
OBERON

A romantic and fairy opera.

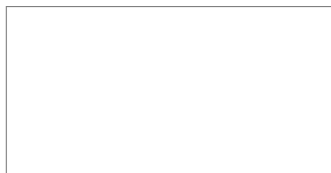
Text by

James Robinson Planché

Music by

Carl Maria von Weber

First performance: April 12 1826, London.



Cara lettrice, caro lettore, il sito internet **www.librettidopera.it** è dedicato ai libretti d'opera in lingua italiana. Non c'è un intento filologico, troppo complesso per essere trattato con le mie risorse: vi è invece un intento divulgativo, la volontà di far conoscere i vari aspetti di una parte della nostra cultura.

Motivazioni per scrivere note di ringraziamento non mancano. Contributi e suggerimenti sono giunti da ogni dove, vien da dire «dagli Appennini alle Ande». Tutto questo aiuto mi ha dato e mi sta dando entusiasmo per continuare a migliorare e ampliare gli orizzonti di quest'impresa. Ringrazio quindi: chi mi ha dato consigli su grafica e impostazione del sito, chi ha svolto le operazioni di aggiornamento sul portale, tutti coloro che mettono a disposizione testi e materiali che riguardano la lirica, chi ha donato tempo, chi mi ha prestato hardware, chi mette a disposizione software di qualità a prezzi più che contenuti.

Infine ringrazio la mia famiglia, per il tempo rubatole e dedicato a questa attività.

I titoli vengono scelti in base a una serie di criteri: disponibilità del materiale, data della prima rappresentazione, autori di testi e musiche, importanza del testo nella storia della lirica, difficoltà di reperimento.

A questo punto viene ampliata la varietà del materiale, e la sua affidabilità, tramite acquisti, ricerche in biblioteca, su internet, donazione di materiali da parte di appassionati. Il materiale raccolto viene analizzato e messo a confronto: viene eseguita una trascrizione in formato elettronico.

Quindi viene eseguita una revisione del testo tramite rilettura, e con un sistema automatico di rilevazione sia delle anomalie strutturali, sia della validità dei lemmi.

Vengono integrati se disponibili i numeri musicali, e individuati i brani più significativi secondo la critica.

Viene quindi eseguita una conversione in formato stampabile, che state leggendo.

Grazie ancora.

Dario Zanotti

Libretto n. 57, prima stesura per **www.librettidopera.it**: aprile 2015.

Ultimo aggiornamento: 27/09/2015.

CHARACTERS

CHARLEMAGNE , king of the Franks	OTHER
SIR HUON of Bourdeaux, duke of Guienne	TENOR
SHERASMIN , his squire	BARITONE
Haroun Alraschid , CALIPH	OTHER
BABEKAN , a Saracen prince	OTHER
ALMANZOR , emir of Tunis	OTHER
FIRST SARACEN	OTHER
SECOND SARACEN	OTHER
THIRD SARACEN	OTHER
FOURTH SARACEN	OTHER
ABDALLAH (a corsair)	OTHER
OBERON , king of the fairies	TENOR
PUCK	MEZZO-SOPRANO
FAIRY	OTHER
CAPTAIN of a vessel	OTHER
Negro SLAVE	BASS
FIRST MERMAID	MEZZO-SOPRANO
SECOND MERMAID	MEZZO-SOPRANO
TITANIA , queen of the fairies	OTHER
REIZA , daughter of Haroun	SOPRANO
FATIMA , her attendant	MEZZO-SOPRANO
ROSHANA , wife of Almanzor	CONTRALTO
NAMOUNA , Fatima's grandmother	OTHER
NADINA , a female of Almanzor's haram	OTHER

Advertisement...

...to the second edition.

The first edition of *Oberon* having been hastily (and by me unexpectedly) printed, I am happy to avail myself of this opportunity of correcting many serious errors, which unfortunately crept into the text, and escaped notice in the hurried inspection of the proofs. At the same time, I beg leave publicly to return my most sincere thanks to all the ladies and gentlemen concerned in the representation of the opera, (many of whom sustained the very trifling parts allotted to them with a zeal as honourable to their feelings as it is grateful to mine) and to every one connected with its production. They will, I am sure, forgive my particularizing Mr. Fawcett, whose unwearied attention and exertions I can never acknowledge.

J. R. Planché
April 15, 1826

Preface

The story on which this opera is founded, appeared originally in that famous collection of French romances, «La bibliothèque bleue», under the title of «Huon de Bordeaux». Wieland adopted the principal incidents, and weaving them into a web of his own, composed his justly celebrated poem of «Oberon», which has been tastefully translated into English by mr. Sotheby. The subject has been frequently dramatized, twice at least in Germany, and twice in England, not counting a masque by mr. Sotheby himself, which I believe was never acted. As the baron von Weber desire, the task has been again attempted; and I am indebted principally to mr. Sotheby's elegant version for the plot of the piece; but the demerits of the dialogue and lyrical portions must be visited on my head: they are presented to the public but as the fragile threads on which a great composer has ventured to string his valuable pearls; and fully conscious of the influence that thought has had on my exertions, I feel that, even as regards these threads,

If aught like praise to me belong,

with him I must divide it;

«I am not the rose,» says the persian song,

«but I have dwelt beside it.»

J. R. Planché
Brompton Crescent,
April 15, 1826

Costume

Charlemagne

White tunic, crimson mantle, jewelled diadem, rich belt, etc. leg bandages of gold. The whole from a contemporary representation of that monarch receiving the consecrated banner from pope Leo. Vide Montfaucon, «Monarchie Française»

Sir Huon

First dress, shirt of ring mail reaching to the knee, golden helmet, crimson chausses or pantaloons, and gilt sandals, the military habit of a Frank of the ninth century. Second dress, Moorish slave.

Sherasmin

First dress, brown tunic, blue pantaloons, brown leg bandages, blue cap of the period, something resembling the ancient Phrygian. Second dress, Moorish slave.

Caliph Haroun

The black burdah or gown of the prophet richly furred and ornamented, black turban, cloth of gold under dress, and cloth of gold slippers

Prince Babekan

A rich Arabian dress.

Almanzor

Long green gown, green turban with diamond ornaments and paradise plume, robe and trowsers of silver tissue and white satin. Second dress, plain white, hair dishevelled, etc.

Reiza

First dress, black velvet turban with diamond ornaments and paradise plume, robe and trowsers of silver tissue and white satin. Second dress, plain white, hair dishevelled. etc. Third dress, rich Moorish lady's habit.

Fatima

First dress, an Arabian female. Second dress, Moorish slave.

Roshana

Rich Moorish lady's habit, green turban and slippers.

Oberonan fairies

Fancy dress.

ACT I

[Overture]

Scene I

Oberon's bower. At the rising of the curtain, several picturesque groups of fairies are discovered, who sing the following

[N. 1 - Introduction]

CHORUS
(pianissimo)

Light as fairy foot can fall,
pace, ye elves, your master's hall;
all too loud the fountains play,
all too loud the zephyrs sigh;
chase the noisy gnat away,
keep the bee from humming by.
Stretch'd upon his lily bed,
Oberon in slumber lies;
sleep, at length, her balm hath shed
o'er his long-unclosed eyes.
O, may her spell as kindly bring
peace to the heart of the fairy king!

(During the Chorus, other fairies and spirits enter and dance.)

Enter Puck, R. U. E.

PUCK How now? how now? Why do ye loiter here?
Are there not tasks to do? The sinking sun
is not an hour's journey from the sea,
and you will deem it hard, I warrant me,
when winking stars proclaim the time for sport,
to be denied the dance. Should Oberon ~

FAIRY We did but watch, that nothing might disturb our master's
slumber.

PUCK Dost thou prate, vile scum?
Skip hence! or by the seal of Solomon. ~

Exeunt fairies.

He sleeps then still. 'Tis the first time his lids
 have closed since he and fair Titania parted.
 Mere wife and husband could not well have wrangled
 on slighter grounds, ~ which was the most inconstant,
 woman or man? Ha! ha! The queen of course
 champion'd her sex, ~ debate rose high, ~ in anger,
 one east, one west, ~ they speeded as of yore,
 swearing by all that fairies reverence,
 never to meet in love, till some fond pair,
 through weal and woe, 'mid flood and chains and fire,
 should keep their plighted faith inviolate,
 unmoved by pleasure and unbent by pain!
 And now the moody king would give his crown
 to find this pair of turtles, and redeem
 his hasty pledge. And, ~ for he knows 'tis vain
 to trust to chance, ~ he spares nor sprite nor spell
 to bring about the miracle. But hold ~
 he wakes! He moves this way: I will
 retire and mark his mood, ere I do speak with him.

(Retires to L. S. E.)

Enter Oberon, R. S. E.

[N. 2 - Air]

OBERON

Fatal oath! not even slumber
 can thy victim's torture tame!
 Of my woes it swells the number,
 of my wrath it feeds the flame.
 Still I burn, and still I languish,
 doubled in my dream I feel,
 all my rage, and all my anguish;
 but no balm their wounds to heal.

PUCK Hail, master!
 (advancing) R. C.

OBERON Tardy spirit, is it thou?
 Where hast thou been since cock-crow?

PUCK Round the globe;
 L. C. through India and Catay, across the sea
 which rolls between them and that western world
 unknown as yet to Frank or Saracen;
 touched at each isle that studs the southern wave;
 on his own sands outraced the dromedary;
 pass'd the strong-pinioned eagle in his flight
 o'er busy Europe; glanced like summer-light'ning
 from pole to pole, ~ in hopes of finding that
 which might console my king.

OBERON My faithful Puck!
C. How could I doubt thy zeal! Speak on, true servant!

PUCK Alack! I cannot speak what thou wouldst hear.
C. Faith I have found, which peril could not shake;
love I have seen, which absence could not cool;
passion, which triumph'd over mortal pain;
but none that spotless pass'd the harder trial
of proud prosperity! Nay, good my master,
droop not: ~ come, come, I have a tale for thee,
will wake thy wonder.

OBERON Thou dost wake it now:
for where's the thing shall make the elf-king wonder,
save that thou'st sought in vain, a constant woman?

PUCK Some two hours since I stood beside the throne
of Charlemagne, and heard the strangest sentence
pass'd on a paladin, that ever tongue
of wrathful monarch spake. His son, prince Scharlot,
waylaid the young sir Huon of Bourdeaux,
and foully would have slain him; but, defeated
in the attempt, paid with his own vile life,
in open fight, the forfeit of his treason.
France with one voice declared sir Huon guilless:
noble and knight around the monarch kneeling
sued for his grace; but o'er the juster king
the partial father triumphed. ~ «Hence!» he cried:
«thou hast thy life, but mark on what conditions!
Speed thee to Bagdad: seek the caliph's hall;
and there on some high festival, before
the assembled court, e'en at the banquet board,
slay him who sits upon Haroun's left hand;
then kiss, and claim his daughter as thy bride!»

OBERON And rides he forth upon this perilous quest?

PUCK Ay, master.

OBERON And alone?

PUCK A single 'squire,
a foolish, faithful varlet, follows him.

OSBERON Hie thee back, spirit, over land and sea,
 swifter than thought till thou dost meet with them;
 cast a deep sleep on both, and bring them hither
 before the breath be cold that bids thee.

(Puck vanishes, R. S. E.)

Yes!
The fairy king sir Huon shall befriend,
and the true knight in turn his woes may end.

The stage opens, L. C. and a flowery bank rises, on which sir Huon and Sherasmin are seen asleep; Puck standing besides them.

PUCK King of fairy land, 'tis done.
(runs to Oberon) R. Knight and 'squire thou lookest on.

OBERON R.
That's my good goblin!
(observing sir Huon)
R. C.

Ha! by starry night!
In this mailed breast, I ween,
love a guest hath never been!
But my piercing eye can see,
should he once installed be,
pleasure, peril, pomp, or pain,
him to shake may strive in vain!
(Clouds envelope the stage.)

Quickly to his charmed eyes
let a pleasing vision rise
of the caliph's lovely child
whom now he seeks on errand wild.
And within the same short hour,
in far Bagdad's haram bow'r,
to the sleeping lady's sight
shall the image of the knight
be shown, and equal love impart,
linking firmly heart to heart.
Spirits, hear your master's spell:
up! and do my bidding well.

Music. The clouds open, and discover the interior of a Persian kiosk. Reiza is seen seated on a couch in a melancholy attitude, with a lute in her hand. She rises and sings.

[N. 3 - Vision]

REIZA

O, why art thou sleeping, sir Huon the brave?
A maiden is weeping by Babylon's wave,
up, up, gallant knight, ere a victim she falls,
Guienne to the rescue! 'Tis beauty that calls.

(The vision disappears; clouds again enclose the kiosk, and then draw off to the fairies' hall, as at first.)

OBERON Enough! Enough! The spell I break,
C. children of the earth, awake!

SHERASMIN Eh! oh! o dear! sir! master!
(waking) (Shakes sir Huon.)

SIR HUON Stay, loveliest! For pity's sake!

(waking) Gone! ~ Where am I? Ha!

(Seeing Oberon.)

OBERON Fear not, sir Huon of Bourdeaux! Thou seest
a friend who knows thee and thine errand.
I am Oberon, the king of fairy land.

SHERASMIN Fairy! O! O! O! O!

(still more frightened)

(runs L.)

OBERON Peace, varlet! Hear me, paladin.

C. Relentless Charlemagne would have thy blood;
but thou shalt execute his dread command,
and to thy native France triumphantly
bear back thy beauteous bride, rest thou but true
amidst the trials fate prepares for thee.
Therefore receive, sir duke, this iv'ry horn;
whatever dangers may thy path beset,
its slightest sound will bring thee sudden aid;
need'st thou the presence of the fairy king,
a bolder blast will bring me to thy side,
tho' planets roll'd between us.
Now to thee,
friend Sherasmin, I turn.

(Sherasmin advances cautiously.)

Approach ~ nay, nearer ~
take courage, man! Here ~

(Giving him a golden cup.)

drink, and drown thy fears in Gascon wine.

SHERASMIN An' it please your fairyship, I'm not at all thirsty; and if I were, I
(trembling) have no skill to drink from an empty cup.

(Aside.)

Gascon wine, indeed! A pretty Gascon tale to tell a man!

OBERON Still faithless ~ still afraid! Quick ~ to thy mouth ~

SHERASMIN Ye ~ ye ~ yes.

(Aside.)

Heaven preserve me!

(Puts the cup to his lips.)

OBERON Be to thyself but true, it will not fail. (The cup fills with wine.)
How sayst thou now?

SHERASMIN Right Gascon, by the mass! S'life! I feel quite another creature;
(after a hearty draught) I'm as bold as a lion! O sweet fairy!

OBERON Keep thou the cup; its golden round will yield
pure wine, fresh springing from a thousand veins,
if touch'd by guiltless mouth; but if base lip
profane its sacred brim, 'tis void, and burns
like molten lead the guilty wretch who grasps it.
Now, Huon, haste where love and honour call:
be bold, be constant, and be happy.

Oberon waves his wand; fairies appear to the symphony, from R. and L.

[N. 4 - Trio and Chorus]

FAIRIES	Honour and joy to the true and the brave, a friend they shall find in the elfin king; but oh! to the traitor, the coward, the slave, for ever the fairy's curse shall cling!
SIR HUON (to Oberon)	Deign, fair spirit my steps to guide, to the foot of the unbeliever's throne; there let my arm and my heart be tried, there be the truth and thy Huon known.
OBERON	The sun is kissing the purple tide, that flows round my fairy bowers, oft must he set in those waters wide ere mortal knight from their shore could ride to Bagdad's distant tow'rs. But, lo! I wave my lily wand, once, twice, three times o'er thee, on the banks of the Tigris thou dost stand, and Bagdad is before thee.

The scene changes to the banks of the Tigris, with the city of Bagdad in the distance.

SHERASMIN	By saint Denis, but he's right!
SIR HUON	Can I trust my startled sight? Yes, the gilded domes are there, in the last bright sunbeams glowing, and the river broad and fair, swiftly to the sea is flowing! But where, alas! is she who shed love's own light upon my slumbers? Is that form forever fled, hush'd for aye those magic numbers?
OBERON	Grieve not, sir knight; but, bold in glory's chase, go forth; the living maid in Babylon embrace.
FAIRIES	Speed, Huon, speed; love and renown soon shall they courage and constancy crown.

(Fairies disappear.)

Oberon waves his wand; the bank changes to a car, drawn by swans; in which Oberon ascends, and disappears.

- SHERASMIN (After a pause, during which sir Huon and he appear lost in wonder.)
 R. C. Master! are you awake, master? if your eyes be wide open, I pray you shake me, that I may open mine too. I would fain be assured whether I be really, bewitched or no.
- SIR HUON I hear the murmur of the waves; I feel the evening breeze upon my cheek. Will that foaming river, those glittering minarets, vanish in their turn?
- SHERASMIN I would wager my wits that they do, and no bad stake neither; for I know not how I shall save them otherwise, an' the fairies serve me another trick of this kidney. Now any one would swear this were a cup I hold in my hand; and I dream'd but now I drank out of it; I should like to dream that dream again ~ but 'tis empty; ~ see, see, it fills, master, it fills!
 (Puts it to his mouth.)
 O kind fairy! dainty Oberon! better wine was never tasted.
- BABEKAN Oh save me! Help! help! save me!
 (without)
- SIR HUON Hark! what cry was that! Ha! look, Sherasmin!
- SHERASMIN A single horseman attacked by a lion!
 (looking out)
- SIR HUON He has fastened on the steed ~ it falls! ~ draw, knave, and save the rider.

Sherasmin puts down the cup and exit with sir Huon. Babekan enters and sinks terrified on the ground. Sherasmin and sir Huon re-enter, hasten to him, and raise him.

- SHERASMIN Art hurt man? Cheerly, cheerly! Marry, thou hast an ugly
 C. customer to deal with there.
 (Aside to sir Huon.)
 Master, this man has a most villainously looking heathen habit. If we be out of fairy land, I trow we be near Bagdad in good earnest.
- (Aloud to Babekan.)
 What! shaking still? Nay then, here's what will cure thee,
 (Takes up the cup.)
 I warrant me. Drink man, and praise the power who sent us here to save thee.
 (Putting the cup to his lips.)
- BABEKAN (screaming and dashing the cup on the ground)
 Ha! Tortures! Slave of Eblis, my lips are scorched to cinders. ~ Curse thee, and ~
- SIR HUON Hold, blasphemer! The knave meant well; ~ 'tis thine own guilt hath turned the wine to fire.

BABEKAN Dog of a Frank! here come my scattered train: their scimitars shall teach thee manners.

(Enter four Saracens, armed.)

BABEKAN Upon them, slaves!

(Saracens attack sir Huon and Sherasmin.)

SIR HUON Ha! France! Ha! saint Denis!

SHERASMIN Guienne! Guienne for the noble duke!

While sir Huon and Sherasmin defend themselves against the Saracens, Babekan steals behind sir Huon and attempts to stab him in the back; Sherasmin perceives him, and strikes the weapon from his hand. Babekan and his attendants fly, pursued by sir Huon and Sherasmin. Go off R.

Scene II

The interior of Namouna's cottage.

Enter Namouna, L. S. E.

NAMOUNA So, so, so, ~ a fine piece of news I've picked up at the palace this evening. ~ A pretty panic Bagdad will be in to-morrow, if the wind still blows from the same quarter. ~ UI! UI! UI! What freaks young women take in their heads, ~ their heads, forsooth! young women have no heads! they think in their hearts! they are led by their hearts! and when they lose their hearts, their wits are gone into the bargain. ~ A plain proof ~ a plain proof. ~ Holy prophet! talking of heads, some will be in jeopardy to-morrow, I fancy. Should the princess keep in her present mood, the caliph will make heads as cheap as turnips, before the sun goes down again.

(A knocking without, R.)

Who is there, I wonder?

(Opens the door.)

Enter sir Huon and Sherasmin.

SHERASMIN A word, good mother, an'it like you.
R. C.

NAMOUNA Allah guard us! What would ye, strangers?
C.

SHERASMIN Don't be frightened, good mother. ~ We are only two poor travellers, who would fain inquire where we may lodge in this strange town. We have had a long journey, ~

(aside)

jump, I should say ~

(aloud)

and need rest and refreshment.

NAMOUNA 'Tis a good step to the nearest caravanseraï, and I question then if you don't find it full. But, if you are not too proud, this is my humble dwelling; and if a plain, wholesome supper may content you, and clean straw till the morning, you can then look for a better lodging by daylight.

SIR HUON C. Thou sayst well, dame: we will be thy guests this night.

SHERASMIN A better lodging! ay, and a prettier landlady; or we're come a
(aside) long way to little purpose.

NAMOUNA Enough, sir stranger; I'll spread for supper directly.
(exit)

SHERASMIN Master, I would this good dame could tell us who the craven caitiff might be, that would have murdered you out of pure gratitude for saving his worthless life from the lion, and then fled as nimbly from us, as he did from the beast before.

SIR HUON L. His dress and attendants bespeak him of rank, but his deeds had
shamed the poorest serf that ever tended swine.

Re-enter Namouna, with a lamp.

NAMOUNA Now, an' it please you, walk this way. Some milk, and a few figs, with a plate of rice, or so, is all I have to offer you; but you must make up for it at the feast to-morrow.

SIR HUON C. The feast! what feast?

NAMOUNA L. C. What feast? Why, was it not for the feast ye came to Bagdad then? The wedding feast, to be sure. Is not the caliph's daughter to be married to-morrow?

SIR HUON The caliph's daughter! to whom, good mother, I pray you?

NAMOUNA Why, by what road came you hither, sir stranger, that the tidings have not reached your ears? The whole country round rings with them.

SHERASMIN C. We came by a shortcut ~ a by-road: we travelled too fast to pick up much intelligence. On with thy tale.

NAMOUNA Marry then, stranger, the bridegroom is prince Babekan. He's as rich as the sea, and plays at chess better than any man in Bagdad.

SHERASMIN (Aside) L. C. Does he? An'our knight's move do not puzzle him, say I know nothing of the game, that's all.

NAMOUNA Ah! and a good-looking man too; in short, a prince whom all confess born for our Reiza; but, between you and I, the princess would rather marry a dragon.

SIR HUON Ha! sayst thou?

SHERASMIN Marry a dragon! S'death! that would be getting a check mate.

NAMOUNA I say it again, sir, a dragon. Ay, ay, you may well stare; but I know what I know. There may be no feast to-morrow after all. I ~ I had it in confidence, and promised not to breathe a syllable; but as you are strangers, and look as if you might be trusted, I'll tell you all about it. You wonder, no doubt, how a poor old soul like me should learn such state secrets, for the commander of the faithful himself knows it not as yet. One word will explain all. My granddaughter is the princess's favourite attendant.

SIR HUON 'Tis well; but your story.

NAMOUNA Well, well, I'm coming to it. Every body knows that, for some time past, the caliph has been looking out for a husband for the beautiful Reiza. Offers were made in plenty, but the princess treated every suitor with the most perfect indifference. Among them came prince Babekan, who fared no better than the rest; but the caliph, taking a great fancy to him, told the princess that, as she would not choose for herself, he must e'en choose for her, and, as she loved nobody better, she might as well marry prince Babekan; to this, at first, she made no violent objection, but within these few hours a wonderful change has taken place, and ~ would you believe it? all on account of a dream.

SIR HUON, A dream!

SHERASMIN

NAMOUNA Ay, a dream. She fancied she was transformed to a hind, and that prince Babekan hunted her through a forest, when suddenly a young knight, whose strange arms showed him not of eastern birth, appeared, and saved her from the darts of the huntsmen. And now, though the preparations are completed for the banquet, and the ceremony is to take place to-morrow, she has sworn never to be the bride of any one but this phantom knight; and, holy Allah! when the caliph shall hear ~

SIR HUON It matters not! The lady shall keep her vow; the knight will mar
(with ardour) the feasting else, I promise thee!

NAMOUNA The prophet preserve us! What do I hear?

(Viewing sir Huon from head to foot.)

And what do I see? An armed knight, too! ~ Habit as strange as his speech! Allah il Allah! Your pardon for a moment, ~ I ~ I'll be back anon. ~ You'll find supper laid within. ~

(Aside.)

I must to the palace as fast as my old limbs will carry me.

(exit hastily)

SHERASMIN The old hag will raise the city on us!

R.

SIR HUON Fear not! She works the will of fate, and fate is friendly to us! O

C. Sherasmin, the beautiful vision which the fairy raised was no delusion. ~ Such a being lives, and for me!

- SHERASMIN The caliph's daughter, too! The very woman the emperor named for your bride! An' a fool might advise, sir, I would cut the matter as short as possible. ~ You are commanded to kill the man who sits on the right of the caliph, and marry the princess. ~ Stick to the latter part of the promise, and forget the rest, master mine! Slicing off a head is but a bad preface to courtship. ~ Let the infidel 'scape free, and cleave to the lady. ~ I'll have everything prepared for flight, and ~
- SIR HUON Knave, I have pledged my knightly word to Charlemagne, and must redeem it to the letter. ~ Huon, beyond his life, ~ beyond his love, ~ esteems his honour!

[N. 5 - Recitative and Aria]

Sir Huon
 Yes, even love to fame must yield;
 no carpet knight am I:
 my home it is the battle field ~
 my song the battle cry!

Sir Huon
 O 'tis a glorious sight to see
 the charge of the christian chivalry,
 when thundering over the ground they go,
 their lances levell'd in long, long row!
 One shock, and their lances are shiver'd all,
 but they shiver not in vain, ~
 they have raised for the foe a rampart wall,
 with the bodies of the slain!
 On they spur over dying and dead ~
 swords are flashing round ev'ry head ~
 they are raised again, but they glitter no more,
 ev'ry blade is dimm'd with gore!
 The fight is done! ~ The field is won! ~
 Their trumpets startle the singing sun!
 As the night winds whirl the red leaves afar,
 they have scatter'd the might of the moslemah!
 Mourn ye maidens of Palestine,
 your lovers lie stark in the cold moonshine,
 the eyes ye kiss'd ere ye bade them go,
 are food for the kits and the hooded crow!
 Joy to the highborn dame of France!
 Conquest waits n her warrior's lance!
 Joy to the girls of fair Guienne!
 Their lovers are hast'ning home again!

Hark! they come! the brave ones see,
who have humbled the pride of Paynimrie.
Twine the wreath, the feast prepare,
fill to the brim the goblet fair;
strike the harp; ~ and loud and high
swell the song of victory!

(exit)

Scene III

*Vestibule in the haram, looking on the Tigris, which is seen by
moonlight through a balustrade in the background.*

Enter Reiza, followed by Fatima, L. U. E.

REIZA Name not the prince, dear Fatima; I hate, I loathe him! Wed him!

(C.) I would wed a serpent sooner! Since the wretch hath harbour'd in this court, I scarcely recognise my father. ~ O Fatima! what a hapless lot is ours! ~ shut up in this splendid prison, ~ no liberty but that of thought, which cannot be debarred us, but which only serves to aggravate the sense of our misfortune. ~

The slaves, the toys, of a sex that despises us. ~ Our very lives dependent upon the caprice of a tyrant! Surely, surely, in those western climes, to which the sun hastens every evening, as though he loved to look on them, woman's fate must be a fairer one! Ah! do not, I beseech thee, friend, strive to crush the solitary hope, which saves me from madness! Trust to my heart's fond bodings. ~ The knight of my dream! ~ my destined lord ~ is near me, and will break this dreadful bondage.

FATIMA How can the daughter of the mighty Haroun suffer an idle vision to get the better of her judgment? Let my mistress listen to the words of her slave.

REIZA Fatima, dear Fatima! ~ How often must I pray thee not to address me in the language of servitude. Thou art my companion, my friend! The slavish phrases of our eastern tongue were from childhood unpleasing to me, and now, methinks, they sound more vilely than ever. ~ The elected of my heart is a Frank ~ a christian. ~ The same power which raised his form to my sight, hath also whispered truths in mine ear, which I fear to repeat even to thee, my Fatima! And canst thou speak of such a vision, as of an ordinary dream? No, no; be sure it is the work of fate. The hour draws nigh! The chains already sound! ~ But think not I will wear them. If this heart be indeed deceived, I have yet a hope in store, which cannot fail. ~ Yes, Fatima!

(In a low but determined tone, and half drawing her dagger.)

Love or death shall free me!

FATIMA Merciful Allah! sheathe that dreadful weapon!

(Knockhig without, L.)

Hark! hark, lady! some one knocks at the little door that opens on the private passage, but I dare not leave you in this desperate mood.

REIZA Fear nothing, girl! The time hath not yet arrived. ~ I will act firmly, but not rashly.

(Knocking again.)

They are impatient, ~ away, and see who knocks.

(exit L.)

No, no; ~ my hope of happiness is yet too strong for me, to rush undriven, on so stern an alternative!

[N. 6 - Finale]

Haste, gallant knight! Oh, haste and save thy Reiza from the yawning grave! For round this hand the worm shall twine, ere linked in other grasp than thine!

Yes, ~ my lord! ~ my joy! ~ my blessing!
Reiza lives for thee alone!
On this heart his signet pressing,
love hath claim'd it for thine own!
Yes, its core thine image beareth,
there it must for ever burn,
like the spot the tulip weareth
deep within its dewy urn! *

* «La tulipe est chez eux (les Persans et les Turcs) le symbole d'un amant passionné, à cause que cette fleur a ordinairement ses feuilles rouges, et qu'elle est marquée au fond d'une noirceur qui a quelque ressemblance à la marque que laisse l'application ou l'impression d'un baton de feu. Ainsi, disent-ils, l'amant a le feu sur le visage, et la blessure dans le cœur.» D'Herbelot: «Bibliothèque Orientale» Art. Laleh.

Re-enter Fatima hastily, L.

FATIMA Joy! ~ we are rescued in the hour of need!
Joy! ~ he is found! ~ the knight is ours indeed!

REIZA Found? where? Sweet Fatima, oh quickly tell!

FATIMA To old Namouna's cot, as evening fell,
he came, by fate directed: there he heard
they dream as I had told her, ~ word for word, ~
and vow'd, with glowing cheek and flashing eye
to rescue thee, or die!

REIZA Said I not, said I not?
(exulting)

REIZA Ah! happy maid!

Both

REIZA

Near me is my own true knight!
Hope hath not my heart betray'd!
Love hath read my dream aright!

FATIMA

Near thee is thy own true knight!
Hope hath not thy heart betray'd!
Love hath read my dream aright!

FATIMA

Hark, lady hark! On the terrace near,
the tread of the haram guard I hear ~
and lo! thy slaves that hither hie,
show that the hour of rest is nigh.

(Reiza and Fatima interchange signs of secrecy. A band of black and white slaves enter from all parts of the gardens, and the female slaves of the princess from the wings.)

REIZA

Oh, my wild, exulting soul!
How shall I thy joy controul?
My kindling eye, my burning cheek,
far, oh! far too plainly speak.
Ere thy tumult they betray,
let me hence! ~ Away! Away!

CHORUS

Now the evening watch is set,
and from ev'ry minaret
soon the muezzin's call to prayer
will sweetly float on the quiet air.
Here no later must we stray,
hence to rest ~ Away! Away!

ACT II

Scene I

A magnificent banqueting-hall in the palace of Haroun. ~ On a divan, at the back of the scene, the caliph is discovered seated. On his left hand is prince Babekan. ~ On each side of the divan hangs a rich veil, behind which are supposed to be the apartments of the females. ~ Embroidered carpets are spread before the caliph and the prince, and on them gilt trays are seen, filled with fruit, coffee, sherbets, etc. ~ The great officers of the caliph's court, black and white eunuchs, etc. form a line on each side of the stage.

[N. 7 - Chorus]

CHORUS Glory to the caliph! to Haroun the just!
 Bow, ye true believers, before him to the dust.
 Woe betide the infidel who dares the caliph's might,
 when on the breeze he floating sees
 «the shadow and the night!» *

* Two black banners, so called, of the caliph of the house of Abbas.

CALIPH (to attendants)
Peace. Prince,
(to Babekan)
the hour is arrived, which, my astrologers have assured me, is
marked upon the table of light as the one destined by Allah for
the marriage of our daughter Reiza.

BABEKAN Commander of the faithful! The impatience of Babekan is at its height. May it please you to give for the instant solemnization of our nuptials?

CALIPH Bring forth the bride. ~

Music. ~ The veil on the right of the caliph is withdrawn, and a train of dancing girls enter, preceding the princess, who, veiled, and richly attired for the ceremony, advances, supported by Fatima, and followed by the female slaves of the haram.

[N. 8 - Allegretto grazioso]

REIZA He is not here! Should he desert me now ~
(aside to Fatima) (Gazes round her in great agitation, and grasps the hilt of her dagger.)

FATIMA Lady, he will not. Be of good cheer, sweet mistress ~
(alarmed)

CALIPH Daughter, approach!

(Clashing of swords without. L.)

Hah! the clash of swords! Head of my father!
What desperate slaves are these?

Enter sir Huon and Sherasmin, L. sword in hand.

SIR HUON Where is my love, my bride?

REIZA Ah! 'tis he! save me! save me!

Rushes into sir Huon's arms, C.

SIR HUON Thus, thus thy Huon claims thee for his own!
(kissing her)

CALIPH Am I awake? Slaves! Dogs! Hew him in pieces!

BABEKAN Hold! might caliph! be mine that task!
(to the guards) (Drawing his scimitar, and rushing on sir Huon.)

SIR HUON (disengaging himself from Reiza)
Ha! Is it thou that sittest upon the caliph's left? Fortune, I thank thee! Die, unbelieving traitor!
(Cuts him down.)

CALIPH Allah il Allah! Tear out his heart!
(stamping with fury)

(The slaves, who have stood as if thunderstruck by the temerity of sir Huon, at this command rush towards him.)

SHERASMIN Master! the horn! the horn!
(to sir Huon quickly)

(Sir Huon winds the horn: all except himself and Sherasmin stand motionless in their various attitudes.)

SIR HUON Thanks, Oberon! Cæsar, I have fulfilled my promise! ~ Haste, Sherasmin, ~ the power of the spell extends throughout the palace! While it lasts, let us secure the princess.
(Exit, bearing out Reiza, L.)

SHERASMIN And the waiting maid into the bargain. ~ Up and away, my pretty pagan! Like master, like man, say I ~ and a nicer little armful never fell to the lot of a Frank. ~ Don't stir, my good friends, I entreat ~ I couldn't think of troubling you.
(Exit, bearing out Fatima, L.)

Scene II

The palace gardens.

Enter four Saracens (the same as in the first act).

FIRST SARACEN Prithee, no more of thy foolery, Amrou; ~ the blows thou didst take from those christian dogs last night, have left such a singing in thine ears, that thou art incapable of understanding a plain tale, and dost confound accounts most vilely. ~

Continued on next page.

- FIRST SARACEN What possible relation can exist between those miserable infidels, and the daughter of the commander of the faithful?
- SECOND SARACEN That I know not. All I say is, that there is a rumour throughout the city, of a Frankish enchanter who has cast a spell upon the princess, and has vowed to carry her off on a fiery dragon, and ~
- FIRST SARACEN Peace ~ look yonder ~ what be they, hurrying hitherward, with each a woman in his arms?
- SECOND SARACEN The two infidels, by the beard of the prophet!
- FIRST SARACEN Amrou! Ali! let us behind these bushes. Be he Eblis himself, I'll be revenged on that foremost dog for the panic he put me in yesterday ~
- SECOND SARACEN Quick! Quick! We are four to two, and the guard within call. They cannot escape ~ unless they be devils indeed.
- (They retire.)

Enter sir Huon and Sherasmin hastily ~ bearing Reiza and Fatima, L.

- SIR HUON We have taken the wrong path. This leads us back to the palace.
(stopping)
- SHERASMIN No, no, sir. We are right enough ~ forward! forward!
(The Saracens rush from their hiding-place, and seize sir Huon and Sherasmin.)
- FIRST SARACEN We have the slaves! What ho! there ~ a guard! a guard!
- SECOND SARACEN Hold him fast. ~
(Snatching the magic horn.)
There's that shall bring assistance.
(Blows a furious blast.)

Violent thunder and lightning ~ the Saracens fly in terror ~ the stage fills with clouds, which open in the centre, and Oberon appears ~ Reiza and Fatima start from their trance.

- OBERON Huon, thou hast redeem'd thy knightly pledge,
(to sir Huon) and I am well content. The maid is thine!
Yet ere thou waft her from her native shore, ~
speak, Reiza! Dost thou willingly forego
pomp, riches, pow'r, thy native court and throne
to be the bride of a young wand'ring knight,
to love but him alone, and with him share
each stern vicissitude his fate may know?
Reflect, ere yet too late. If this alarm thee,
bid love's delusive visions melt away,
and at my word, the past no longer known,
the caliph shall again his child embrace,
and Reiza, great and glorious as before,
shall reign the queen of Fars and Araby.

REIZA King of the genii! for sure thou art no less! thy piercing eye can
 L. read my heart, and witness to the truth of my tongue. Come weal,
 come woe, Reiza will love and follow this valiant knight
 throughout the world, so he will prove as true!

SIR HUON Else may all good desert me.
 L.

OBERON Enough!
 (Waves his wand.)

Scene III

*The clouds disperse, and discover the sea-shore, with the port of
 Ascalon: a vessel lying at anchor.*

OBERON Behold the port of Ascalon!
 Yon bark is bound for Greece. Hie thee on board.
 Whate'er may hap, remember Oberon
 befriends ye, whilst his friendship you deserve.
 Farewell! Be true, and triumph!
 (Oberon vanishes through floor.) R. C.
 (Exeunt sir Huon and Reiza.)

SHERASMIN Don't be frightened, my little unbeliever. He's an old friend, bless
 (to Fatima) you. He didn't ask you if you'll love me; but there's little doubt of
 that when we come to be better acquainted. I'll make thee a
 marvellous fond husband, I warrant thee.

FATIMA I must needs trust thee, for I have no other hope to follow my
 C. lady, and I would rather thou shouldst prove a bad one than part
 me from her.

SHERASMIN Why then, most faithful of infidels! thou christian-hearted little
 C. mohammedan! thou shalt have me by this light, for thou deserv'st
 me; and I am not for every woman's market, I promise thee.

FATIMA But canst thou love one of another faith?

SHERASMIN 'Faith can I, if she can love me; love is of all faiths.

FATIMA And sometimes of none, in Araby. I know not if the men be truer
 in Frangistan ~

SHERASMIN Frangi ~ O ~ ah ~ I know ~ you mean my country. Why, my
 dear, for the matter of that, a ~ a man's a man, you know, all the
 world over, except when he betrays an affectionate woman; and
 then, curse him, he's no man.

FATIMA Ay, that's the way you all talk at the beginning. None of you ever
 dream of betraying an affectionate woman, till you find the
 woman is affectionate, and then an excuse is easily found for the
 action. But what will your other wives sav when you bring a
 stranger amongst them?

- SHERASMIN My other wives! O, never trouble your head about that, my love.
We Franks find one wife at a time enough in all conscience.
- FATIMA One wife! how odd!
- SHERASMIN Odd! Ay, according to your matrimonial arithmetic, perhaps; but
in my country we should call two wives the odd number; besides,
we couldn't so easily get rid of a refractory spouse as your eastern
husbands.
- FATIMA Do you Franks then never tie your wives up in sacks, and fling
them into the river?
- SHERASMIN No; nor send them bow-strings with their husband's compliments,
and beg they'll be so good as to be strangled immediately. But
many in my country would be happy, I dare say, if you could
introduce either of the customs.
- FATIMA Not I, for the world: I shall be too glad to live in a country where
I need not be every moment putting my hand to my head, to feel
if it be still on my shoulders.
- SHERASMIN Well, well, my little pagan, you have nothing to fear on that
score; I have lived a stout bachelor these five-and-thirty years in
despite of all the simpers and ogles of all the girls in Gascony.
But there's something in those little heathen twinklers of thine
which makes me fancy I shall love thee most furiously.
- FATIMA And shall I pay visits, and make feasts, as the married women do
in Bagdad?
- SHERASMIN You shall walk till you're tired, and eat as long as you're able;
you shall go to court, and see the emperor; you shall go to Rome,
and see the pope; bid adieu to locks, bolts and bars, palaces that
are prisons, and husbands that are gaolers. We'll be contracted
here by a cadì, and married at home by a monk. In less than a
year you'll drink wine, and abjure the koran; and then you and
your first boy may be christened together. What sayest thou, my
girl; dost think thou canst love me? Wilt thou follow me? And
wilt thou follow nobody else afterwards? For such things do
happen in France, once in a century or so.
- FATIMA Bless me, what a many questions you ask at a time; I hardly
know how to answer you. But, I think I may promise.

[N. 9 - Aria]

A lonely Arab maid,
the desert's simple child,
unskill'd in arts by which, 'tis said,
men's love may be beguil'd.
Like some uprooted flow'r am I,
upon a river a little hour, then die,
unheeded as I sprung.
But if thy friendly hand
should lift me from the tide,
and bear me to some distant land,
to bloom thy bosom's pride,
o, sooner from his darling rose
the nightingale shall roam,
than I disturb that heart's repose,
which love hath made my home.

SHERASMIN Enough, my little warbler, thou art mine. This kiss to seal the bargain. By my faith, thou art the rose and the nightingale blended that thou sing'st of. An' my master be as well pleased as I am, there are not two happier fellows in christendom.

Re-enter sir Huon and Reiza, R. S. E. with the captain of the vessel.

SIR HUON Now, Sherasmin, to the port. The wind is fair for Greece. The captain stays for us. Dear Reiza, I burn to kneel with thee before the throne of Charlesmagne! That sweet revenge is all I ask of heaven!

[N. 10 - Quartetto]

SIR HUON, CAPTAIN

Over the dark blue waters,
over the wide, wide sea,
fairest of Araby's daughters,
say, wilt thou sail with me?

REIZA, FATIMA

Were there no bounds to the water,
no shore to the wide, wide sea,
still fearless would Araby's daughters
sail on through life with thee.

ALL

On board then, on board, while the skies are light,
and friendly blows the gale;
our hearts are as true as our bark, and bright
our hopes as its sun-lit sail.

(Exeunt.) L. S. E.

Scene IV

Rocks.

Enter Puck, R.

[N. 11 - Air and Chorus]

PUCK Here, by Oberon's command,
C. have I flown from fairy land,
ere to earth a dewy gem
could drop from a rose's diadem
gifted with his power to call
those whose art may raise a squall,
which shall make old ocean roll,
foaming in his rocky bowl,
till in wrath he piecemeal tear
the bark which beareth yonder pair,
and fling them on the island nigh;
first trial of their constancy.
Spirits of air, and earth, and sea,
spirits of fire, which holy be,
all that have pow'r o'er wind and wave,
come hither, come hither, my spirits so brave.

Whether ye be in the caverns dark
lighted alone by the diamond spark,
or beneath the waters deep,
where the prison'd pearl doth sleep,
or in skies beyond the one
mortal eyes do lock upon,
or in the womb of some groaning hill,
where the lava streams is boiling still, ~
spirits, wherever you chance to be,
come hither, come hither, come hither to me;
I charge ye by the magic ring
of your faithful friend, the fairy king.

(Spirits appear in various parts of the stage.)

SPIRITS We are here! we are here!
 Say, what must be done?
 Must we cleave the moon's sphere?
 Must we darken the sun?
 Must we empty the ocean upon its own shore?
 Speak! speak! we heave pow'r to do this and more!

PUCK Nay, nay, your task will be, at most,
 to wreck a bark upon this coast,
 which simple fairy may not do,
 and, therefore have I summon'd you!

SPIRITS Nought but that? Ho, ho, ho, ho!
 Lighter labour none we know.
 Winds and waves obey the spell:
 hark! 'tis done! Farewell! farewell!

(Thunder and lightning. Puck and spirits vanish.) R.

Scene V

*Cavern on the sea-beach. The ocean seen through the mouth of it.
 Other perforations lead through the rock to the interior of the island.
 Storm continued. Stage wery dark: fragments of wreck are thrown upon
 the stage.*

Enter sir Huon, supporting Reiza, who is nearly exhausted.

SIR HUON Look up, my love! my wife! O heaven, she dies! my Reiza dies!
 And I ~ I am her murderer! ~ 'Twas for my sake she gave up
 every thing ~ a throne! ~ a father! ~ O spare her, gracious
 heaven!

(Reiza falls on a rock.) C.

[N. 12 - Air]

C.

Ruler of this awful hour,
 spare! oh, spare you tender flow'r!
 If thou must strike, oh let thy thunder fall
 on me! on me! the wretched cause of all!

REIZA Huon!
 (recovering)

SIR HUON Ah! she speaks! she speaks! But wretch that I am! where shall I
 find food and shelter for her on this frightful shore? O my sweet
 bride! to see thee thus forlorn and desolate, and know myself the
 cause drives me to madness!

REIZA Dearest Huon, do not speak thus. If I must die, it is enough that I breathe my last upon thy bosom.

SIR HUON My fond, true girl! ~ This kindness but augments my agony! That such should be the fate of love like thine! O Oberon! is this thy friendship? Cruel spirit! no help! No. ~

(The waves cast the magic cup on shore.)

Hah! can it be?

(Snatching it up, and putting it to his lips.)

It is! It is the magic cup! Forgive me, fairy! Drink, drink, sweet Reiza; for thee its richest stream will surely flow.

REIZA O cheering draught! thy power is great indeed; I feel new
(rising, after having strength; new hope thrill through my veins. Dear Huon, a wonder
drank) chained our hearts together, and wonders still surround us. Yes, these are but trials surely, and though severe they be, will end in happiness.

SIR HUON I must needs think so, but alas! this cup! where is its faithful bearer? My poor varlet! my trusty Sherasmin! drowned! drowned!

REIZA And Fatima, the kind devoted Fatima, she too, I fear, hath perished. Thou and I alone have 'scaped the general wreck!

SIR HUON Not so. The heartless captain and his crew took to the boats. Despairing then, I plunged with thee into the waves, followed by Sherasmin with Fatima; and from that moment I saw them no more.

REIZA Unfortunates!

SIR HUON But what must now be done? The storm is abating, as if satisfied with the destruction it hath made: this cavern is dry and overgrown with moss. What if thou should'st rest thee here while I ascend the cliffs, and look around to see if aught like human aid be near us?

REIZA Be it so. But stay not long from me.

SIR HUON I will not sweetest. Ah! where is now the ivory horn that would have brought us succour instantly?

(Exit sir Huon, R.)

[N. 13 - Recitative and Aria]

REIZA Ocean! thou mighty monster that liest curled like a green serpent, round about the world! To musing eye thou art an awful sight, when calmly sleeping in the morning light, but when thou risest in thy wrath, as now, and fling'st thy folds around some fated prow, crushing the strong-ribb'd bark as 'twere a reed, then, ocean, art thou terrible indeed!

Still I see thy billows flashing,
 through the gloom their white foaming flinging,
 and the breaker's sullen dashing,
 in mine ear hope's knell is ringing!
 But lo! methinks a light is breaking
 slowly o'er the distant deep,
 like a second morn awaking,
 pale and feeble from its sleep!
 Brighter now, behold, 'tis beaming
 on the storm whose misty train,
 like some shatter'd flag is streaming,
 or a wild steed's flying mane!

And now the sun bursts forth! the wind is lulling fast,
 and the broad wave but pants from fury past!

Cloudless o'er the blushing water,
 now the setting sun is burning!
 Like a victor red with slaughter,
 to his tent in triumph turning!
 Ah! perchance these eyes may never
 look upon its light again!
 Fare thee well, bright orb, forever!
 Thou for me wilt rise in vain!
 But what gleams so white and fair,
 heaving with the heaving billow?
 'Tis a seabird wheeling there
 o'er some wretch's wat'ry pillow!
 No! it is no bird I mark.
 Joy! It is a boat! a sail
 and yonder rides a gallant bark
 uninjur'd by the gale!

O transport! my Huon! haste down to the shore! Quick, quick, for
 a signal, this scarf shall be waved! they see me! they answer!
 they ply the strong oar! my husband, my love! we are saved! we
 are saved!

(During this scene, the storm clears off as described; the setting sun breaks forth in full splendour; a small boat
 is seen, and immediately afterwards a large vessel. Towards the conclusion of the scena the boat disappears as
 making in for the shore.)

Huon! Huon! why tarriest thou? Se, they near the beach! they
 leap into the surf ~ they come.

Enter Abdallah and pirates, L.

ABDALLAH Hah! a fair prize, by Mahomet! Seize her, my lads, and away to sea again: she's worth a fortune to us!

(They seize her.)

REIZA What mean ye, strangers? I cannot go alone! One dear to me as life is ranging o'er the cliffs; but he will return speedily. Huon! Huon!

ABDALLAH He will return! It's a man then. No, no, my Peri! we have neither time to wait his return, nor wish for his company. The market's overstocked with male rubbish. Thou art just the bale of goods we were looking for. To the boat with her!

REIZA Ah! Huon! Huon! save me! help! help!

Sir Huon rushes in, R.

SIR HUON Madness and misery! villains, release her!

ABDALLAH (aising his sword to plunge into his bosom)
Down with the dog.

(Sir Huon is struck to the ground senseless.) R.

REIZA (breaking from the grasp of the pirates, and flinging herself before sir Huon)
Mercy! Mercy!

ABDALLAH Dost thou plead for him? Well, 'twere almost a pity to stain a good Damascus blade with the blood of so sorry a slave as this. So I'll be merciful for once. Bind him and leave him to his fate. He'll starve and rot; and there's an ablution saved. Away with her to the boat.

REIZA O horrible! Leave him not to perish here alone! If ye be men, have pity on us both: sell us for slaves, but do not separate us!

ABDALLAH To the boat I say!

(They drag off Reiza) L. (while another party bind the arms of sir Huon, who remains insensible) R.

As soon as they have quitted the stage, a symphony is heard. Oberon descends in a car drawn by swans.

OBERON Alas! poor mortal! Oberon deplores
the cruel fate which bids him to the quick
probe the hurt spirit of a child of clay,
so free from all the leaven of his race!
But keep thou true; and once thy trials o'er,
the fairy friend, released from his rash vow,
shall pay thee, for each moment past of pain,
years of high honour and unfading love!

(stamping)

Puck! my brave spirit!

PUCK Here, great Oberon!
(appearing) L.

OBERON Servant, here is more to do;
 thou must guard this child of clay
 from the night's unwholesome dew,
 from the scorching beams of day,
 'till yon sun, about to set,
 hath seven times the waters met;
 for, when seven days have past,
 the pirate shall his anchor cast
 in Tunis' bay. Then through the air,
 as quick as light this mortal bear,
 and lay him gently down before
 old Ibrahim the gard'ner's door.
 Lo! upon his lids I shed
 sleep like that which binds the dead.
 Sound nor shock the spell shall brake,
 'till thou in Tunis bid him wake.

PUCK Mighty king of fairy land,
 C. be it as thou dost command,
 him to shield from sun and shower,
 Puck will build a fairy bow'r
 here upon this desert shore,
 where never flow'ret bloomed before.

*Waves his wand; a pavilion of flowers rises and encloses sir Huon. The
 sun sets and the stars appear.*

PUCK See ~ 'tis done; nor noxious dew
 nor scorching ray shall pierce it through,
 though ev'ry gentle beam and air
 may freely find an entrance there.
 But, master! mark where in the sky
 the night star opes its silver eye,
 the herald of the lady moon,
 whose light will gladden the waters soon!
 And, hark! ~ the mermaids' witching strain
 steals o'er the lull'd and list'ning main!

[N. 14 - Finale]

FIRST MERMAID
 (within)

O! 'tis pleasant to float on the sea,
 when the wearied waves in a deep sleep be,
 and the last faint light of the sun hath fled,
 and the stars are must'ring over head,
 and the night-breeze comes with its breath so bland,
 laden with sweets from a distant land!
 O! 'tis pleasant to float and sing,
 while ever our dripping locks we wring.

SECOND MERMAID

O! 'tis pleasant to float on the sea,
when nothing stirs on its breast but we!
The warder leans at the twilight hour,
over the wall of his time-worn tow'r
and signs himself and mutters a pray'r,
then listens again to the 'witching air!
O! 'tis pleasant to float and sing,
while ever our dripping locks we wring!

PUCK Master! say ~ our toil is o'er,
may we dance upon this shore?
And a merry burden bear
to the mermaids' ditty rare?

OBERON Better boon thy zeal hath won
I will stay and see it done.

OBERON, PUCK

Hither! hither! ye elfin throng,
come dance on the sands to the mermaids' song;
hasten and prove to the nymphs of the sea,
that the spirits of earth can as jocund be;
come as lightly, and look as fair,
as blossoms that sail on the summer air.
Hither! hither! ye elfin throng,
come dance on the sands to the mermaids' song.

*During the duo the stage becomes illuminated by the light of the moon.
Mermaids and water nymphs appear on the sea, and fairies enter, and
sing the following chorus.*

CHORUS

Who would stay in her coral cave,
when the moon shines o'er the quiet wave,
and the stars are studding the dark blue arch,
through which she speeds on her nightly march.
Merrily, merrily, let us sail
over the sea by her light so pale!

OBERON, PUCK, FAIRIES

Who would sleep in the lily's bell,
when the moon shines over each wood and dell,
and the stars are studding the dark blue arch,
through which she speeds on her nightly march.
Merrily, merrily, dance we here
over the sands by her light so clear.

ACT III

Scene I

Exterior of Ibrahim the gardener's house. Sunrise.

Enter Fatima, in a slave dress, from the house, L.

FATIMA Alas! poor Fatima, how changed is thy lot! The sun, which so lately beheld thee, the favourite attendant of a mighty princess, now rises upon the lowly slave of Ibrahim, the gardener of the emir of Tunis. And that beloved mistress, where is she ~ the beautiful, the powerful, the worshipped Reiza? sunk in the merciless ocean, or perishing on some barren rock, with the chosen of her heart, her gallant but ill-fated Huon! Yet surely that powerful spirit who professed himself so strongly their protector, cannot thus barbarously have deserted them. No, ~ I will cherish the hope, that we shall shortly meet again. My own unlooked for preservation makes may well encourage the idea. Besides, I had a dream last night which should prognosticate good fortunes.

[N. 15 - Air]

O Araby! dear Araby!
 My own, my native land!
 Methought I cross'd the dark blue sea,
 and trod again thy strand.
 And there I saw my father's tent
 beneath the tall date-trees,
 and the sound of music and merriment
 came sweetly on the breeze.
 And thus to the lightly touch'd guitar,
 I heard a maiden tell
 of one who fled from proud Serdar,
 with the youth she lov'd so well.
 Al, al al al! though the nightstar be high,
 'tis the morning of love for my Yusuf and me;
 though the flow'rs of the garden have clos'd ev'ry one,
 the rose of the heart blooms in love's rising sun.
 Al, al al al! soon will Zeenab be far,
 from the drear anderûn* of cruel Serdar.
 Al, al al al! 'tis the neigh of his steed!
 O, prove, my good barb, thou art worthy thy breed!
 Now o'er the salt desert we fly like the wind;
 and our fears fade as fast as the turrets behind.
 Al, al al al! we the frontier have won,
 and may laugh at the lord of the drear anderûn.

* The haram, or women's apartment.

Enter Sherasmin, L. in a garden's dress, with a spade in one hand, and a basket of flowers in the other.

SHERASMIN Ah! Fatima, art there, my girl? Here am I, in the garb of my new occupation, you see, which I have taken to as kindly as possible, considering circumstances. Hast seen our master this morning?

FATIMA No, but he is up, and gone into the city on some business.

SHERASMIN He's a kind-hearted old soul, Fatima. I marked his eye twinkle, when he heard the captain of the vessel, who picked us up, say, how narrowly we escaped being food for fish; and I shall never forget the tone in which he said, «Poor devils! the waves didn't separate you, and shall I be more cruel than they? ~ No, there's your price, captain; and now get you two along together; work hard, feed well, and be merry!»

FATIMA Ay, Sherasmin, it was kind indeed of him not to part us. Our lot would have been truly miserable, if destitute of that last consolation, the opportunity of deploring it together. Heaven grant that our poor lord and lady were ~

SHERASMIN Ah! that's a bad business, indeed, Fatima; but not so bad, I hope, as it seems. I cannot suppress the strong conviction, that they are safe. The magic horn, I fear, was left in the haram gardens at Bagdad, and the fairy cup is full of salt-water. ~ But, though the gifts be lost, the giver is as powerful as ever. ~ So kiss thy fond husband, my girl, and a fig for misfortune. Let's make up our minds to be happy ~ there's a good deal in that, I can tell you. ~ Gad, what merry days I have seen in my time, and I hope to see some more yet, Fatima.

[N. 16 - Duo]

On the banks of sweet Garonne,
I was born one fine spring morning.
Soon as I could run alone,
kicks, and cuffs, and tumbles, scorning,
shirking labour, loving fun,
quaffing wine, and hating water,
fighting ev'ry neighbor's daughter,
and kissing every neighbour's daughter,
o how fast the days have flown,
on the banks of sweet Garonne!

FATIMA

On the waves of Bund-emir
first I saw the day-beams quiver;
there I wander'd, year by year,
on the banks of that fair river;
roaming with my roaming race,
wheresoe'er the date-tree lured them;
on a greener resting-place,
pasture for their flocks ensured them.
Never knew I grief or fear
on the banks of Bund-emir!

SHERASMIN Times have alter'd, mistress mine!

FATIMA Fled is fortune's sunny weather.
 We are slaves ~

SHERASMIN

Yet why repine
while, my dear, we're slaves together!
Let's be merry while we're true,
love our song, and joy the chorus,
dig and delve, and bill and coo,
as Eve and Adam did before us.

SHERASMIN, FATIMA Let's be merry
 etc.

(Exeunt Fatima and Sherasmin, L.)

Puck descends with sir Huon.

PUCK Seven times hath blush'd the morn,
since thy love was from thee torn;
seven times the sun hath set,
since thine eyes his light hath met.
Now in port the bark doth ride,
which contains thy captive bride.
Wake! a faithful friend is nigh!
Back to fairy land I fly!

(Puck disappears, R. sir Huon shows signs of returning animation.)

Re-enter Sherasmin, L.

SHERASMIN So, that's all right. ~ Now for ~
(seeing sir Huon)
Hollo! what have we here? ~ Eh! ~ No! ~ Yes! ~ Is it possible?
my master! my dear master! I shall go mad with joy.
(Helping him to rise.)
Sir, sir! speak to me ~ don't you know me? It's Sherasmin, your
faithful Sherasmin.

SIR HUON Sherasmin! where am I? How came I here? What new miracle is
(gazing about him this? Is it a dream, or did I dream till now?
wildly)

- SHERASMIN By saint Denis, master, I am as much puzzled as yourself; but this I know, that you are here in Tunis, before the door of old Ibrahim, the emir's gardener, who bought both Fatima and me in the slave-market two days ago.
- SIR HUON Fatima here too!
- SHERASMIN Yes, sir, we were picked up at sea by a corsair of Tunis, just as we were at the last gasp. But where's my lady, sir? Safe and sound, I hope, if not with you.
- SIR HUON O Sherasmin! now you rend open my wound again! Twelve hours have scarcely passed, since a band of pirates tore her from the rude rock on which the waves had cast us, and these weaponless arms, which could no longer defend her. Whither they have borne her, heaven only knows.
- SHERASMIN Twelve hours ago! ~ Why, master, the desert shore on which our vessel struck, is full four days' sail from Tunis with the fairest wind, and ~
- SIR HUON Well! it may be so ~ I was felled to the earth by the ruffian crew, and how long I lay senseless, I know as little as the means by which I was wafted to this spot. But doubtless Oberon hath stood my friend ~ and from that thought I gather new hope and courage to struggle with my fate.
- SHERASMIN I said it! I said but now to Fatima, we shall all meet again, and be merry! See, sir, here she comes. Lord, lord, how glad she will be to see you!

Re-enter Fatima, hastily, L..

- FATIMA Oh Sherasmin! such news!
(seeing sir Huon)
Ah! mercy on me! what do I see?
- SHERASMIN See! Why, you see my noble master alive and well, Fatima! ~ Praised be the kind fairy! I knew it, I felt it all along. I couldn't be melancholy, though I tried, and now I somehow, ~ I can't help crying for the life and soul of me: this turning gardener has made my head like an old watering-pot.
- FATIMA And came my noble lord with my lady?
- SIR HUON Your lady! Alas! Fatima, I know not where or in whose power she pines!
- FATIMA Wonder on wonder then! ~ For 'twas of her I came to tell. ~ My lady lives ~ my lady is in Tunis!
- SIR HUON, Here! in Tunis!
- SHERASMIN
- FATIMA At the palace.
- SIR HUON Hast seen her, Fatima? Speak! speak, for heaven's sake!

- FATIMA No, my dear lord, I have not seen her; but this morning a bark put into Tunis, and the rumour runs, that within this hour the captain has presented to the emir a most beautiful female, found on a desert island. Almanzor was enchanted at the first glance, dismissed the captain with a magnificent present, and has lodged her in a pavilion in the haram gardens, which till now, belonged to his wife
Roshana. The crew of the vessel have blazoned her beauty through the city; and from their description I have no doubt of its being the princess.
- SIR HUON 'Tis she! ~ my conscious heart assures me 'tis my Reiza! Your counsel, my kind friends: what's to be done?
- SHERASMIN Mortal force will avail us nothing, and we have no magic horn to aid us as at Bagdad. ~ Our first care must be to establish you, unsuspected, in this neighbourhood. I will pray Ibrahim to take you also into his service; and if I succeed, you must e'en be content to dig beside your poor Sherasmin, till time and fate shall favour our enterprise. Come in, sir; ~ the old man is from home at present ~ and ere he return, we must manage to equip you in a less suspicious habit than that. But stay ~ yonder comes a Greek ~ a fellow servant of ours, who is as anxious to get out of the clutches of the infidels as we are. The varlet has all the cunning of his country ~ I'll just let him into as much of your situation as 'tis fit he should know, and he'll help me to patch up a story, I warrant you!

Enter Arcon, L.

(Sherasmin takes him aside, and during the commencement of the trio converses with him in dumb show.)

[N. 17 - Trio]

- SIR HUON And must I then dissemble?
- FATIMA No other hope I know ~
- SIR HUON But let the tyrant tremble ~
unscathed he shall not go!
- FATIMA Viewless spirit of pow'r and light!
Thou who mak'st virtue and love thy care,
restore to the best and the bravest knight
the fondest and fairest of the fair!

ALL

Spirit adored!
Strike on our part!
Bless the good sword,
and the faithful heart!

Scene II

An apartament in the haram of the emir.

Enter Almanzor, followed by a black slave, R.

ALMANZOR Has the lovely stranger been refreshed and habited, as we commanded?

SLAVE The will of my lord has been faithfully executed by his slave.

ALMANZOR Conduct her hither.

(Exit slave, L.)

ALMANZOR Yes ~ I will again behold those eyes, dark and tender as the mountain roe's; again listen to that voice, sweet as the breeze-rung bells of paradise! Thrice blessed be the waves which flung her back upon that desert shore! They cover not so fair a pearl, they never bore a richer treasure. She comes! ~ she comes! ~ Unseen, awhile I'll gaze upon her beauty; then pay a prince's tribute to its power!

(Retires.)

Enter Reiza, richly habited, L.

[N. 18 - Air]

REIZA

Mourn thou, poor heart, for the joys that are dead;
flow, ye sad tears, for the joys that are fled:
sorrow is now the sole treasure I prize;
as peris on perfume, I feed on its sighs:
and bitter to some as its fountain may be,
'tis sweet as the waters of Gelum to me.*
Ye that are basking in pleasure's gay beam,
ye that are sailing on hope's golden stream,
a cloud may come o'er ye, ~ a wave sweep the deck,
and picture a future of darkness and wreck;
but the scourge of the desert** o'er my heart hath past,
and the tree that's blighted fears no second blast.

* «The water of Gelum, on account of its purity, is called the water of paradise.» Dow.

** The kamsin, a devastating wind, so called by the Arabs.

ALMANZOR Beautiful being! wherefore that plaintive lay, sweet and sad as
(advancing) the moan of the dove over the fallen cypress? ~ Tell me thy grief,
that I may bring to thee the balm will cure it. ~ Almanzor can do much.

REIZA Can he awake the dead?

ALMANZOR No: ~ but he can surround the living with such delights, that they will weep the dead no longer.

REIZA Indeed! Then waste them not on me ~ for I would still weep on. ~ My hopes have passed from me, like the phantom streams which mock the fainting traveller in the desert; and, like him, would I lay me down and die.

ALMANZOR Hath Almanzor then no power to bid a spring gush forth for thee in the wilderness? Is there no green oasis, to which his hand may lead thee? Bethink thee, loveliest, ~ all that charmeth woman, ~ gay chambers, ~ costly robes, ~ high feasting, and sweet music, these are mine to offer thee, and ~

REIZA All these I had, and I left them without a sigh! Without a sigh I can remember that I had them. They increased not my happiness when I was happy, and they can take no jot from my wretchedness! ~ A costly robe but adds to the weight of a sinking spirit; and when the nightingale is dead, and the canker in the heart of the rose, she careth not for the smile of the sun, or the song of the fountain.

ALMANZOR Hear me, fair creature! I know not whom thou art, or whence thou comest, beyond what they could tell, who brought thee hither! ~ But this I know, thy beauty is above all price. The caliph, my great master, before whom the whole world falls prostrate, should not buy thee from me! ~ Nay, by Allah! if rank and power can move thy heart to love, speak but the word, I will fling off allegiance, defy Haroun, and share with thee the independent throne of Tunis.

REIZA Dream it not! ~ Almanzor, there is a gulph between us: its dark shore is strewn with the wreck of happiness: come not thou near it with thy gilded bark, if thou wouldst save thyself.

ALMANZOR Thou art Almanzor's sovereign; but yet hear me. Thy grief shall be respected: no boisterous mirth shall break its spell, ~ no rude intrusion profane its sanctuary; but gentlest cares shall daily steal away some unmarked portion of thy melancholy, till the light of joy may pierce its last thin shadow. ~ Nay, reply not! ~ For thine own sake, do not wake me from this vision, even though it be delusive. Leave me, while yet I feel myself thy slave. A moment longer, and I may remember I am also thy master.

(Exit Reiza, L.)

As Almanzor is rushing out on the opposite side, Enter Roshana, R.

ALMANZOR Roshana!

ROSHANA Light of my eyes! what shakes my lord so strongly? ~ your cheek is flushed, your look is wild, Almanzor! ~ Why do you frown on me? ~ have I offended?

ALMANZOR Your sight offends me ~ stand from out my path.

ROSHANA The emir of Tunis was not wont to speak thus to Roshana. The blood of the prophet runs in these veins; let my lord shed it, but not insult his wife.

ALMANZOR My wife! my slave! By Allah, one word more, and Tunis shall not hold a slave so wretched as I will make the proud Roshana. Out of my path, before I spurn thee! Hence, and vent thy spleen upon thy women; but for thy life, wake not Almanzor's fury!
(Exit.) R.

ROSHANA O holy prophet! why have I lived to see this day? ~ Why do I live
C. to bear this foul disgrace? ~ Why, but for vengeance! Yes, by Allah! terrible vengeance! Cast off, ~ despised, ~ insulted, ~ for this new toy, ~ this pining stranger. ~ Roshana, awake! Hast thou no power in Tunis? ~ Yes, to-day, ~ But wilt thou have to-morrow? Not if this minion listen to the suit of thy faithless lord. Well then, to-day, while I have power, let me use it. ~ Her vengeance glutted, Roshana knows how to die, and foil that of her enemies.

(Exit.) L.

Scene III

*Myrtle grove in the garden of Almanzor.
Enter Fatima, R.*

FATIMA Well, that's settled: ~ our master the gardener has consented to employ our master the paladin; and the latter has already commenced operations. Sherasmin told the old man a famous story about his sham kinsman's skill in raising tulips! ~ Heaven send he put it not to the proof, for there'll not be a plant left alive in the whole garden, I'm sure. ~ He doesn't know a tulip from a sun-flower! He handles a hoe as if it were a lance, and slashes about with his pruning knife, as though he were lopping heads instead of branches. ~ Hah! here he comes.

Enter sir Huon, L. dressed as a gardener, hastily: in his hand is a bouquet, which he examines minutely.

SIR HUON It must be from my Reiza! I've heard that in these climes, each flower hath a meaning, and that lovers often express their passionate thoughts in such sweet letters! O for some clue to read this riddle!

Continued on next page.

SIR HUON

(Seeing Fatima.)

Hah! Fatima! tell me, my kind girl, what may this mean?
 Standing but now, gazing upon the cruel walls which bar me
 from my Reiza, I saw the small fair hand of a female issue from
 the only lattice which opens on these garderts, ~ and presently
 this bunch of flowers fell from it at my feet.

(Giving them to her.)

FATIMA Ha! they are token-flowers.

(Examining the bouquet, and explaining its meaning to sir Huon.)

See, my lord, a jonquil, ~ that means «Have pity on my passion.»
 These cinnamon blossoms, ~ « My fortune is yours.» ~ Stay,
 what is this? ~ these flowers puzzle me ~ I have it ~ no ~ I cannot
 make that out. The gold wire that binds them should mean, «I die
 for thee ~ come quickly!» ~ And look ~ here are some characters
 scratched upon this laurel leaf, ~ «At sunset, the gate in the
 myrtle grove ~ love, and vengeance on a tyrant.» It's from my
 lady, ~ she has doubtless gained some slave, who will direct your
 steps to her; but ah! the danger ~

SIR HUON

Talk not of danger in a cause like this! Hasten to Sherasmin: tell
 him to prepare for instant flight. ~ Day is closing fast, and there is
 no time for consultation. Do thou and he await me at the well
 behind the gardener's house. There, if fate smile upon my
 enterprise, will I bring thy mistress.

FATIMA

And if fate does not smile upon us, to-morrow morning will find
 Sherasmin and I at the bottom of the well; for never will we
 outlive the loss of our dear lord and lady.

(Exit.) R.

SIR HUON

At sunset, the gate in the myrtle grove! 'Tis here at hand, and the
 moment is almost as nigh. My own true Reiza! A few brief
 seconds, and I shall clasp her again to this devoted bosom.

[N. 19 - Air]

I revel in hope and joy again;
 a ray shines over my breaking chain,
 beams like a beacon the gloom above,
 and lights my path to my lady love!
 I feel like a mountain stream set free
 from the stern frost-spirit's mastery,
 rushing down from its rocky height,
 leaping and sparkling in wild delight.
 I revel in hope and joy again!
 I seek my love as that stream the main:
 they shall turn the tide with a silken glove,
 ere they bar my way to my lady love!

Scene IV

Saloon in the kiosk of Roshana: in the flat an arch closed with rich curtains. The stage is quite dark.

Enter Nadina, leading Sir Huon, L.

SIR HUON Where is she? Gentle guide, ~ where is my love?

NADINA Rest thou here ~ anon thou shalt behold her.

(Exit.) M. D.

SIR HUON My heart misgives me! ~ why this strange delay? ~ the passage was free for her as for the slave, and by this time we should have joined our friends. She comes not ~ how torturing is this suspense!

The curtains of the arch fly open and discover a recess illuminated, in which Roshana is reclining, covered with a rich veil.

SIR HUON Ah! she is there! My love! my life!

(Rushing to her, and clasping her in his arms.)

Why dost thou loiter here? Let us away! the morn shall see us far from Tunis!

ROSHANA Nay, christian, not so. The morn shall see thee on the throne of
(throwing off her veil) Tunis, if thou wilt share it with Roshana!

SIR HUON Merciful heaven! I am betrayed!

ROSHANA Thou hast no cause for fear: ~ listen to me, christian. Thou seest before thee the wife of Almanzor, the proud emir of Tunis. I mark'd thee toiling in the garden beneath the eye of Ibrahim, and could see thy spirit spurned the menial task. Thou art no common slave ~ there is a fire in thine eye, a pride in thy port, which speak thee noble: ~ suffice it to say, I saw and loved thee. ~ Let not thy colder nature start at this plain avowal. ~ The passions of the daughters of Africa burn as fiercely as the sun which blazes over them. Two of the wildest now rage within my bosom ~ vengeance and love. Nerve thine arm, christian, to gratify the first ~ the latter shall reward thee beyond thy most sanguine wishes!

SIR HUON Whither hath my rashness led me? How shall I answer this
(aside) impetuous woman?

ROSHANA Thou art silent. Canst thou hesitate to accept the good I offer thee? ~ Arouse thee, christian. Is it not thy glory to smite the moslem? Listen ~ I will lead thee this night to the couch of Almanzor. When his brain swims with the forbidden wine, and his lids are heavy with the fumes of the banquet, stab him to the heart! His slaves shall fall like dust at thy feet. The haram yields obedience to my nod. Wealth, rank, and power ~ liberty and love ~ reward thee for one blow!

- SIR HUON Never, mighty princess! If Almanzor has wronged thee, give me a sword, and let me hand to hand strive with the tyrant! I will shed my blood freely to right an injured woman; but I am no assassin to stab a sleeping man!
- ROSHANA Is he not the enemy of thy race and creed? Must the lances glitter in the sun, and the mighty steed paw up the earth, before thy blood can boil, and thy steel spring from its scabbard? Think on thy countrymen who pine in chains around thee, and nourish with the sweat of their brows the soil of the infidel! Thou shalt be their liberator, and I will be thy proselyte! Thou shalt have the glory of giving freedom to five hundred Franks, and of converting a princess of the blood of Mohammed! What care I for a prince who spurns me, or a prophet who denies me the privileges of my fellow clay? Christian! gallant christian! revenge thyself and me ~ strike the tyrant and the unbeliever, and defy the caliph on his distant throne.
- SIR HUON Urge me no more, lady. I love another; and while I freely own thy dazzling beauty, and my unworthiness, I must declare as plainly, that naught can shake my honour or my faith.
- ROSHANA
(aside) Destruction to my hopes! Wretched Roshana, where is the boasted power of thine eyes? where are the charms that poets have sung, and princes have sighed for? A slave, whose life hangs on thy breath, calmly rejects thine hand, even with a jewell'd sceptre in its grasp! ~ But shall this be? shall I be baffled thus? Come all ye arts of woman to my aid! the touch that disarms the mighty ~ the look that blinds the wise! He must be more or less than man if he break through the net I cast around him.

She claps her hands. ~ A troop of dancing girls and female slaves, richly attired, enter and surround sir Huon with garlands. One presents him with a cup of wine.

[N. 20 - Chorus and Ballet]

- CHORUS For thee hath beauty decked her bower,
for thee the cup of joy is filled:
o drain the draught and cull the flower,
ere the rose be dead, and the wine be spilled!
- SIR HUON Hence! The flow'rs ye proffer fair,
poison in their fragrance bear!
And the goblet's purple flood
seems to me a draught of blood!
- (He breaks from the garlands, and is met by Roshana, who clings to him and prevents his flight.)

CHORUS When woman's eye with love is bright,
 canst thou shun its 'witching light?
 Bearest thou the heart to flee
 when her white arms circle thee?

SIR HUON There is no beauty in woman's eye,
 when it burns with unholy brilliancy!
 'Tis like the glare of the sightless dead,
 when the soul which should kindle their orbs hath fled!
 There is no charm that can yield delight
 in the wanton's hand, be it never so white ~
 sooner its fingers should o'er me stray,
 when the worm hath eaten the flesh away!

(Disengages himself from Roshana, and rushes to the wing by which he entered. ~ The dancing girls and slaves anticipate his intention, and group themselves so as opposite his exit.)

CHORUS

O turn not away from the banquet of bliss!
 O lose not a moment so precious as this!
 Remember the sage* who sung o'er his repast
 «How pleasant were life if a shadow could last.»
 Then, mortal, be happy, and laugh at the wise
 who know life's shadow, yet wait till it flies!

* Abdolmélik, the fifth caliph of the house of Ommiyah, and the eleventh from the prophet; whilst he was at supper, he said, «How sweetly we live, if a shadow would last!» Vide Ockley, «History of Saracens».

SIR HUON Off! let me pass! I would not willingly lay an ungentle hand upon
 a woman, but patience hath its bounds! Give way I say!

As he is about to force his way through them, the slaves disperse, and Almanzor, L. enters, followed by some armed negroes. Sir Huon is instantly seized.

ALMANZOR Eternal curses! A man within these walls!

ROSHANA Almanzor! flushed with wine too ~ 'tis well, the slave shall die
 (aside) C. the death his folly merits!

(Aloud, and falling at Almanzor's feet.)

Allah be praised! I owe thee more than life! This christian dog,
 for some vile purpose, and by unknown means, gained access to
 this sacred spot. My slaves discovered him, and he would have
 fled. Shrieking, they strove with their weak arms to bar his
 passage; when happily my lord arrived, as sent by heaven to our
 assistance!

ALMANZOR Drag him away to death. In the palace court let him be burned
 alive, within this hour!

(They force sir Huon from the stage.)

ALMANZOR (to Roshana)

Woman, I doubt this tale, but be it as it may, he dies! For thee ~
 (Pauses a while and observes her: then, turning to one of the remaining negroes, he
 silently motions him towards Roshana.)

ROSHANA Hah! is it so? There is no time to lose then.
(aside)

(As two of the negroes approach her, she evades their grasp; and, rushing on Almanzor, aims a blow at him with her dagger: her arm is caught, and the weapon wrested from her, by a third slave.)

ALMANZOR Thou hast been dangerous too long. Farewell, Roshana. Thine is
(in a calm low tone) a towering spirit, but the ocean is deep enough to cover it.

ROSHANA Were it as deep as gehennem, it should not separate us,
(in the same tone) Almanzor. In the banquet hall and the haram bower, in the blaze of noon and the darkness of night, Roshana shall be with thee; her blue lip shall meet thine on the brim of the goblet; her glassy eye glare on thee from the midst of the roses. The rushing of waters and the shriek of their victim shall be heard above the song of joy and the trumpet of triumph. Sleeping and waking shall they ring in thine ears; and when the angel of death shall stand at the foot of thy couch, there shall Roshana be also, to smile on the last struggle of her despairing murderer!

(Almanzor signs to the negroes to remove Roshana.)

The scene closes.

Scene V

*Garden behind Ibrahim's house ~ a rose-bush particularly prominent.
~ Moonlight.*

Enter Sherasmin, R.

SHERASMIN No, I can see nobody. Mischief! mischief. I greatly fear thou art afoot! My master must have been here long ago, had he succeeded in his project! If they have discovered him, they'll twist his neck with as little compunction as if it were a pigeon's! Fatima returns not, neither! Has she heard nothing? Or has she heard too much? Sir Oberon! Sir Oberon! I begin to fear that thou wilt turn out a scurvy fairy, after all. ~ O murder! what the devil's that? I've trod on a snake, and it has bitten my leg through! O I'm a dead man!

(A lily rises through the stage, and the ivory horn is seen swinging upon it.)

There it is! ~ No ~ it isn't ~ it's a ~ no ~ why. ~

(Approaching cautiously, and looking at it.)

The horn! the horn! the fairy horn!

(Snatching it from the lily, which sinks again, and dancing about delightedly.)

We're all right! we're all safe ~ we are all ~ Lira, lira la! lira, lira la! Ah, Fatima!

Enter Fatima, hastily, R.

FATIMA Misery! misery! all's lost! all's ruined! We were deceived! The token came from the wife of the emir! Almanzor surprised sir Huon in the haram, and they are going to burn him alive!

SHERASMIN Burn him alive! ~ My master ~ ha! ha! ha! that's a good joke!

FATIMA A good joke! art thou mad? I tell thee even now they are raising stake and pile in the court of the haram.

SHERASMIN Excellent! 'twill be rare sport ~ follow me, Fatima!

FATIMA He's frantic! the dreadful tidings have turned his brain.

SHERASMIN No, they hav'n't. Don't be frighten'd. If I am mad, I'm only horn-mad, and that's nothing very extraordinary for a married man, you know, Fatima.

FATIMA What! the fairy horn restored to us? But are you sure it's the fairy horn? It may be some trick, perhaps.

SHERASMIN Sure! why, ~ yes, ~ it must be ~ it ~ at least, it looks very much like it. ~

(Blows a soft note. Fatima bursts into, a loud laugh.)

Oh yes. I can swear to the notes ~ come ~ come, don't stand laughing there ~ every moment is precious now.

FATIMA Oh! oh! oh! ha! ha! ha! I can't help it! ha! ha! ha!

SHERASMIN What the deuce ails the girl! Fatima! ~ Fatima! ~ Oh murder! it's the horn ~ that's for doubting the fairy, you know ~ what's to be done now? ~ If I blow again, I shall do more mischief. ~ So, you must e'en laugh on, till I get within hearing of the enemy, and then take your chance with the rest. ~ Follow me, you grinning goose, do «Guienne for the noble duke!»

FATIMA Ha! ha! ha!

(Exeunt.) L. (Fatima laughing.)

Scene VI

The court of the haram. In the centre of the stage is a stake, surrounded by fagots. A band of negroes are discovered, with lighted torches.

Enter Almanzor, attended, L.

ALMANZOR Bring forth the guilty slave!

(Exeunt Negroes.)

A shriek is heard within: L. Reiza rushes from the haram, and flings herself at the feet of Almanzor.

ALMANZOR The lovely stranger!

REIZA At thy feet, Almanzor, I crave a first and only boon.

ALMANZOR What canst thou ask, fair creature, that Almanzor can deny?
Speak; it is thine.

REIZA Pardon for him thou hast but now condemned to a most cruel and
unmerited death.

ALMANZOR How! for that vile slave who dared profane the haram! What is
that dog to thee?

REIZA He was deceived, and he is innocent. I have heard all. Ask thine
own slaves, the slaves of that wretched princess now struggling
with the waters. Spare him! O spare him!

ALMANZOR It cannot be! He hath transgressed the law. Waste not a thought
upon a wretch like that.

REIZA Almanzor, hear me ~ he is my husband.

ALMANZOR Hah! thy husband! He whom thy captors left bound upon the
beach, and thou didst deem dead? Praised be the prophet! Now,
lady, hear Almanzor; you ask me to be merciful ~ do thou set the
example. Pity my sufferings, smile upon my love; and I will not
only spare his life, but load him with riches, and give him safe
and honourable conduct to his native land.

REIZA Never!
(rising)

ALMANZOR Beware! the bow, o'erstrained, may break.

REIZA Barbarian, do thy worst; I fear thee not. The man I love would
shame to live on terms so base; and I would rather share his
dreadful fate, than free him from it by such infamy.

ALMANZOR Then be it so. Thou hast condemned thyself; for yield thou shalt,
(furiously) or mount the pile with him. Bind her to the stake, and bring the
christian forth.

(Slaves seize and bind Reiza.)

Negroes enter with sir Huon, R.

SIR HUON Reiza! O heavy hour!

REIZA O happy hour! Huon, we die together.
L.

ALMANZOR Enough! To the stake with them, and fire the pile!

REIZA (As they are dragging him to the stake.)
Tyrant, beware! Thou killest the caliph's daughter; Haroun will
rend thee piecemeal.

ALMANZOR Ha! ha! ha! that lie will scarcely serve thy turn. But, were it true,
(laughing scornfully) she hath wedded with a vile christian, and deserves to die. Slaves,
fire the pile, I say!

(As the negroes are about to set fire to the pile, the faint sound of a horn is heard. ~ Almanzor becomes motionless. ~ The negroes and other slaves dance to the following chorus.)

[N. 21 - Finale]

CHORUS Hark! what notes are swelling?
 Whence that wondrous sound,
 ev'ry foot compelling
 in merry dance to bound?

Enter Arcon, and Sherasmin with the horn, followed by Fatima, L.

SIR HUON, REIZA, SHERASMIN, FATIMA

Rejoice, rejoice, 'tis the horn of power!
They dance in the court and they dance in the tow'r,
they dance in the garden, they dance in the hall,
on the ocean's beach, and the city wall.
A second and louder blast shall bring
the donor himself ~ the elfin king!

(Sherasmin blows a louder blast; the bonds of sir Huon and Reiza are burst asunder; the fagots and stake sink. ~ The stage fills with clouds, as in the second act. The negroes and Almanzor fly in terror.)

The clouds open: Oberon and Titania appear, C.

OBERON Hail, faithful pair! your woes are ended!
 Your friend in turn you have befriended!
 His pledge redeem'd by you hath been:
 again in love he clasps his fairy queen!

Swift as the lightning's glance,
brave knight, behold, I bring
thee and thine to thy native France,
and the palace of thy king.
Kneel at his feet with the bride thou has won;
Europe shall ring with the deed thou hast done:
now for ever I break the spell
with the grateful fairy's last farewell.

The clouds envelope Oberon and Titania, then rise and discover the palace of Charlemagne.

Grand march.

Enter guards, nobles, and ladies of the emperor's court, and lastly Charlemagne. Flourish.

Sir Huon, Reiza, Sherasmin, and Fatima, who have left the stage at the change of scene, re-enter; sir Huon armed as in first scene. ~ They kneel.

[N. 22 - March]

SIR HUON Behold! obedient to the oath he swore,
Huon is kneeling at thy feet once more;
for, by the help of heav'n, his hand hat done
the daring deed, and from the caliph won
this lovely maid, ~ by ev'ry peril tried,
the heiress of his throne, and now thy vassal's bride.

(Charlemagne rises and welcomes sir Huon and Reiza.)

CHORUS

Hail to the knight, with his own good brand,
who hath won a fair bride from the Saracen's hand!
Hail to the maiden who o'er the sea
hath follow'd her champion so faithfully!
By bards yet unborn oft the tale shall be told
of Reiza the lovely and Huon the bold!

The end.

INDEX

Characters.....	3	[N. 9 - Aria].....	26
Advertisement.....	4	[N. 10 - Quartetto].....	26
Preface.....	5	Scene IV.....	27
Costume.....	6	[N. 11 - Air and Chorus].....	27
Act I.....	7	Scene V.....	28
[Ouverture].....	7	[N. 12 - Air].....	28
Scene I.....	7	[N. 13 - Recitative and Aria].....	29
[N. 1 - Introduction].....	7	[N. 14 - Finale].....	32
[N. 2 - Air].....	8	Act III.....	34
[N. 3 - Vision].....	10	Scene I.....	34
[N. 4 - Trio and Chorus].....	12	[N. 15 - Air].....	34
Scene II.....	14	[N. 16 - Duo].....	35
[N. 5 - Recitative and Aria].....	17	[N. 17 - Trio].....	38
Scene III.....	18	Scene II.....	39
[N. 6 - Finale].....	19	[N. 18 - Air].....	39
Act II.....	21	Scene III.....	41
Scene I.....	21	[N. 19 - Air].....	42
[N. 7 - Chorus].....	21	Scene IV.....	43
[N. 8 - Allegretto grazioso].....	21	[N. 20 - Chorus and Ballet].....	44
Scene II.....	22	Scene V.....	46
Scene III.....	24	Scene VI.....	47
		[N. 21 - Finale].....	49
		[N. 22 - March].....	50

SIGNIFICANT PIECES

Fatal oath! not even slumber (Oberon)	8
Light as fairy foot can fall (Chorus)	7
Mourn thou, poor heart, for the joys that are dead (Reiza)	39
Near me is my own true knight! (Reiza, Fatima, Chorus)	20
O 'tis a glorious sight to see (Sir Huon)	17
O Araby! dear Araby! (Fatima)	34
O! 'tis pleasant to float on the sea (Mermaids)	32
Ocean! thou mighty monster that liest curled (Reiza)	29
Ruler of this awful hour (Sir Huon)	28