could hint as much to him. *(Referring to book)*
But here it says, in plainest print,
It's most unladylike to hint -
You may not hint,
You must not hint -
It says you mustn't hint, in print!
And if I loved him through and through -
(True love and not a passing whim),
Then I could speak of it to you,
And you could speak of it to him.
(Referring to book)
But here I find it doesn't do
To speak until you're spoken to.
Where can it be? *(Searching book)*
Now let me see - *(Finding reference)*
"Don't speak until you're spoken to!"

Exit HANNAH.

Rose. Poor Aunt! Little did the good soul think, when she breathed the hallowed name of Robin, that he would do even as well as another. But he resembleth all the youths in this village, in that he is unduly bashful in my presence, and lo, it is hard to bring him to the point. But soft, he is here!

ROSE is about to go when ROBIN enters and calls her.

Robin. Mistress Rose!

Rose. *(surprised)* Master Robin!

Robin. I wished to say that - it is fine!

Rose. It is passing fine.

Robin. But we do want rain.

Rose. Aye, sorely. Is that all?

Robin. *(sighing)* That is all.

Rose. Good day, Master Robin!

Robin. Good day, Mistress Rose!

Both going - both stop.

Rose. } I crave pardon, I -

Robin. } I beg pardon, I -

Rose. You were about to say? -

Robin. I would fain consult you -

Rose. Truly?

Robin. It is about a friend.

Rose. In truth I have a friend myself.

Robin. Indeed? I mean, of course -

Rose. And I would fain consult you -

Robin. *(anxiously)* About him?

Rose. *(prudishly)* About her.

Robin. *(relieved)* Let us consult one another -

No.4. - DUET - (Rose and Robin)

Robin. I know a youth who loves a little maid -
(Hey, but his face is a sight for to see!)
Silent is he, for he's modest and afraid -
(Hey, but he's timid as a youth can be!)

Rose. I know a maid who loves a gallant youth -
(Hey, but she sickens as the days go by!)
She cannot tell him all the sad, sad truth -
(Hey, but I think that little maid will die!)

Robin. Poor little man!

Rose. Poor little maid!

Robin. Poor little man!

Rose. Poor little maid!

Both. Now, tell me pray, and tell me true,
What in the world should the young man/maid do?

Robin. He cannot eat and he cannot sleep _
(Hey, but his face is a sight for to see)

Daily he goes for to wail - for to weep -
(Hey, but he's wretched as a youth can be!)

Rose. She's very this and she's very pale -
(Hey, but she sickens as the days go by!)
Daily she goes for to weep - for to wail -
(Hey, but I think that little maid will die!)

Robin. Poor little maid!

Rose. Poor little man!

Robin. Poor little maid!

Rose. Poor little man!

Both. Now, tell me pray, and tell me true,
What in the world should the young man/maid do?

Rose. If I were the youth I should offer her my name -
(Hey, but her face is a sight for to see!)

Robin. If I were the maid I should fan his honest flame -
(Hey, but he's bashful as a youth can be!)

Rose. If I were the youth I should speak to her today -
(Hey, but she sickens as the days go by!)

Robin. If I were the maid I should meet the lad half way -
(For I really do believe that timid youth will die!)

Rose. Poor little man!

Robin. Poor little maid!

Rose. Poor little man!

Robin. Poor little maid!

Both. I thank you miss/sir, for your counsel true;
I'll tell that maid/youth what she/he ought to do!

Exit ROSE.

Robin. Poor child! I sometimes think that if she wasn't quite so particular I might venture
- but no, no - even then I should be unworthy of her!

Sits despondently. Enter OLD ADAM.

Adam. My kind master is sad! Dear Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd -

Robin. Hush! As you love me breathe not that hated name. Twenty years ago, in horror at the prospect of inheriting that hideous title and, with it, the ban that compels all who succeed to the baronetcy to commit at least one deadly crime per day, for life, I fled my home and concealed myself in this innocent village under the name of Robin Oakapple. My younger brother, Despard, believing me to be dead, succeeded to the title and its attendant curse. For twenty years I've been dead and buried. Don't dig me up now.

Adam. Dear master, it shall be as you wish, for have I not sworn to obey you for ever in all things? Yet, as we are here alone, and as I belong to that particular description of good old man to whom the truth is a refreshing novelty, let me call you by your own right title once more! (*ROBIN assents*) Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd! Baronet! Of Ruddygore! Whew! It's like eight hours at the seaside!

Robin. My poor old friend! Would there were more like you!

Adam. Would there were indeed! But I bring you good tidings! Your foster-brother, Richard, has returned from sea - his ship the TOM-TIT rides yonder at anchor, and he himself is even now in this very village!

Robin. My beloved foster-brother? No, no - it cannot be!

Adam. It is even so - and see, he comes this way!

Exeunt together. Enter chorus of bridesmaids.

No.5. - CHORUS OF BRIDESMAIDS

From the briny sea
Comes young Richard, all victorious!
Valorous is he -
His achievements all are glorious!
Let the welkin ring
With the news we bring
Sing it - shout it -
Tell about it -
Safe and sound returneth he,
All victorious from the sea!

Enter RICHARD. The girls welcome him as he greets old acquaintances.

No.6. - SONG - (Richard with chorus of Bridesmaids)

Richard. I shipped, d'ye see, in a revenue sloop,
And, off Cape Finistere,
A merchantman we see,
A Frenchman, going free,
So we made for the bold Mounseer,
D'ye see?
We made for the bold Mounseer.

But she proved to be a frigate -
And she up with her ports,
And she fires with a thirty-two!
It come uncommon near,
But we answered with a cheer,
Which paralysed the Parley-voo!
D'ye see?
Which paralysed the Parley-voo!

Chorus. Which paralysed the Parley-voo!
D'ye see?
Which paralysed the Parley-voo!

Richard. Then our Captain he up and he says, says he,
"That chap we need not fear -
We can take her if we like,
She is sartin for to strike,
For she's only a darned Mounseer,
D'ye see?
She's only a darned Mounseer!
But to fight a French fal-lal -
It's like hittin' of a gal -
It's a lubberly thing for to do;
For we, with all our faults,
Why we're sturdy British salts,
While she's only a Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
A miserable Parley-voo!"

Chorus. While she's only a Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
A miserable Parley-voo!

Richard. So we up with our helm, and we scuds before the breeze
And we gives a compassionating cheer;
Froggee answers with a shout
As he sees us go about,
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer,
D'ye see?
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer!
And I'll wager in their joy
They kissed each other's cheek
(Which is what them furriners do),
And they blessed their luck stars
We were hard British Tars
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo!

Chorus. Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo,
 D'ye see?
 Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo!

No.6½. - HORNPIPE

Exit Chorus. Enter ROBIN.

Robin. Richard!

Richard. Robin!

Robin. My beloved foster-brother, and very dearest friend, welcome home again after ten long years at sea! It is such deeds as you have just described that cause our flag to be loved and dreaded throughout the civilized world!

Richard. Why, lord love ye, Rob, that's but a trifle to what we have done in the way of sparing life! I believe I may say, without exaggeration, that the marcifful little TOM-TIT has spared more French frigates than any craft afloat! But, 'tain't for a British seaman to brag so I'll just stow my jawin' tackle and belay. *(ROBIN sighs)* But 'vast heavin', messmate, what's bought you all a-cock-bill?

Robin. Alas, Dick, I love Rose Maybud, and love in vain!

Richard. *You* love in vain? Come, that's good! Why, you're a fine strapping muscular young fellow - tall and strong as a to'-gall'n-m'st - taut as a fore-stay - aye, and a barrowknight to boot, if all had their rights!

Robin. Hush, Richard - not a word about my true rank, which none here suspect. Yes, I know well enough that few men are better calculated to win a woman's heart than I. I'm a fine fellow, Dick, and worthy any woman's love - happy the girl who gets me, say I. But I'm timid, Dick; shy - nervous - modest - retiring - diffident - and I cannot tell her, Dick, I cannot tell her! Ah, you've no idea what a poor opinion I have of myself, and how little I deserve it.

Richard. Robin, do you call to mind how, years ago, we swore that, come what might, we would always act upon our hearts' dictates?

Robin. Aye, Dick, and I've always kept that oath. In doubt, difficulty and danger, I've always asked my heart what I should do, and it has never failed me.

Richard. Right! Let your heart be your compass, with a clear conscience for your binnacle light, and you'll sail ten knots on a bowline, clear of shoals, rocks and quicksands! Well, now, what does my heart say in this here difficult situation? Why, it says, "Dick," it says - (it calls me, "Dick" acos it's known me from a babby) - "Dick," it says, "you ain't shy - you ain't modest - speak you up for him as is!" Robin, my lad, just you lay me alongside, and when she's becalmed in my lee, I'll spin a yarn that'll sarve to fish you two together for life!

Robin. Will you do this thing for me? Can you, do you think? Yes, (*feeling his pulse*) there's no false modesty about you. Your - what I should call bumptious self-assertiveness (I mean the expression in its complimentary sense) has already made you a bos'n's mate, and it will make an admiral of you in time, if you work it properly, you dear, incompetent old impostor! My dear fellow, I'd give my right arm for one tenth of your modest assurance!

No.7. - SONG - (Robin with Richard)

Robin. My boy, you may take it from me,
That of all the afflictions accurst
With which a man's saddled
And hampered and addled,
A diffident nature's the worst.
Though clever as clever can be -
A Crichton of early romance -
You must stir it and stump it,
And blow your own trumpet,
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance.

If you wish in the world to advance,
Your merits you're bound to enhance,
You must stir it and stump it,
And blow your own trumpet,
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance!

Both. If you wish in the world to advance,
Your merits you're bound to enhance,
You must stir it and stump it,
And blow your own trumpet,
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance!

Robin. Now take, for example, my case:
I've a bright intellectual brain -
In all London city
There's no one so witty -
I've thought so again and again.
I've a highly intelligent face -
My features cannot be denied -
But, whatever I try sir,
I fail in - and why, sir?

Richard. (*spoken*) I dunno!

Robin. I'm modestly personified!

If you wish in the world to advance,
Your merits you're bound to enhance,

You must stir it and stump it,
And blow your own trumpet,
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance!

Both. If you wish in the world to advance,
Your merits you're bound to enhance,
You must stir it and stump it,
And blow your own trumpet,
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance!

Robin. As a poet I'm tender and quaint -
I've passion and fervour and grace -
From Ovid and Horrace
To Swinburn and Morris,
They all of them take a back place.
Then I sing and I play and I paint:
Though none are accomplished as I,
To say so were treason:
You ask me the reason?

Richard. (*spoken*) No I didn't!

Robin. I'm diffident, modest and shy!

If you wish in the world to advance,
Your merits you're bound to enhance,
You must stir it and stump it,
And blow your own trumpet,
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance!

Both. If you wish in the world to advance,
Your merits you're bound to enhance,
You must stir it and stump it,
And blow your own trumpet,
Or, trust me, you haven't a chance!

Exit ROBIN.

Richard. (*looking after him*) Ah! It's a thousand pities he's such a poor opinion of himself,
for a finer fellow don't walk! Well, I'll do my best for him. "Plead for him as
though it was for your own father" - that's what my heart's a-remarking to me just
now. But here she comes! Steady! Steady it is!

Enter ROSE. He is much struck by her.

Richard. By the Port Admiral but she's a tight little craft! Come, come, she's not for you,
Dick, and yet - she's fit to marry Lord Nelson! By the flag of old England, I can't
look at her unmoved.

Rose. Sir, you are agitated -

- Richard. Aye, aye, my lass, well said! I am agitated, true enough! - took flat aback, my girl, but 'tis naught - 'Twill pass. *(aside)* This here heart of mine's a-dictatin' to me like anythink. Question is, have I the right to disregard its promptings?
- Rose. Can I do aught to relieve thine anguish, for it seemeth to me that thou art in sore trouble? This apple - *(proffering a damaged apple)*
- Richard. *(examining it and returning it)* No my lass, 'taint that: I'm took flat aback - I never see anything like you in all my born days. Parbuckle me if you ain't the loveliest gal I've ever set eyes on. There, I can't say fairer than that, can I?
- Rose. No! *(aside)* The question is, is it meet that an utter stranger should thus express himself? *(Refers to book)* Yes - "Always speak the truth."
- Richard. I'd no thought of sayin' this here to you on my own account, for, to tell the truth, I was chartered by another; but when I see you my heart it up and it says, says it, "This is the very lass for you, Dick" - "Speak up to her, Dick" it says - (it calls me Dick acos we was at school together) - "Tell her all, Dick," it says, "Never sail under false colours - it's mean!" That's what my heart tells me to say, and in my rough, common-sailor fashion, I've said it, and I'm a-waitin' for your reply. I'm a-tremblin', miss. Lookye here - *(holding out his hand)* That's narvousness!
- Rose. *(aside)* Now, how should a maiden deal with such an one? *(consults book)* "Keep no one in unnecessary suspense." *(aloud)* Behold, I will not keep you in unnecessary suspense. *(refers to book)* "In accepting an offer of marriage, do so with apparent hesitation." *(aloud)* I take you but with a certain show of reluctance. *(refers to book)* "Avoid any appearance of eagerness" *(aloud)* Though you will bear in mind that I am far from anxious to do so. *(refers to book)* "A little show of emotion will not be misplaced!" *(aloud)* Pardon this tear! *(wipes her eye)*
- Richard. Rose, you've made me the happiest blue-jacket in England! I wouldn't change places with the admiral of the fleet, no matter who he's a-huggin' at this present moment! But, axin' your pardon, miss, *(wiping his lips on his hand)* might I be permitted to salute the flag I'm a-goin' to sail under?
- Rose. *(referring to book)* "An engaged young lady should not permit too many familiarities" *(aloud)* Once! *(RICHARD kisses her)*

Enter ROBIN, with chorus of Bridesmaids.

No.9. - ENTRANCE OF BRIDESMAIDS²

I well his suit has sped,
Oh, may they soon be wed!
Oh, tell us, tell us pray,
What doth the maiden say?
In singing are we justified,
In singing are we justified?

²The last night of the D'Oyly Carte 1969/70 London Season, Saturday 7th March, included the Duet No.8 in Act Two. See Page 34.

"Hail the bridegroom - hail the bride
Let the nuptial knot be tied:
In fair phrases
Hymn their praises,
Hail the bridegroom - hail the bride"?

Robin. Well - what news? Have you spoken to her?

Richard. Aye, my lad, I have - so to speak - spoke her.

Robin. And she refuses?

Richard. Why, no, I can't truly say she do!

Robin. Then she accepts! My darling! (*embraces ROSE*)

Bridesmaids. "Hail the bridegroom - hail the bride
Let the nuptial knot be tied:
In fair phrases
Hymn their praises,
Hail the bridegroom - hail the bride"?

Rose. (*referring to book*) Now, what should a maiden do when she is embraced by the wrong gentleman?

Richard. Belay, my lad, belay! You don't understand!

Rose. Oh, sir, belay, I beseech you!

Richard. You see, it's like this: she accepts - but it's me!

Robin. You!

RICHARD embraces ROSE.

Bridesmaids. "Hail the bridegroom - hail the bride
Let the nuptial knot be tied -

Robin. (*interrupting angrily*) Hold your tongues, will you! Now then, what does this mean?

Richard. My poor lad, my heart grieves for thee, but it's like this: The moment I see her, and just as I was a-goin' to mention you name, my heart it up and it says, says it, "Dick, you fell in love with her yourself," it says. "Be honest and sailor-like - don't skulk under false colours - speak up," it says, "Take her, you dog, and with her my blessin'!"

Bridesmaids. "Hail the bridegroom - hail the bride -

Robin. Will you be quiet! Go away! (*chorus make faces at him and exit*) Vulgar girls!

Richard. What could I do? I'm bound to obey my heart's dictates.

Robin. Of course - no doubt. It's quite right - I don't mind, that is - not particularly - only it's - it is disappointing, you know.

Rose. *(to ROBIN)* Oh, but, sir, I knew not that thou didst seek me in wedlock, or in very truth I should not have hearkened unto this man, for behold, he is but a lowly mariner, and very poor withal, whereas thou art a tiller of the land, and thou hast fat oxen, and many sheep and swine, a considerable dairy farm, and much corn and oil!

Richard. That's true, my lass, but it's done now, ain't it, Rob?

Rose. Still, it may be that I should not be happy in thy love. I am passing young, and little able to judge. Moreover, as to thy character, I know naught!

Robin. Nay, Rose, I'll answer for that. Dick has won thy love fairly. Broken-hearted as I am, I'll stand up for Dick through thick and thin!

Richard. *(with emotion)* Thankye, messmate! That's well said. That's spoken honest. Thankye Rob! *(grasps his hand)*

Rose. Yet methinks I have heard that sailors are but worldly men, and little prone to lead serious and thoughtful lives.

Robin. And what then? Admit that Dick is not a steady character, and that when he's excited he uses language that would make your hair curl, - Grant that, he does - it's the truth, and I'm not going to deny it! But look at his good qualities. He's as nimble as a pony, and his hornpipe is the talk of the fleet!

RICHARD dances a few steps.

Robin. There! That's only a bit of it.

Richard. Thankye Rob! That's well spoken. Thankye Rob!

Rose. But it may be that he drinketh strong waters that do bemuse a man, and make him even as the wild beasts of the desert!

Robin. Well, suppose he does, and I don't say he don't, for rum's his bane and ever has been. He does drink - I won't deny it. But what of that? Look at his arms - tattooed to the shoulder! *(RICHARD rolls up his sleeve)* No, no - I won't hear a word against Dick!

Rose. But they say that mariners are rarely true to those that they profess to love!

Robin. Granted - granted - and I don't say that Dick isn't as bad as any of 'em. *(RICHARD chuckles)* You are, you know you are, you dog! A devil of a fellow - a regular out-and-out Lothario! But what then? You can't have everything, and a better hand at turning in a dead-eye don't walk a deck! And what an accomplishment that is in a family man! No, no - not a word against Dick. I'll stick up for him through thick and thin!

Richard. Thankye, Rob, thankye! You're a true friend. I've acted accordin' to my heart's dictates, and such orders as them no man should disobey!

No.10. - TRIO - (Rose, Richard and Robin)

In sailing o'er life's ocean wide
Your heart should be your only guide;
With summer sea and favouring wind
Yourself in port you'll surely find.

Richard. My heart says, "To this maiden strike -
She's capture you
She's just the sort of girl you like -
You know you do.
If other men her heart should gain,
I shall resign."
That's what it says to me quite plain,
This heart of mine.

Robin. My heart says, "You've a prosperous lot
With acres wide;
You mean to settle all you've got
Upon your bride."
It don't pretend to shape my acts
By word or sign;
It merely states these simple facts,
This heart of mine!

Rose. Ten minutes since my heart said, "White!"
It now says, "Black!"
It then said, "Left!" It now says, "Right!"
Hearts often tack.
I must obey its latest strain -
You tell me so. *(to RICHARD)*
But should it change its mind again,
I'll let you know!

Turning from RICHARD to ROBIN, who embraces her.

Ensemble. In sailing o'er life's ocean wide
No doubt the heart should be your guide;
But it is awkward when you find
A heart that does not know its mind!

Exit ROBIN and ROSE, L., and RICHARD R., weeping.

Enter MAD MARGARET. She is wildly dressed in picturesque tatters, and is an obvious caricature of theatrical madness.

No.11. - RECIT. AND ARIA - (Margaret)

Cheerily carols the lark
Over the cot.
Merrily whistles the clerk
Scratching a blot.
But the lark
And the clerk,
I remark,
Comfort me not!

Over the ripening peach
Buzzes the bee.
Splash on the billowy beach
Tumbles the sea.
But the peach
And the beach
They are each
Nothing to me!

And why?
Who am I?
Daft Madge! Crazy Meg!
Mad Margaret! Poor Peg!
He! he! he! he! he! (*chuckling*)
Mad, I?
Yes very!
But, why?
Mystery!
Don't call!
Whist! Whist!

No crime -
'Tis only
That I'm
Love-Lonely!
That's all!

BALLAD

To a garden full of posies
Cometh one to gather flowers,
And he wanders through it's bowers
Toying with the wanton roses,
Who, uprising from their beds,
Hold on high their shameless heads
With their pretty lips a-pouting,
Never doubting - never doubting
That for Cytherean posies
He would gather aught but roses!

In a nest of weeds and nettles,
Lay a violet half-hidden,
Hoping that his glance unbidden
Yet might fall upon her petals.
Though she lived alone, apart,
Love lay nestling in her heart,
But, alas, the cruel awaking
Set her little heart a-breaking,
For he gathered for his posies
Only roses - only roses!

She bursts into tears. Enter ROSE.

Rose. A maiden, and in tears? Can I do aught to soften thy sorrow? This apple -

ROSE offers an apple. MARGARET examines it and rejects it.

Mar. No! *(mysteriously)* Tell me, are you mad?

Rose. I? No! That is, I think not.

Mar. That's well! Then you don't love Sir Despard Murgatroyd? All mad girls love him. I love him. I'm poor Mad Margaret - Crazy Meg - Poor Peg! He! he! he! he! he!
(chuckles)

Rose. Thou lovest the bad baronet of Ruddygore? Oh, horrible - too horrible!

Mar. You pity me? Then be my mother! The squirrel had a mother, but she drank and the squirrel fled! Hush! They sing a brave song in our parts - it runs somewhat thus; *(sings)*

"The cat and the dog and the little puppee
Sat down in a - down in a - in - "

I forget what they sat down in, but so the song goes. Listen! I've come to pinch her!

Rose. Mercy, whom!

Mar. You mean, "Who."

Rose. Nay! It is the accusative after the verb.

Mar. True. *(melodramatically)* I've come to pinch Rose Maybud!

Rose. *(aside, alarmed)* Rose Maybud!

Mar. Aye! I love him - he loved me once. But that's all gone. Fisht! He gave me an Italian glance - thus *(business)* and made me his. He will give her an Italian glance, and make her his! But it shall not be, for I'll stamp on her - stamp on her - stamp on her! Did you ever kill anybody? No? Why not? Listen - I killed a fly this morning! It buzzed, and I wouldn't have it! So it died - pop! So shall she!

Rose. But behold, I am Rose Maybud, and I would fain not die, "pop"!

Mar. You are Rose Maybud?

Rose. Yes, sweet Rose Maybud!

Mar. Strange! They told me she was beautiful! And *he* loves *you*! No, no! If I thought that, I would treat you as the auctioneer and the land-agent treated the ladybird - I would rend you asunder!

Rose. Nay, be pacified, for behold I am pledged to another, and lo, we are to be wedded this very day!

Mar. Swear me that! Come to a Commissioner and let me have it on affidavit! I once made an affidavit - but it died - it died - it died! But see, they come - Sir Despard and his evil crew! Hide, hide - they are all mad - quite mad!

Rose. What makes you think that?

Mar. Hush! They sing choruses in public. That's mad enough I think! Go - hide away, or they will seize you. Hush! Quite softly - quite, quite softly!

Exit together on tiptoe. Enter Chorus of Bucks and Blades heralded by Chorus of Bridesmaids.

No.12. - CHORUS

Bridesmaids. Welcome gentry,
 For your entry
 Sets our tender hearts a-beating.
 Men of station,
 Admiration
 Prompts this unaffected greeting.
 Hearty greeting offer we!

*Your exceeding
 Easy breeding
 Just the thing our hearts to pillage -
 Cheers us, charms us,
 Quite disarms us:
 Welcome, welcome to our village;
 To our village welcome be.*

Men. When thoroughly tired
 Of being admired
 By ladies of gentle degree - degree,
 With flattery sated
 High-flown and inflated,
 Away from the city we flee - we flee!
 From charms intramural
 To prettiness rural

The sudden transition
Is simply Elysian.
So, come Amaryllis,
Come Chloe and Phyllis,
Your slaves for the moment are we!

Girls. The sons of the tillage
Who dwell in this village
Are people of lowly degree - degree.
Though honest and active
They're most unattractive
And awkward as awkward can be - can be!
They're clumsy clodhoppers
With axes and choppers,
And shepherds and ploughmen
And drovers and cowmen
Hedgers and reapers
And carters and keepers,
But never a lover for me!

Girls. So welcome
gentry,
For your
entry

Sets our tender
hearts a-beating.

Men of
station
Admi -
ration
Prompts this unaf -
fected greeting.
Hearty greeting offer we!

Men. When thoroughly tired
Of being admired
By ladies of gentle degree -
degree,
With flattery sated
High-flown and inflated,
Away from the city we flee
- we flee!

From charms intermural
To prettiness rural
The sudden transition
Is simple Elysian
So, come Amaryllis,
Come Chloe and Phyllis,
Your slaves for the moment
are we!

Enter SIR DESPARD.

No.13. - SONG AND CHORUS - (Sir Despard)

Sir D. Oh why am I moody and sad?

Chorus. Can't guess!

Sir D. And why am I guiltily mad?

Chorus. Confess!

Sir D. Because I am thoroughly bad!

Chorus. Oh yes!

Sir D. You'll see it at once in my face!
Oh why am I husky and hoarse?

Chorus. Ah, why?

Sir D. It's the workings of conscience of course!

Chorus. Fie, fie!

Sir D. And huskiness stands for remorse,

Chorus. Oh my!

Sir D. At least, it does so in my case!

When in crime one is fully employed -

Chorus. Like you -

Sir D. Your expression gets warped and destroyed:

Chorus. It do.

Sir D. It's a penalty none can avoid;

Chorus. How true!

Sir D. I once was a nice looking youth:
But like stone from a strong catapult -

Chorus. A trice -

Sir D. I rushed at my terrible cult -

Chorus. That's vice -

Sir D. Observe the unpleasant result!

Chorus. Not nice.

Sir D. Indeed, I am telling the truth!

Oh, innocents, happy though poor!

Chorus. That's we!

Sir D. If I had been virtuous, I'm sure -

Chorus. Like me!

Sir D. I should be as nice looking as you're!

Chorus. Maybe!

Sir D. You are very nice looking indeed!
Oh innocents, listen in time -

Chorus. We *doe*.

Sir D. Avoid an existence of crime -

Chorus. Just so -

Sir D. Or you'll be as ugly as I'm -

Chorus. *(loudly)* No, no!

Sir D. And now, if you please, we'll proceed!

All the girls express their horror of SIR DESPARD. As he approaches them they fly from him, terror stricken, leaving him alone on the stage.

Sir D. Poor children, how they loathe me - me whose hands are certainly steeped in infamy, but whose heart is as the heart of a little child! Oh Ruthven, my elder brother, if you had not died mysteriously in childhood, you would have been me, I should have been you, and all would have been well.

Enter MAD MARGARET.

Mar. *(wildly)* Despard. How de do? How de do? How de do?

Sir D. Margaret Mackintosh? Why do you follow me about everywhere?

Mar. You are here to carry off Rose Maybud! But don't do it - don't do it! Better not - better not! He he he. *(chuckling)*

Sir D. My good girl, I don't want Rose Maybud. But what is a poor baronet to do when a whole picture-gallery of ancestors step down from their frames and threaten him with an excruciating death if he hesitates to commit his daily crime? But, ha ha, I am even with them! *(mysteriously)* I get my crime over first thing in the morning, and then, ha ha, for the rest of the day, I do good, I do good, I do good! *(melodramatically)* Two days since I stole a child and built an orphan asylum! Yesterday I fractured a skull and founded a hospital! This morning I robbed a bank and endowed a bishopric! Tomorrow I carry off Rose -

Mar. *(significantly)* Tomorrow - you - carry of Rose?

Sir D. Certainly - and build a cathedral!

Mar. *(with intensity)* If you carry off Rose Maybud, I'll bite you!

Sir D. Really Margaret, if a man commit an error - and atone with a cathedral.

Mar. Not a word. I am desperate.

DUET - (Margaret, Sir Despard and Chorus)³

- Mar. If you attempt to take the girl and carry her off, away -
- Sir D. Sing hey, sing ho, and exactly so,
(to audience) And it's all for the love of a lad, poor thing.
- Mar. Your doom shall be a terrible one, and fill you with dismay.
- Sir D. Sing bless my soul, with a poison bowl!
(to audience) And it's all for the love of a lad, poor thing.
- Mar. A nightly course of apple-pie beds, tin-tacks upon your chair -
And prickly things, with terrible stings, shall tickle you everywhere -
I rather think you'll find your razors rasp you when you shave,
And I'll hurry you, worry you, flurry you, scurry you, into an early grave!
- Chorus. And the owl shall smile, and the snail shall sneeze,
And the tadpole kneel on his bended knees;
The slug shall shout, and the crow turn pale,
Before Mad Margaret's curse shall fail!
- Sir D. *(aside)* And it's all for the love of a lad, poor thing!
- Mar. Your breakfast bread I'll daily spread with mouldy mothery jam!
- Sir D. Sing hey for the dart in her wounded heart,
(aside) And it's all for the love of a lad, poor thing!
- Mar. You shall eat French eggs, Australian beef, and American hard-boiled ham!
- Sir D. Sing hey for the lead in her poor thick head,
(aside) And it's all for the love of a lad, poor thing!
- Mar. If this you do, your sheets I'll strew with Abernethy crumbs,
I'll line your hat with cobbler's wax - your gloves shall split at the thumbs -
With damp cigars and flat champagne I'll blight you in your bloom,
And I'll hurry you, worry you, flurry you, scurry you into an early tomb.
- Chorus. And the cat shall crow, and the gnat shall neigh,
And the toad shall trot, and the bat shall bray,
And the snake shall snore, and the worm shall wail,
Before Mad Margaret's curse shall fail!
- Sir D. *(aside)* And it's all for the love of a lad, poor thing.

Exit MAD MARGARET.

³There appears to be no evidence that Sullivan ever set this number.

Sir D. This is what it is to be the sport and toy of a picture gallery! But I will be bitterly revenged upon them! I will give them all to the nation, and nobody shall ever look upon their faces again!

Enter RICHARD.

Richard. Ax your honour's pardon but -

Sir D. Ha! Observed! And by a mariner! What would you with me fellow?

Richard. Your honour, I'm a poor man-o'-war's man, becalmed in the doldrums -

Sir D. I don't know them.

Richard. And I make so bold as to ax your honour's advice. Does your honour know what it is to have a heart?

Sir D. My honour knows what it is to have a complete apparatus for conducting the circulation of the blood through the veins and arteries of the human body.

Richard. Aye, but has your honour a heart that ups and looks you in the face and gives you quarter-deck orders that it's life and death to disobey?

Sir D. My honour does not have a heart of that description, but I have a picture gallery that presumes to take that liberty.

Richard. Well, your honour, it's like this - your honour had an elder brother -

Sir D. It had.

Richard. Who should have inherited your title and with it, it's cuss.

Sir D. Aye! But he died - Oh Ruthven!

Richard. He didn't.

Sir D. He did not?

Richard. He didn't. On the contrary, he lives in this here very village, under the name of Robin Oakapple, and he's a-goin' to marry Rose Maybud this very day.

Sir D. Ruthven alive, and going to marry Rose Maybud? Can this be possible?

Richard. Now the question I was going to ask your honour is - ought I to tell your honour this?

Sir D. I don't know. It's a delicate point. I think you ought. Mind, I'm not sure, but I think so!

Richard. That's what my heart says. It says, "Dick", it says (it calls me Dick acos it's entitled to take that liberty), "That there young gal would recoil from him if she knew what he really were. Ought you to stand off and on, and let this young gal take this false

step and never fire a shot across her bows to bring her to? No," it says, "you did not ought." And I won't ought, accordin'.

Sir D. Then you really feel yourself at liberty to tell me that my elder brother lives - that I may charge him with his cruel deceit, and transfer to his shoulders the hideous thralldom under which I have laboured for so many years! Free - free at last! Free to live a blameless life, and to die beloved and regretted by all who knew me.

No.14. - DUET - (Richard and Sir Despard)

Richard. You understand?

Sir D. I think I do.
With vigour unshaken
This step shall be taken.
It's neatly planned.

Richard. I think so too;
I'll readily bet it
You'll never regret it!

Both. For duty, duty must be done;
The rule applies to everyone,
And painful though that duty be,
To shirk the task were fiddle-de-dee,
To shirk the task were fiddle-de-dee,
To shirk the task,
To shirk the task were fiddle-de,
Fiddle-de, fiddle-de,
Fiddle-de, fiddle-de,
Fiddle-de, fiddle-de-dee!

Sir D. The bridegroom comes -

Richard. Likewise the bride -
The maidens are very
Elated and merry;
They are her chums.

Sir D. To lash their pride
Were almost a pity,
The pretty committee!

Both. For duty, duty must be done;
The rule applies to everyone,
And painful though that duty be,
To shirk the task were fiddle-de-dee,
To shirk the task were fiddle-de-dee,
To shirk the task,
To shirk the task were fiddle-de,
Fiddle-de, fiddle-de,

Fiddle-de, fiddle-de,
Fiddle-de, fiddle-de-dee!

Exit RICHARD and SIR DESPARD. Enter Chorus.

No.15. - FINALE

Girls. Hail the bride of seventeen summers:
In fair phrases
Hymn her praises;
Rend your song on high, all comers.
She rejoices
In your voices.
Smiling summer beams her,
Shedding every blessing on her:
Maidens, greet her -
Kindly treat her -
Ye may all be brides some day!

Men. Hail the bridegroom who advances,
Agitated
Yet elated.
He's in easy circumstances,
Young and lusty,
True and trusty!
Happiness untold awaits them
When the parson consecrates them:
People near them,
Loudly cheer them -
You'll be bridegrooms some fine day.

All. Smiling summer beams her,
Shedding every blessing on her:
Maidens, greet her -
Kindly treat her -
You may all -

Girls. May all be
Brides some day!

Men. May bridegrooms
Some fine day!

Enter ROBIN attended by RICHARD and OLD ADAM, meeting ROSE, attended by ZORAH and DAME HANNAH. ROSE and ROBIN embrace.

MADRIGAL

Rose. When the buds are blossoming,
Smiling welcome to the spring,
Lovers choose a wedding day -
Life is love in merry May!

Girls. Spring is green - Fal la la!
Summer's rose - Fal la la!

Principals. It is sad when summer goes, Fal la!

Men. Autumn's gold - Fal la la!
Winter's grey - Fal la la!

Principals. Winter still is far away, Fal la!

All. Leaves in autumn fade and fall.
Winter is the end of all.
Spring and summer teem with glee:
Spring and summer then, for me! Fal la!

Hannah. In the spring-time seed is sown:
In the summer grass is mown:
In the autumn you may reap:
Winter is the time for sleep.

Girls. Spring is hope - Fal la la!
Summer's joy - Fal la la!

Principals. Spring and summer never cloy - Fal la!

Men. Autumn, toil - Fal la la!
Winter rest - Fal la la!

Principals. Winter after all is best - Fal la!

All. Spring and summer pleasure you,
Autumn, aye, and winter too -
Every season has it's cheer
Life is lovely all the year! Fal la!

GAVOTTE

After gavotte, enter SIR DESPARD.

Sir D. Hold, bride and bridegroom, ere you wed each other,
I claim young Robin as my elder brother!
His rightful title I have long enjoyed:
I claim him as Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd!

All. Oh, wonder!

What means this interfering?
At once be disappearing,
Or cheer with welcome hearty
Our Rose's wedding party.

Rose. (*wildly*) Deny the falsehood Robin, as you should;
It is a plot!

Robin. I would if conscientiously I could,
But I cannot!

All. Ah, base one!

SOLO - (Robin)

As pure and blameless peasant,
I cannot, I regret,
Deny a truth unpleasant:
I am that baronet!

All. He is that baronet!

Robin. But when completely rated
Bad baronet am I,
That I am what he's stated
I'll recklessly deny!

All. He'll recklessly deny!

Robin. When I'm a bad Bart I will tell taradiddles!

All. He'll tell taradiddles when he's a bad Bart!

Robin. I'll play a bad part on the falsest of fiddles!

All. On very false fiddles he'll play a bad part!

Robin. But until that takes place I must be conscientious!

All. He'll be conscientious until that takes place!

Robin. Then adieu with good grace to my morals sententious!

All. To morals sententious adieu with good grace!
Adieu with good grace to his morals, his morals sententious!

When he's/I'm a bad Bart he/I will tell taradiddles!
On very false fiddles he'll/I'll play a bad part!
He'll/I'll play a bad part on the falsest of fiddles!
And tell taradiddles when he's/I'm a bad Bart!

Zorah. Who is the wretch who hath betrayed thee?
Let him stand forth?

Richard. (*coming forward*) 'Twas I!

All. Die, traitor!

Richard. Hold, my conscience made me!
Withhold your wrath!

SONG - Richard

Within this breast there beats a heart
Whose voice can't be gainsaid.
It bade me thy true rank impart,
And I at once obeyed.
I knew 'twould blight thy budding fate -
I knew 'twould cause thee anguish great -
But did I therefore hesitate?
No! I at once obeyed!

All. Acclaim him who, when his true heart
Bade him young Robin's rank impart,
Immediately obeyed!

SOLO - (Rose)

Rose. (*addressing ROBIN*) Farewell!

Thou hadst my heart -
'Twas quickly won!
But now we part -
Thy face I shun!
Farewell!

Go bend the knee
At vice's shrine;
Of life with me
All hope resign.
Farewell!

To DESPARD.

Take me - I am thy bride!

Chorus. Hurray!

Bridesmaids. Hail the bridegroom - hail the bride!
When the nuptial knot is tied;
Every day will bring some joy
That can never, never cloy!

Enter MARGARET, who listens.

Sir D. Excuse me, I'm a virtuous person now -

Rose. That's why I wed you!

Sir D. And I to Margaret must keep my vow!

Mar. Have I misread you?
Oh joy! With newly kindled rapture warmed,
I kneel before you! (*kneels*)

Sir D. I once disliked you; now that I've reformed,
How I adore you! (*they embrace*)

Bridesmaids. Hail the bridegroom - hail the bride!
When the nuptial knot is tied;
Every day will bring some joy
That can never, never cloy!

Rose. Richard, of him I love bereft,
Through thy design,
Thou art the only one that's left,
So I am thine!

Bridesmaids. Hail the bridegroom - hail the bride!
When the nuptial knot is tied!

Rose and Richard.

Oh, happy the lily
When kissed by the bee;
And, sipping tranquilly,
Quite happy is he;
And happy the filly
That neighs in her pride;
But happier than any
A pound to a penny,
A lover is when he
Embraces his bride!

Sir D. and Mar.

Oh, happy the flowers
That blossom in June;
And happy the bowers
That gain by the boon,
But happier by hours
The man of decent,
Who, folly regretting,
Is bent on forgetting
His bad baronetting,
And means to repent!

Hannah, Adam and Zorah.

Oh, happy the blossom
That blooms on the lea,
Likewise the opossum
That sits on a tree,
When you come across 'em
They cannot compare
With those who are treading
The dance at a wedding,
While people are spreading
The best of good fare!

Robin. Oh, wretched the debtor
Who's signing a deed!
And wretched the letter
That no one can read!
But very much better
Their lot it must be,
Than that of the person
I'm making this verse on,
Whose head there's a curse on -
Alluding to me!

All. Oh, happy the lily
When kissed by the bee;
And, sipping tranquilly,
Quite happy is he;
And happy the filly
That neighs in her pride;
But happier than any
A pound to a penny,
A lover is when he
Embraces his bride!

DANCE

At the end of the dance, ROBIN falls senseless on the stage. Picture.

CURTAIN.

Act Two

Scene:- Picture Gallery of Ruddygore Castle. The walls are covered with full-length portraits of the Baronets of Ruddygore from the time of James I. - the first being that of SIR RUPERT, alluded to in the legend; the last, that of the last deceased Baronet, SIR RODERIC.

Enter ROBIN and ADAM melodramatically, ROBIN wearing the haggard aspect of a guilty roué; ADAM, that of the wicked steward to such a man.

No.1. - DUET - (Robin and Adam)

- Robin. I once was as meek as a new born lamb,
I'm now Sir Murgatroyd - ha! ha!
With greater precision
(Without the elision),
Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd - ha! ha!
- Adam. And I who was once his *valley-de-sham*,
As steward I'm now employed - ha! ha!
The dickens may take him -
I'll never forsake him!
As steward I'm now employed - ha! ha!
- Both. How dreadful when an innocent heart
Becomes, perforce, a bad young Bart.,
And still more hard on Old Adam
His former faithful *valley-de-sham*!
- Robin. My face is the index to my mind,
All venom and spleen and gall - ha! ha!
Or, properly speaking,
It soon will be reeking
Of venom and spleen and gall - ha! ha!
- Adam. My name from Adam Goodheart you'll find
I've changed to Gideon Crawle - ha! ha!
For a bad Bart.'s Steward
Whose heart is much too hard,
Is always Gideon Crawle - ha! ha!
- Both. How providential when you find
The face the index to the mind,
And wicked men compelled to call
Themselves by names like Gideon Crawle - ha! ha!
- Robin. This is a painful state of things, Gideon Crawle!
- Adam. Painful, indeed! Ah, my poor master, when I swore that come what would, I
would serve you in all things for ever, I little thought to what a pass it would bring
me! The confidential advisor to the greatest villain unhung! *It's a dreadful position
for a good old man!*

- Robin. Very likely, but don't be gratuitously offensive, Gideon Crawle.
- Adam. Sir, I am the ready instrument of your abominable misdeeds because I have sworn to obey you in all things, but I have not sworn to allow deliberate and systematic villainy to pass unreprieved. If you insist upon it I will swear that, too, but I have not sworn it yet. Now, sir, to business. What crime do you propose to commit today?
- Robin. How should I know? As my confidential adviser, it's your duty to suggest something.
- Adam. Sir, I loathe the life you are leading, but a good old man's oath is paramount and I obey. Richard Dauntless is here with pretty Rose Maybud to ask your consent to their marriage. Poison their beer.
- Robin. No - not that - I know I'm a bad Bart., but I'm not as bad a Bart. as all that.
- Adam. Well there you are, you see! It's no use my making suggestions if you don't adopt them.
- Robin. (*melodramatically*) How would it be, do you think, were I to lure him here with cunning wile - bind him with good stout rope to yonder post - and then, by making hideous faces at him curdle the heart-blood in his arteries, and freeze the very marrow in his bones? How say you Gideon, is not the scheme well planned?
- Adam. It would be simply rude - nothing more. Now if you were to seize Rose Maybud and confine her in the lowest dungeon beneath the castle moat, that would be disgraceful indeed. But soft - they come!

ADAM and Robin retire up as CHORUS OF BRIDESMAIDS enters.

CHORUS OF BRIDESMAIDS

Although in fashion regular
 Both Rose and Richard plighted are -
 A picturesque event -
 The wedding would be null and void
 Unless Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd
 Accorded his consent.
 Which to refuse
 He will not choose -
 Of that we're confident.

And so we come in duty bound,
 His views upon the point to sound
 (The Usual compliment).
 Our landlord he - it would not do
 Sir Ruthven's wishes to pooh-pooh;
 Or he might raise our rent -
 And that would be

To you and me
Most inconvenient!

Enter RICHARD and ROSE

Chorus. Hail the bridegroom - hail the bride!
When the nuptial knot is tied,
Life will be one happy dream,
Joyfulness reign all supreme.

ADAM and ROBIN retire up as RICHARD and ROSE enter.

No.8. - DUET - (Rose and Richard (from Act 1))⁴

Richard. The battle's roar is over,
O my love!
Embrace thy tender lover
O my love!
From tempest's welter,
From war's alarms,
O give me shelter
Within those arms!
Thy smile alluring,
All heart-ache curing,
Gives peace enduring,
O my love!

Rose. If heart both true and tender
O my love!
A life-love can engender,
O my love!
A truce to sighing
And tears of brine,
For joy undying
Shall aye be mine.

Both. And thou and I, love,
Shall live and die, love,
Without a sigh, love -
My own, my love!

Enter chorus of bridesmaids.

No.2. - DUET AND CHORUS - (Rose and Richard)

Richard. Happily coupled are we,
You see -
I am a jolly Jack Tar,

⁴See footnote on page 13. The Crediton Operatic and Dramatic Society production of 1996 also followed this with a reprise of No. 9, with the words "What doth the maiden say?" altered to "What doth Sir Ruthven say?"

My star,
And you are the fairest,
The richest and rarest
Of innocent lasses you are!

Fanned by a favouring gale,
You'll sail
Over life's treacherous sea
With me,
And as for bad weather
We'll brave it together,
And you shall creep under my lee,
My wee!
And you shall creep under my lee!

For you are such a smart little craft -
Such a neat little, sweet little craft.
Such a bright little, tight little,
Slight little, light little,
Trim little, prim little craft!

Chorus. For she is such a smart little craft -
Such a neat little, sweet little craft.
Such a bright little, tight little,
Slight little, light little,
Trim little, prim little craft!

Rose. My hopes will be blighted, I fear,
My dear;
In a month you'll be going to sea,
Quite free,
And all of my wishes
You'll throw to the fishes
As though they were never to be!
And I shall be left all alone
To moan,
And weep at your cruel deceit,
Complete,
While you'll be asserting
Your freedom by flirting
With every woman you meet,
You cheat -
Ah!
With every woman you meet!

Though I am such a smart little craft -
Such a neat little, sweet little craft.
Such a bright little, tight little,

Slight little, light little,
Trim little, prim little craft!

Chorus. For she is such a smart little craft -
Such a neat little, sweet little craft.
Such a bright little, tight little,
Slight little, light little,
Trim little, prim little craft!

Enter ROBIN.

Robin. Soho! Pretty one - in my power at last, eh? Know ye not that I have those within my call who, at my lightest bidding, would immure ye in an uncomfortable dungeon *where ye would linger out a lonesome lifetime in silent solitude?* (*calling*)
What ho! Within there!

Richard. Hold - we are prepared for this (*producing a Union Jack*). Here is a flag that none dare defy. (*all kneel*) And while this glorious rag floats over Rose Maybud's head, the man does not live that would dare to lay unlicensed hands upon her!

Robin. Foiled - and by a Union Jack! But a time will come, and then -

Rose. Nay, let me plead with him. (*to ROBIN*) Sir Ruthven, have pity. In my book of etiquette the case of a maiden about to be wedded to one who unexpectedly turns out to be a baronet with a curse on him, is not considered. *It is a comprehensive work, but it is not as comprehensive as that.* Time was when you loved me madly. Prove that this was no selfish love by according your consent to my marriage with one who, if he be not you yourself, is the next best thing - your dearest friend!

No.3. - SONG - (Rose with chorus of bridesmaids)

In bygone days I had thy love -
Thou hadst my heart.
But fate, all human vows above,
Our lives did part!
By the old love thou hadst for me
By the fond heart that beat for thee -
By joys that never now can be,
Grant thou my prayer!

Chorus. Grant thou her prayer!

Rose. *My heart that once in truth was thine,
Another claims -
Ah, who can laws to love assign,
Or rule its flames?
Our plighted love-bond gently bless,
The seal of thy consent impress
Upon our promised happiness -
(kneeling) Grant thou my prayer!*

Chorus. *(kneeling)* Grant thou her prayer!

Robin. *(recit.)* Take her - I yield!

All. *(recit.)* Oh rapture!

Chorus. Away to the parson we go -
 Say we're solicitous very
 Then he will turn two into one -
 Singing hey, derry down derry!

Richard. For she is such a smart little craft -

Rose. Such a neat little, sweet little craft -

Richard. Such a bright little -

Rose. Tight little -

Richard. Slight little -

Rose. Light little -

Both. Trim little, prim little craft!

Chorus. For she is such a smart little craft -
 Such a neat little, sweet little craft.
 Such a bright little, tight little,
 Slight little, light little,
 Trim little, prim little craft!

Exit all but ROBIN.

Robin. For a week I have fulfilled my accursed doom! I have duly committed a crime a day! Not a great crime I trust, but still in the eyes of one so strictly regulated as I used to be, a crime. But will my ghostly ancestors be satisfied with what I have done, or will they regard it as an unworthy subterfuge? *(addressing the pictures)* Oh, my forefathers, wallowers in blood, there came at last a day, when, sick of crime, you, each and every, vowed to sin no more, and so, in agony, called welcome Death to free you from your cloying guiltiness. Let the sweet psalm of that repentant hour soften your long dead hearts and tune your souls to mercy on your poor posterity!

The stage darkens for a moment. When it becomes light again the Pictures are seen to have become animated.

No.4. - CHORUS OF ANCESTORS - (with Solos, Robin and Sir Roderic)

Chorus. Painted emblems of a race,
 All accursed in days of yore,
 Each from his accustomed place
 Steps into the world once more!

The pictures step from their frames and march round the stage.

MARCH OF THE ANCESTORS

Baronet of Ruddygore,
Last of our accursed line,
Down upon the oaken floor -
Down upon those knees of thine!
Coward, poltroon, shaker, squeamer,
Blockhead, sluggard, dullard, dreamer,
Shirker, shuffler, crawler, creeper,
Sniffler, snuffler, wailer, weeper,
Earthworm, maggot, tadpole, weevil!
Set upon thy course of evil
Lest the king of Spectre-Land
Set on thee his grisly hand!

The spectre of SIR RODERIC descends from his frame.

Sir Rod. By the curse upon our race -

Chorus. Dead and hèarsed
All accursèd!

Sir Rod. Each inheriting this place -

Chorus. Sorrows shake it!
Devil take it!

Sir Rod. Must perforce, or yea or nay -

Chorus. Yea or naying
Be obeying!

Sir Rod. Do a deadly crime each day!

Chorus. Fire and thunder,
We knocked under -
Some atrocious crime committed
Daily ere the world we quitted!

Sir Rod. Beware! Beware! Beware!

Robin. Gaunt vision, who art thou
That thus with icy glare
And stern relentless brow,
Appearest, who knows how?

Sir Rod. I am the spectre of the late
Sir Roderic Murgatroyd,
Who comes to warn thee that thy fate
Thou cans't not now avoid.

Robin. Alas, poor ghost!

Sir Rod. The pity you express
For nothing goes:
We spectres are a jollier crew
Than you, perhaps, suppose!

Chorus. We spectres are a jollier crew
Than you, perhaps, suppose!

Sir Rod. When the night wind howls in the chimney cowl,
And the bat in the moonlight flies,
And inky clouds, like funeral shrouds,
Sail over the midnight skies -
When the footpads quail at the night-bird's wail,
And black dogs bay at the moon,
Then is the spectre's holiday -
Then is the ghosts' high-noon!

Chorus. Ha! ha!
Then is the ghosts' high-noon!

Sir Rod. As the sob of the breeze sweeps over the trees
And the mists lie low on the fen,
From grey tomb-stones are gathered the bones
That once were women and men,
And away they go, with a mop and a mow,
To the revel that ends too soon,
For cock-crow limits our holiday -
The dead of the night's high-noon!

Chorus. Ha! ha!
The dead of the night's high-noon!

Sir Rod. And then each ghost with his ladye-toast
To their churchyard beds takes flight.
With a kiss perhaps, on her lantern chaps,
And a grisly grim, "good-night!";
Till the welcome knell of the midnight bell
Rings forth its jolliest tune,
And ushers in our next high holiday -
The dead of the night's high-noon!

Chorus. Ha! ha!
The dead of the night's high-noon!

Robin. I recognise you now - you are the Picture that hangs at the end of the gallery.

Sir Rod. In a bad light. I am.

Robin. Are you considered a good likeness?

Sir Rod. Pretty well. Flattering.

Robin. Because as a work of art you are poor.

Sir Rup. That's true.

Sir Jas. No doubt.

Sir Con. Wants tone.

Sir Mer. Not mellow enough.

Sir Rod. I am crude in colour, but I have only been painted ten years. In a couple of centuries I shall be an Old Master, and then you will be sorry you spoke lightly of me.

Robin. How came you to be a Lord Mayor?

Sir Rod. I couldn't help it. It was part of my hideous doom.

Robin. Poor soul! And may I ask why you have left your frames?

Sir Rod. It is our duty to see that our successors commit their daily crime in a conscientious and workmanlike fashion. It is our duty to remind you that you are evading the conditions under which you are permitted to exist.

Robin. Really I don't know what you'd have. I've only been a bad baronet a week and I've committed a crime punctually every day.

Sir Rod. Let us enquire into this. Monday?

Robin. Monday was a bank holiday.

Sir Rod. True. Tuesday?

Robin. On Tuesday I made a false income tax return.

All. Ha! Ha!

Sir Rup. That's nothing.

Ghost 2. Nothing at all.

Sir Con. Everybody does that.

Sir Gil. It's expected of you.

Sir Rod. Wednesday?

Robin. (*melodramatically*) On Wednesday I forged a will.

Sir Rod. Whose will?

Robin. My own.

Sir Rod. My good sir, you can't forge your own will!

Robin. Can't I though! I like that! I did! Besides, if a man can't forge his own will, whose will can he forge?

Sir Mer. There's something in that.

Sir Des. Yes, it seem reasonable.

Sir Lio. At first sight it does.

Sir Rup. Fallacy somewhere, I fancy!

Robin. A man can do what he likes with his own!

Sir Rod. I suppose he can.

Robin. Well then, he can forge his own will. Stoopid! On Thursday I shot a fox.

All. Hear, hear!

Sir Rod. That's better. (*addressing ghosts*) Pass the fox, I think? (*they assent*) Yes, pass the fox. Friday?

Robin. On Friday I forged a cheque.

Sir Rod. Whose cheque?

Robin. Gideon Crawle's.

Sir Rod. But Gideon Crawle hasn't a banker.

Robin. I didn't say I forged his banker, I said I forged his cheque.

Sir Mer. That's true.

Sir Des. Yes, it seems reasonable.

Sir Con. At first sight it does.

Sir Rup. Fallacy somewhere!

Robin. On Saturday I disinherited my only son.

Sir Rod. But you haven't got a son.

Robin. No - not yet. I disinherited him in advance, to save time. You see - by this arrangement - he'll be born ready disinherited.

Sir Rod. I see. But I don't think you can do that.

Robin. My good sir, if I can't disinherit my own unborn son, whose unborn son can I disinherit?

Sir Mer. That's right enough.

Sir Des. Yes, it seems reasonable.

Sir Con. At first sight it does.

Sir Rup. Fallacy somewhere!

Sir Rod. Yes, all these arguments sound very well, but I can't help thinking that, if they were reduced to syllogistic form, they wouldn't hold water. Now quite understand us. We are foggy, but we don't allow our fogginess to be presumed upon. Unless you undertake to - well, suppose we say, carry off a lady? (*addressing ghosts*) Those who are in favour of his carrying off a lady - (*all raise their hands except a bishop*). Those of the contrary opinion? (*Bishop holds up his hands*) Oh, you're never satisfied! Yes, unless you undertake to carry off a lady at once - I don't care what lady - any lady - choose your lady - you perish in inconceivable agonies.

Robin. Carry off a lady? Certainly not, on any account. I've the greatest respect for ladies, and I wouldn't do anything of the kind for worlds! No, no. I'm not that kind of a baronet, I assure you! If that's all you've got to say, you'd better go back to your frames.

Sir Rod. Very well - then let the agonies commence.

Ghosts make passes. ROBIN begins to writhe in agonies.

Robin. Oh! Oh! Don't do that! I can't stand it!

Sir Rod. Painful, isn't it? It gets worse by degrees.

Robin. Oh! Oh! Stop a bit! Stop it, will you? I want to speak!

SIR RODERIC makes a sign to the Ghosts who resume their attitudes.

Sir Rod. Better?

Robin. Yes - better now. Whew!

Sir Rod. Well, do you consent?

Robin. But it's such an ungentlemanly thing to do!

Sir Rod. As you please. *(to ghosts)* Carry on!

Robin. Stop! I can't stand it! I agree! I promise! It shall be done!

Sir Rod. To-day?

Robin. To-day!

Sir Rod. At once?

Robin. At once! I retract! I apologise! I had no idea it was anything like that!

DUET AND CHORUS

Robin. Pray you, sir, excuse, in charity,
 Any act of impropriety
 To my unfamiliarity
 With the rules of ghost society.
 Pray withhold your animosity:
 Though it's awkward for a gentleman
 To embark on wild ferocity
 Like a cut-throat Oriental man,
 I'll forgo my wild identity,
 So, without undue tautology,
 Pray accept from this nonentity
 All appropriate apology!
 Though the prospect does not fascinate,
 Like a baronet, bad but sensible,
 I will murder - rob - assassinate -
 Everything that's reprehensible!

Chorus. Though the prospect does not fascinate,
 Like a baronet, bad but sensible,
 I will murder - rob - assassinate -
 Everything that's reprehensible!

Sir Rod. If you speak in all sincerity,
 And obey with due humility,
 Pray forgive me my asperity
 Prompted by your imbecility.
 Your obedience will gratify -
 We have gained a moral victory,
 But before the terms I ratify,
 Hear my counsel valedictory.
 Set to work with due rapidity.,
 Make away with all impediment -
 Naught will serve you, quip or quiddity,

Pray believe that what I said I meant.
Poison, stab, defame and dissipate -
Let your deeds be indefensible,
You'll commit, as I anticipate,
Everything that's reprehensible!

Chorus. Poison, stab, defame and dissipate -
Let your deeds be indefensible,
You'll commit, as we anticipate,
Everything that's reprehensible!

CHORUS

Baronet of Ruddygore,
Ere we seek our penal flames,
Your forgiveness we implore
For miscalling you such names
As 'coward, poltroon, shaker, squeamer,
Blockhead, sluggard, dull-head, dreamer,
Shaker, shuffler, crawler, creeper,
Sniffler, snuffler, wailer, weeper,
Earthworm, maggot, tadpole, weevil',
All these names are most uncivil -
This is our apology,
Pardon - pardon us - or die!

No.6. - CHORUS

He yields! He answers to our call!
We do not ask for more.
A sturdy fellow after all,
This latest Ruddygore!
All perish in unheard-of woe
Who dare our wills defy;
We want your pardon, ere we go,
For having agonized you so -
So pardon us -
So pardon us -
So pardon us -
Or die!

Robin. I pardon you!
I pardon you!

All. He pardons us -
Hurrah!

The ghosts return to their frames.

Ghosts. Painted emblems of a race,
All accursed in days of yore
Each to his accustomed place
Steps unwillingly, once more!

By this time the Ghosts have changed to pictures again. ROBIN is overcome by emotion.

Enter ADAM.

Adam. My poor master, you are not well -

Robin. Gideon Crawle, it won't do - I've just seen 'em - all my ancestors - they've just gone. They say I must do something desperate at once, or perish in horrible agonies. Go - go to yonder village - carry off a maiden - bring her here at once - anyone - I don't care which -

Adam. But -

Robin. Not a word, but obey! Fly!

Exit ADAM.

No.7. - RECIT and SONG - (Robin)

Away, Remorse! Compunction, hence!
Go, Moral Force! Go, Penitence!
To Virtue's plea a long farewell -
Propriety, I ring your knell!
Come guiltiness of deadliest hue!
Come desperate deeds of derring-do!

SONG - (1st version)

For thirty-five years I've been sober and wary -
My favourite tippie came straight from a dairy -
I kept guinea-pigs and a Belgian canary -
A squirrel, white mice, and a small black-and-tan.
I played on the flute, and I drank lemon squashes -
I wore chamois leather, thick boots, macintoshes,
And things that will someday be known as galoshes,
The type of a highly respectable man!

For the rest of my life I abandon propriety -
Visit the haunts of Bohemian society,
Wax-works, and other resorts of impiety,
Placed by the moralist under a ban.
My ways will be those of a regular satyr,
At carryings-on I must be a first-rater -
Go night after night to a wicked theayter -
It's hard on a highly respectable man!

Well, the man who has spent the first half of his tether,
On all the bad deeds you can bracket together,
Then goes and repents - in his cap it's a feather -
Society pets him as much as it can.
It's a comfort to think, if I now go a cropper,
I sha'n't, on the whole, have done more that's improper
Than he who was once an abandoned tip-topper,
But now is a highly respectable man!

SONG - (2nd version)

Henceforth all the crimes that I find in the Times,
I promise to perpetrate daily;
To-morrow I start, with a petrified heart,
On a regular course of Old Bailey.
There's confidence tricking, bad coin, pocket picking,
And several other disgraces -
There's postage-stamp priggings, and then thimble-rigging,
The three-cared delusion at races!
Oh! A baronet's rank is exceedingly nice,
But the title's uncommonly dear at the price!

Ye well-to-do squires who live in the shires,
Where petty distinctions are vital,
Who found Athenæums and local museums,
With views to a baronet's title -
Ye butchers, and bakers, and candle-stick makers,
Who sneer at all things that are tradey -
Whose middle-class lives are embarrassed by wives
Who long to parade as, "My Lady,"
Oh! Allow me to offer a word of advice,
The title's uncommonly dear at the price!

Ye supple M.P.'s who go down on your knees,
Your precious identity sinking,
And vote black or white as your leaders indite,
(Which saves you the trouble of thinking),
For your country's good name, her reputation, or her shame,
You don't care the snuff of a candle -
But you're paid for your game when you're told that your name
Will be graced by a baronet's handle -
Oh! Allow me to give you a word of advice -
The title's uncommonly dear at the price!

Exit ROBIN

Enter SIR DESPARD and MARGARET. They are both dressed in sober black and formal cut, and present a strong contrast to their appearance in Act One.

No.8. - DUET - (Margaret and Sir Despard)

Sir D. I once was a very abandoned person -

Mar. Making the most of evil chances.

Sir D. Nobody could conceive a worse'un -

Mar. Even in all the old romances.

Sir D. I blush for my wild extravagances,
But be so kind
To bear in mind

Mar. We were the victims of circumstances!

Dance.

That is one of our blameless dances!

I was once an exceedingly odd young lady -

Sir D. Suffering much from spleen and vapours.

Mar. Clergymen thought my conduct shady -

Sir D. She didn't spend much upon linen-drapers.

Mar. It certainly entertained the gapers.
My ways were strange -
Beyond all range -

Sir D. Paragraphs got into all the papers.

Dance.

We only cut respectable capers.

I've given up all my wild proceedings.

Mar. My taste for a wandering life is waning.

Sir D. Now I'm a dab at penny readings.

Mar. They are not remarkably entertaining.

Sir D. A moderate livelihood we're gaining.

Mar. In fact we rule
A National school.

Sir D. The duties are dull, but I'm not complaining.

Dance.

Sir D. This sort of thing takes a deal of training!

Sir D. We have been married a week.

Mar. One happy, happy week!

Sir D. Our new life -

Mar. Is delightful indeed!

Sir D. So calm!

Mar. So pure!

Sir D. So peaceful!

Mar. So unimpassioned! *(wildly)* Master, all this I owe to you! See, I am no longer wild and untidy. My hair is combed. My face is washed. My boots fit!

Sir D. Margaret, don't. Pray restrain yourself. *Be demure, I beg.*

Mar. *Demure it is. (resuming her quiet manner)*

Sir D. *Then make it so.* Remember, you are now a district visitor.

Mar. A gentle district visitor!

Sir D. You are orderly, methodical, neat; you have your emotions well under control.

Mar. I have! *(wildly)* Master, when I think of all you have done for me, I fall at your feet. I embrace your ankles, I hug your knees! *(doing so)*

Sir D. Hush. This is not well. This is calculated to provoke remark. Be composed, I beg!

Mar. Ah! You are angry with poor little Mad Margaret!

Sir D. No, not angry; but a district visitor should learn to eschew melodrama. Visit the poor by all means, and give them tea and barley-water, but don't do it as if you were administering a bowl of deadly nightshade. It upsets them. Then, when you nurse sick people, and find them not as well as could be expected, why go into hysterics?

Mar. Why not?

Sir D. Because it's too jumpy for a sick room. *Then again, as I've frequently told you, it is quite possible to take too much medicine.*

Mar. *What, when you're ill?*

Sir D. *Certainly. These are valuable remedies but they should be administered with discretion.*

Mar. How strange! Oh, Master! Master! - How shall I express the all-absorbing gratitude that - *(about to throw herself at his feet)*

Sir D. Now! *(warningly)*

Mar. Yes, I know dear - it sha'n't occur again. *(he is seated - she sits on the ground by him)* Shall I tell you one of Mad Margaret's odd thoughts? Well, then, when I am lying awake at night, and the pale moonlight streams through the lattice casement, strange fancies crowd upon my poor mad brain, and I sometimes think that if we could hit upon some word for you to use whenever I am about to relapse - some word that teems with hidden meaning - like, "Basingstoke" - it might recall me to my saner self. For, after all, I am only Mad Margaret! Daft Meg! Poor Peg! He! he! he!

Sir D. Poor child, she wanders! But soft - someone comes - Margaret - pray recollect yourself - Basingstoke, I beg! Margaret, if you don't Basingstoke at once, I shall be seriously angry.

Mar. *(recovering herself)* Basingstoke it is!

Sir D. Then make it so.

Enter ROBIN. He starts on seeing them.

Robin. Despard! And his young wife! This visit is unexpected.

Mar. Shall I fly at him? Shall I tear him limb from limb? Shall I rend him asunder? Say but the word and -

Sir D. Basingstoke!

Mar. *(suddenly demure)* Basingstoke it is!

Sir D. *(aside)* Then make it so. *(aloud)* My brother - I call you brother, still, despite your horrible profligacy - we have come to urge you to abandon the evil courses to which you have committed yourself, and at any cost to become a pure and blameless ratepayer.

Robin. That's all very well, but you seem to forget that on the day I reform I perish in excruciating torment.

Sir D. Oh, better that than pursue a course of life-long villainy. Oh, seek refuge in death, I implore you!

Mar. Why not die? Others have died and no one has cared. You will not be mourned.

Sir D. True! You could die so well!

Robin. You didn't seem to be of this opinion when you were a bad baronet.

Sir D. No, because I had no good brother at my elbow to check me when about to do wrong.

Robin. *(aside)* A home-thrust indeed! *(aloud)* But I've done no wrong yet.

Mar. *(wildly)* No wrong! He has done no wrong! Did you hear that!

Sir D. Basingstoke!

Mar. *(recovering herself)* Basingstoke it is!

Sir D. My brother - I still call you brother, you observe - you forget that you have been, in the eye of the law, a bad baronet of Ruddygore for ten years - and you are therefore responsible - in the eye of the law - for all the misdeeds committed by the unhappy gentleman who occupied your place.

Robin. Meaning you?

Sir D. Meaning me.

Robin. I see! Bless my heart, I never thought of that! Was he - was I very bad?

Sir D. Awful. Wasn't he? *(to MARGARET)*

Mar. Desperate! Oh, you were a flirt!

Robin. And I've been going on like this for how long?

Sir D. Ten years! Think of all the atrocities you have committed - by attorney, as it were - during that period. Remember how you trifled with this poor child's affections - how you raised her hopes on high (don't cry, my love - Basingstoke, you know), only to trample them in the dust when they were at the very zenith of their fullness. Oh fie sir, fie - she trusted you!

Robin. Meaning you?

Sir D. Nothing of the kind sir. I was simply your representative.

Robin. Well, meaning us, then. What a scoundrel we must have been! There, there - don't cry my dear *(to MARGARET who is sobbing on ROBIN's breast)*, it's all right now. Birmingham you know - Birmingham -

Mar. *(sobbing)* It's Ba - Ba - Basingstoke!

Robin. Basingstoke! Of course it is - Basingstoke!

Mar. Then make it so!

Robin. There, there - it's all right - he's married you now - that is, I've married you *(turning to DESPARD)* - I say, which of us has married her?

Sir D. Oh, I've married her.

Robin. *(aside)* Oh. I'm glad of that. *(to MARGARET)* Yes, he's married you now *(passing her over to DESPARD)*, and anything more disreputable than my conduct seems to have been I've never even heard of. But my mind is made up - I will defy my ancestors. I will refuse to obey their behests - thus, by courting death, atone in some degree for the infamy of my career!

Mar. I knew it - I knew it - God bless you - *(hysterically)*

Sir D. Basingstoke!

Mar. Basingstoke it is! *(recovering herself.)*

No.9. - TRIO - (Margaret, Robin and Sir Despard)

Robin. My eyes are fully open to my awful situation -
I shall go at once to Roderic and make him an oration.
I shall tell him I've recovered my forgotten moral senses,
And I don't care two-pence halfpenny for any consequences.
Now I do not want to perish by the sword or by the dagger,
But a martyr may indulge a little pardonable swagger,
And a word or two of compliment my vanity would flatter,
But I've got to die tomorrow, so it really doesn't matter!

Sir D. So it really doesn't matter -

Mar. So it really doesn't matter -

All. So it really doesn't matter, matter, matter, matter, matter!

Mar. If I were not a little mad and generally silly,
I would give you my advice upon the subject, willy-nilly;
I should show you in a moment how to grapple with the question,
And you'd really be astonished by the force of my suggestion.
On the subject I shall write you a most valuable letter,
Full of excellent suggestions, when I feel a little better;
But at present I'm afraid I am as mad as any hatter,
So I'll keep 'em to myself, for my opinion doesn't matter!

Sir D. Her opinion doesn't matter -

Robin. Her opinion doesn't matter -

All. Her opinion doesn't matter, matter, matter, matter, matter!

Sir D. If I had been so lucky as to have a steady brother
Who could talk to me as we are talking now to one another -
Who could give me good advice when he discovered I was erring
(Which is just the very favour which on you I am conferring),

My existence would have made a rather interesting idyll,
And I might have lived and died a very decent indiwiddle.
This particularly rapid, unintelligible patter,
Isn't generally heard, and if it is it doesn't matter!

Robin. If it is it doesn't matter -

Mar. It ain't it doesn't matter -

All. If it is it doesn't matter, matter, matter, matter, matter!

Exit SIR DESPARD and MARGARET.

Enter ADAM

Adam. *(Guiltyly.)* Master - the deed is done!

Robin. What deed?

Adam. She is here - alone, unprotected -

Robin. Who?

Adam. The maiden. I've carried her off - I had a hard task, for she fought like a tiger-cat!

Robin. Great heavens, I had forgotten her! I had hoped to have died unspotted by crime, but I am foiled again - and by a tiger-cat! Produce her - and leave us!

No.9a. - MELODRAME - (Bars 1 - 5 only)

ADAM introduces OLD HANNAH, very much excited, and exits.

Robin. Dame Hannah! This is - this is not what I expected.

Hannah. Well sir, and what would you with me? Oh, you have begun bravely - bravely indeed! Unappalled by the calm dignity of blameless womanhood, your minion has torn me from my spotless home, and dragged me, blindfold and shrieking, through hedges, over stiles and across a very difficult country, and left me helpless and trembling, at your mercy! Yet not helpless, coward sir, for approach one step - nay, but the twentieth part of one poor inch, and this poniard *(producing a very small dagger)* shall teach ye what it is to lay unholy hands on old Stephen Trusty's daughter.

Robin. Madam, I am extremely sorry for this. It is not at all what I intended. *Circumstances of a delicate nature compelled me to request your presence in this confounded castle for a brief period - but* anything more correct - more deeply respectful than my intentions towards you, it would be impossible for anyone - however particular - to desire!

Hannah. *(Wildly.)* Am I a toy - a bauble - a pretty plaything - to grace your roustering banquets and amuse your ribald friends? Am I a gew-gaw to while away an idle

hour withal, and then be cast aside like some old glove, when the whim quits you?
Harkye, sir, do you take me for a gew-gaw of this description?

Robin. (*appalled.*) Certainly not - nothing of the kind - anything more profoundly respectful -

Hannah. Bah! I am not to be tricked by smooth words, hypocrite!

No.9a. - MELODRAME - (Bars 6 - 15 repeated ad-lib)

Hannah. But be warned in time, for there are, without, a hundred gallant hearts whose trusty blades would hack him limb from limb who dared to lay unholy hands on old Stephen Trusty's daughter!

Robin. And this is what it is to embark on a career of unlicensed pleasure!

HANNAH, who has taken a formidable dagger from one of the armed figures, throws her small dagger to ROBIN.

Hannah. Harkye, miscreant, you have secured me, and I am your poor prisoner; but if you think that I cannot take care of myself you are very much mistaken. Now then, it's one to one, and let the best man win! (*making for him.*)

No.9a. - MELODRAME - (Bars 16 - 22)

Robin. (*in an agony of terror.*) Don't! don't look at me like that! I can't bear it! Roderic! Uncle! Save me!

No.9a. - MELODRAME - (Bars 23-28)

RODERIC appears, rising through a trap⁵ as far as his waist. Red flames accompany him.

Sir Rod. What is the matter? Have you carried her off?

Robin. I have - she is there - look at her - she terrifies me! **Come quite up and save me!**

Sir Rod. (*looking at HANNAH.*) Little Nannikin!

Hannah. (*amazed.*) Roddy-doddy!

Sir Rod. My own old love! Why how came you here?

Hannah. This brute - he carried me off! Bodily! But I'll show him! (*about to dash at ROBIN.*)

Sir Rod. Stop! (*To ROBIN.*) What do you mean by carrying off this lady? Are you aware that, once upon a time she was engaged to be married to me? I'm very angry - very angry indeed.

Robin. Now I hope this will be a lesson to you in future, not to -

⁵As more and more theatres, especially in the provinces, abandoned trap doors, this stage direction was changed to read ***RODERIC enters, from his picture. He comes down the stage.***

Sir Rod. Hold your tongue, sir.

Robin. Yes uncle.

Sir Rod. Has he treated you with proper respect since you've been here, Nannikin?

Hannah. Pretty well, Roddy. Come quite up, dear!

Sir Rod. No, I don't think I shall.

Robin. No, I don't think you should.

Sir Rod. Hold your tongue, sir.

Robin. Yes uncle.

Sir Rod. I'm very much annoyed. Have you given him any encouragement?

Hannah. *(to ROBIN.)* Have I given you any encouragement? Frankly, now have I?

Robin. No. Frankly, you have not. Anything more scrupulously correct than your conduct, it would be impossible to desire.

Hannah. There now - come up dear!

Sir Rod. *(reluctantly)* Very well, but you don't deserve it, you know. *(comes up.)*

Robin. Before we go any further, I am anxious to assure you on my honour as a gentleman, and with all the emphasis at my command, that anything more profoundly respectful -

Sir Rod. You go away.

Robin. Yes uncle.

Exit ROBIN.

Sir Rod. Little Nannikin!

Hannah. Roddy-doddy!

Sir Rod. This is a strange meeting after so many years!

Hannah. Very. I thought you were dead.

Sir Rod. I am. I died ten years ago.

Hannah. And are you pretty comfortable?

Sir Rod. Pretty well - that is - yes, pretty well.

Hannah. You don't deserve to be, you bad, bad boy, for you behaved very shabbily to poor old Stephen Trusty's daughter. For I loved you all the while dear; and it made me dreadfully unhappy to hear of all your goings-on, you bad, bad boy!

No.10. - SONG - (Hannah, with Sir Roderic)

There grew a little flower
'Neath a great oak tree:
When the tempest 'gan to lower
Little heeded she:
No need had she to cower,
For she dreaded not it's power -
She was happy in the bower
Of her great oak tree!
Sing hey,
Lackaday!
Let the tears fall free
For the pretty little flower and the great oak tree!

Both. Sing hey,
Lackaday! etc.:

When she found that he was fickle,
Was that great oak tree,
She was in a pretty pickle,
As she well might be -
But his gallantries were mickle,
For Death followed with his sickle,
And her tears began to trickle
For her great oak tree!
Sing hey,
Lackaday!
Let the tears fall free
For the pretty little flower and the great oak tree!

Both. Sing hey,
Lackaday! etc.:

Said she, "He loved me never,
Did that great oak tree,
But I'm neither rich nor clever
And so why should he?
But though fate our fortunes sever,
To be constant I'll endeavour,
Aye, for ever and for ever
To my great oak tree!"
Sing hey,
Lackaday!
Let the tears fall free
For the pretty little flower and the great oak tree!

Both. Sing hey,
Lackaday! etc.:

HANNAH falls weeping on RODERIC's bosom.

Sir Rod. Little Nannikin!

Hannah. Roddy-doddy!

Sir Rod. It's not too late, is it?

Hannah. Oh, Roddy! (*bashfully.*)

Sir Rod. I'm quite respectable now, you know.

Hannah. But, you're a ghost, ain't you?

Sir Rod. Well, yes - a kind of a ghost.

Hannah. But what would be my legal status as a ghost's wife?

Sir Rod. It would be a very respectable position.

Hannah. But I should be the wife of a dead husband, Roddy!

Sir Rod. No doubt.

Hannah. But the wife of a dead husband is a widow, Roddy!

Sir Rod. I suppose she is.

Hannah. And a widow is at liberty to marry again, Roddy!

Sir Rod. Dear me, yes - that's awkward. I never thought of that.

Hannah. No Roddy - I thought you hadn't.

Sir Rod. When you've been a ghost for a considerable time it's astonishing how foggy you become!

*Enter ROBIN excitedly, followed by chorus of bridesmaids.*⁶

Robin. Stop a bit - both of you.

Sir Rod. This intrusion is unmannerly.

Hannah. I'm surprised at you.

Robin. I can't stop to apologise - and idea has just occurred to me. A Baronet of Ruddygore can only die through refusing to commit his daily crime.

Sir Rod. No doubt.

Robin. Therefore, to refuse to commit a daily crime is tantamount to suicide!

⁶Soon after the première, when Gilbert abandoned the revival of the ghosts, this stage direction was changed to read, '*Enter ROBIN, excitedly, followed by all the characters and Chorus of Bridesmaids.*'

Sir Rod. It would seem so.

Robin. But suicide is, itself a crime - and so, by your own showing, you ought none of you to have ever died at all!

Sir Rod. I see - I understand! We are all practically alive!

Robin. Every man jack of you!

Sir Rod. My brother ancestors! Down from your frames! *(the ancestors descend.)* You believe yourselves to be dead - you may take it from me that you're not, and an application to the Supreme Court is all that is necessary to prove that you never ought to have died at all.

Ancestors embrace bridesmaids. Enter RICHARD, ROSE, DESPARD and MARGARET.

Robin. Rose, when you believed I was a simple farmer, I believe you loved me?

Rose. Madly, passionately!

Robin. But, when I became a bad baronet, you very properly loved Richard instead?

Rose. Passionately, madly!

Robin. But if I should turn out not to be a bad baronet after all, how would you love me then?

Rose. Madly passionately!

Robin. As before?

Rose. Why, of course!

Robin. My darling! *(they embrace.)*

Bridesmaids. Hail the bridegroom - hail the bride -

Richard. *(interrupting them.)* Will you be quiet? *(to ROBIN.)* Belay, my lad, belay, you don't understand!

Rose. Oh, sir, belay, if it's absolutely necessary.

Robin. Belay? Certainly not. *(to RICHARD.)* You see, it's like this - as all my ancestors are alive, it follows, as a matter of course, that the eldest of them is the family baronet, and I revert to my former condition.

Richard. *(going to ZORAH.)* Well, I think it's exceedingly unfair!

Robin. *(to SIR RUPERT.)* Here, Great Uncle, allow me to present you. *(to the others.)* Sir Rupert Murgatroyd, Baronet of Ruddygore!

All. Hurrah!

Sir Rup. Fallacy somewhere!

No.11. - FINALE

- Rose. When a man has been a naughty baronet,
And expresses deep repentance and regret,
You should help him, if you're able,
Like the mousie in the fable,
That's the teaching in my book of etiquette!
- All. That's the teaching in her book of etiquette!
- Robin. Having been a wicked baronet a week,
Once again a modest livelihood I seek;
Agricultural employment
Is to me a keen enjoyment,
For I'm naturally diffident and meek!
- All. For he's naturally diffident and meek!
- Richard. If you ask me why I do not pipe my eye,
Like an honest British sailor I reply,
That with Zorah for my missis,
There'll be bread and cheese and kisses,
Which is just the sort of ration I enjye!
- All. Which is just the sort of ration you enjye!
- Sir D. & Mar. Prompted by a keen desire to evoke,
All the blessed calm of matrimony's yoke,
We will toddle off tomorrow,
From this scene of sin and sorrow,
For to settle in the town of Basingstoke!
- All. Prompted by a keen desire to evoke,
All the blessed calm of matrimony's yoke,
They will toddle off tomorrow,
From this scene of sin and sorrow,
For to settle in the town of Basingstoke!
For to settle in the town of Basingstoke!
They will toddle off tomorrow,
From this scene of sin and sorrow,
For to settle, settle, settle, settle, settle, settle
In the town of Basingstoke!
For happy the lily,
The lily when kissed by the bee;
But happier than any,
But happier than any
A lover is when he
Embraces his bride!

CURTAIN.