

**THE PRETTY DRUIDESS;
OR, THE MOTHER, THE MAID, AND THE MISTLETOE BOUGH.
An Extravaganza, (FOUNDED ON BELLINI'S OPERA, "NORMA")**

(First performed at the opening of the Charing Cross Theatre, Saturday, 19 June,
1869.)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Norma (Mother Superior of the Pretty Druidess)	Miss HUGHES.
Pollio (a Roman Pro-Consul)	Miss CICELY NOTT.
Adalgisa (a Novice)	Miss KATHLEN IRWIN.
Oroveso (Druidic High Priest—father of Norma)	Mr. R. BARKER.
Flavius (a Roman Centurion)	Miss CRUISE.
Arminia (Pretty Druidess)	Miss E. MAYNE.
Clotilda (Pretty Druidess)	Miss STEMBRIDGE.
Ingonda (Pretty Druidess)	Miss MAXSE.
Bellina (Pretty Druidess)	Miss EDITH LYND.
Small Priestess	Miss BARRIER.
1st Soldier	Mr. BARRIER.
2nd Soldier	Mr. LLOYD.

Scene I.—*The Druidesses' Retreat (Moonlight).*

Scene II.—*Norma's Home.*

Scene III.—*The Temple of Irminsul, prepared for a Fancy Fair.*

Scene I. —*Sanctum of the Druid Priestesses—the interior of a cavern cut in the side of a rock, a large opening at back, with practicable parapet in roughly hewn stone. The sides of the cavern are hung with matting. Oil lamps hang from the roof, also a large bough of mistletoe. At the back, through the opening, a moonlit landscape is seen. Adalgisa, Arminia, Ingonda, and other Priestesses discovered in the act of tatting articles for a Fancy Fair.*

Song and Chorus.

(*Air.*— “*We’re all nodding.*”)

- Chor.** We’re all tatting,
Tat, tat, tatting, tatting, tatting,
Tatting, at our house at home.
- Adalgisa.** Such a simple little piece of work was surely never planned.
Take a little bit of cotton and a shuttle in your hand,
And go on chatting,
Chat, chat, chatting, chatting, chatting,
Chatting, at our house at home.
- Chor.** And go on chatting, &c.
- Adalgisa.** It’s a kind of occupation, too, that innocent I call,
And very much more proper than, for instance, if we all
Were to go ratting,
Rat, rat, ratting, ratting, ratting.
Ratting, at our house at home.
- Chor.** Were to go ratting, &c.
- Arminia.**
I’m sick and tired of working, I declare,
For such an end — to stock a Fancy Fair,
And drive, with money gathered from each stall,
Those dear delightful Romans out of Gaul!
- Ingonda.**
The Romans! Ah, that joy won’t last, I fear!
There’s no attraction to detain them here.
They’ll soon from our vicinity be gone,
That dreadful Norma’s always looking on!
- Arminia.**
Then they’re so handsome, courteous, gallant, brave,
Each quartering himself, the cunning knave,
Upon some priest who has a pretty daughter!
- Adalgisa.**
Yes — taken furnished lodgings by the *quarter*!
Think, frail young women, of their wicked pillages,
Think of the bustling towns and quiet villages,
These Roman monsters from our hands have wrested!
Indeed our very capital’s invested!
It’s bad to have one’s *capital*, I hear,
Invested in *Italian bonds*, my dear.
- Arminia.**
But they’re such splendid fellows for flirtation,
So dashing in their tone and conversation!

Adalgisa.

Yes, in their language, dear, I've often thought
They "dash" much more than even soldiers ought.

Arminia.

I love them, one and all!

Adalgisa.

Arminia, pooh!

Arminia.

And so, I verily believe, do you! (*all laugh.*)

Adalgisa. (*aside.*)

To keep my secret vainly have I tried!

Ingonda.

I'm even jealous of the beards that hide
One half of every soldier's facial graces.

Adalgisa.

My dear, if they uncovered *all* their faces,
They'd be too lovely—so, like men of sense,
They claim to *be 'eard* in their own defence.
But soft — here's Oroveso — work away!

(*They resume their work. Enter Oroveso, L.U.E.*)

Oroveso.

I rather think I heard some priestess say,
She loved a Roman—loved her country's foe!

Adalgisa.

We're taught to love our enemies, you know.

Oroveso.

It *was* a priestess whom I overheard!
Yours is nice conduct, Miss, upon my word.
These soldiers to flirtation onwards egging,
While gentlemanly priests are going begging!
Look at that bearded ruffian Pollio.
He's quartered on me and I ought to know!
Come, priestesses, how would you like a few
Stout chaps like Pollio billeted on you?

Adalgisa. (*demurely.*)

Were that calamity to happen, it
Would clearly be our duty to submit.

Oroveso.

The fellow's one interminable hoax,
Begins his senseless irritating jokes
As soon as he gets up—while still it's dark!

Adalgisa.

A healthy custom— *rising with the lark!*

Oroveso.

Who stuffs the priest's arm-chair with pins and needles?
Who fills the priest's umbrella with black-beadles?
Who pulls the priest's moustachios by the roots?
Who sends the priest fictitious cheques on Coutts?
Who places cactus in his trouser legs?

Who takes and hardboils all his new-laid eggs?
 Who treads upon his toes until he limps?
 Who fills the sacerdotal boots with shrimps?
 Who daily gives the priest “cold pig” to wake him?
 Who does all this? Why, Pollio does, deuce take him!
 Sticks walnut-shells upon my cat, for shoes,
 And teaches her to wake her tuneful *mews*.
 Through him my dog, who formerly, poor feller,
 Was black and tan, is now a startling *yeller*!
 My pigs he sets a-squeaking like a good ’un,
 My pork gives me no peace — except *pease pudden*!
 At meals he never leaves me at my ease,
 And, thanks to him, my dinners are all *teaze*.
 He’s always planning jokes on me, the vulture!

Adalgisa.

Because his tastes incline to *waggery-culture*.

Oroveso.

But he’s a soldier — helmet, sword, and boots.
 If he’s so fond of pastoral pursuits,
 Why don’t he dress accordingly, my charmer?

Adalgisa.

He does — he always wears a *suit of armour*.

Oroveso.

Well, well, well, well, that’s quite enough, my dear,
 ’Twas not to bandy words the priest came here,
 Great Norma’s coming to address the meeting,
 Prepare to give her an appropriate greeting.

Enter Norma, attended by Clotilda.

Chorus of Priestesses.

(Air — “Norma viene.”)

Norma’s drums are loudly beating,
 Norma will address the meeting,
 Give her an appropriate greeting,
 She is welcome, quite, I’m sure!

Recitative, Norma. (“Sediziose voce.” — Norma.)

Attention, please, young ladies!
 You are aware that a Fair called Fancy
 To-morrow will be held in yon Druidic Temple,
 And I am here, at some personal inconvenience,
 To guide and regulate that Fair, called Fancy!

(Air changes to “Babblyboobledore.”)

Norma.

Young ladies, I’m going to superintend
 Our Family Fancy Fair —
 So gather around, if you would befriend
 Our Family Fancy Fair.
 For if we desire our funds to feed,
 And make all our enemies freely bleed,

No weapons are ours, except, indeed,
A Family Fancy Fair!

All. A Family Fancy — Family Fancy —
Family Fancy Fair;
A Family Fancy — Family Fancy —
Family Fancy Fair!

Norma. In yonder domain we'll hold our tryst —
Our Family Fancy Fair—
A liberal gentleman can't resist
A Family Fancy Fair.
To flatter and wheedle, and dazzle and coax,
These racketty, rollicking Roman folks,
We're carefully planning that splendid hoax,
A Family Fancy Fair!

All. A Family Fancy—Family Fancy, &c.

Norma. It's a carnival gay of empty pates,
A Family Fancy Fair!
No code of propriety regulates
A Family Fancy Fair!
Though people are easily shocked or awed
By common-place robbery, — all applaud
That fidgetty, finicky, flimsy fraud,
A Family Fancy Fair!

All. A Family Fancy — Family Fancy, &c.

Norma.
A cup of tea — my customary fluid —
And the last number of the "Daily Druid."
(They give her a newspaper. She reads.)
Humph — innovation forward boldly marches —
A priestess brought before the Dean of Arches!

Adalgisa.
What *has* she done—oh, tell us, I implore!

Norma. *(sternly)*
Put on her mystic wreath, wrong side before!

All.
The monster!

Norma.
Money market — last advices —
Advertisements—hem! *(reads)* "Human sacrifices.
If fine fat subjects you desire to kill,
Use Thorley's Food for Victims" — yes, we will.
The fashion plate my curious bosom probes —
The last new thing in sacerdotal robes —
Patterns for chasubles and albs, most neat?
Poplins for surplices! How truly sweet!
Frizettes are going out.

Arminia.

Oh, that's too bad —

Norma.

And back hair will be dyed a quiet plaid —
Skirts will be longer —

Adalgisa.

So they may, with reason!

Norma.

And — nonsense! bodies will be worn next season!
Come, come, that's cheering news, indeed, to read.
Now to the evening's business we'll proceed.

(to Adalgisa.) Go, close the gates, or otherwise, you know,

Some foe may come — which were not *cummy fo!*

(aside, to Clotilda.) Oh, wretched Norma, forced to lend a hand,

To drive her husband Pollio from the land,
Far from his loving wifey, — and to know
That he would only be too glad to go!

Clotilda.

But why not give it up, while time there's still?

Norma.

It is my father Oroveso's will,
That by establishing a fair, we all
May raise the funds to drive him out of Gaul.
But this sound code of business we'll arrange,
We only take bank notes, and give no change,
And won't sell anything to any buyer
That anyone could possibly require!

(aloud) Now, priestesses, be good enough to tell

The articles that you've prepared to sell.

Adalgisa. *(producing cap)*

A smoking cap —

Norma. *(aside to Clotilda.)*

Ah, there, at least, he's thwarted,

For (hush!) tobacco isn't yet imported!

Adalgisa.

Some scented soap.

Norma. *(aside to Clotilda.)*

They're certain to refuse it —

Italians, generally, do not use it!

Adalgisa.

A razor-case, completely stocked.

Norma. *(aside to Clotilda.)*

That's brave!

For warriors are not allowed to shave!

Adalgisa.

Braces, embroidered with initial letter.

Norma.

Embroidered braces? *(aside to Clotilda.)* Nothing could be better!

No Roman wears, in all the martial train,

The garments they're intended to sustain!

Adalgisa.

How shall we bear ourselves to-morrow, pray?

Norma.

Attention, and I'll point you out the way.
 With pretty speech accost both old and young,
 And speak it trippingly upon the tongue.
 But if you mouth it with a hoyden laugh,
 With clumsy ogling, and uncomely chaff,
 As I have oft seen done at fancy fairs,
 I had as lief a huckster sold my wares.
 Avoid all so-called "beautifying," dear.
 Oh, it offends me to the soul to hear,
 The things that men among themselves will say
 Of some *soi-disant* beauty of the day,
 Whose face, when with cosmetics she has cloyed it,
 Out-Rachels Rachel! Pray you, girls, avoid it!
 Neither be ye too tame, but, ere you go,
 Provide yourselves with sprigs of mistletoe,
 Offer them coyly to the Roman herd,
 But don't you "suit the action to the word,"
 For in the very torrent of your passion,
 Remember modesty is still in fashion.
 Oh, there be ladies whom I've seen hold stalls —
 Ladies of rank, my dears, to whom befalls
 Neither the accent nor the gait of ladies;
 So clumsily "made up" with Bloom of Cadiz,
 Powder, rouge, lip-salve — that I've fancied then
 They were the work of Nature's journeymen!
 Let her, whose hair is black with lustre mellow,
 Not dream of using dye to turn it yellow —
 She'll find it argues (when at length she loses it)
 A sad ambition in the fool that uses it!
 Now get you ready.

(**Norma and Priestesses** *exeunt at opposite entrances, the Priestesses curtsying, and singing the following Chorus.*)

Chorus of Priestesses.

(*Air— "Norma viene," second portion.*)

Norma now retreat is beating,
 Norma has addressed the meeting.
 Our appropriate form of greeting
 Gave her great delight I'm sure.

(*Lights down. Pollio and Flavius appear at the back with dark lanterns, climbing into the room by means of a rope ladder.*)

Pollio.

Now, in the Druidesses' room we stand,
 And Adalgisa should be close at hand.
 Here they perform their mystic rites, no doubt —
 The "*rites of women*," that we hear about.

Which means the right to wield, with all facility,
 Authority without responsibility.

(calling.) Ho! Adalgisa, are you quite alone?

Flavius

Take heed, lest this affair of yours be known.
 You're Norma's wife, you know. Oh, fie, you Turk!

Pollio.

I brought you here to watch — go, do your work —
 My sword shall hasten you, if you're too slow.
 The watch, when it is *wounded*, p'raps will go,
 My Adalgisa comes — away, away!

[Exit Flavius to watch: enter Adalgisa (R.)]

Adalgisa.

Oh, Pollio, where have you been all day.

Pollio.

Down at the Club, engaged on divers matters —
 My Club's the Rag — and yours?

Adalgisa.

Oh, mine's the *Tatters!*

I've been at work for Norma's fancy fair.

Pollio.

A lively way of passing time, I swear.
 I never could distinctly understand,
 How first you came to join this dismal band.

Adalgisa.

On yonder hill I lived — my father's home —
 When hither came the splendid troops of Rome.
 Thence, I could see, no soldier dreamt of hurting them —
 Young Druid Priestesses at work, converting them.
 I saw the soldiers seriously incline,
 And longed to make that pious duty mine.
 So, coyly shrinking from its worldly pale,
 I left the *mountain* and I took the *veil*,
 Now that we're shut out from the world away,
 We spend two-thirds at least of every day
 Converting soldiers to our sacred fire —

(piously) That is a task of which I never tire —

Then we go out — collect forgotten pew-rates —
 Embroider slippers for young Druid curates,
 With whom to yonder fane we daily go
 To worship the mysterious mistletoe! *(indicating bough suspended from roof.)*

Pollio.

The mistletoe — of course — we'll pledge our vows
 Under the sacred shadow of its boughs.

Adalgisa.

But stay — it is our deity, up here,
 Suppose it takes offence —

Pollio.

Oh, never fear.

Though it may see, be sure 'twill never breathe it —

It wouldn't notice things so much *beneath it!* (*He kisses her.*)

Duet. — Pollio and Adalgisa.

Air— "The Bells of Aberdovey."

- Pollio.** Pity, pity, take on me —
I'm distracted, as you see!
Oh, when will Pollio wedded be
To the pretty Adalgisa!
- Adalgisa.** Spare me — spare me, oh my love!
Oh, leave me in my sacred grove,
Says the pretty Adalgisa!
You forget my solemn vows
To great Irminsul plighted.
- Pollio.** Do so, too, and be my spouse
And we will be united.
- Both.** Pity, pity, take on me,
I'm distracted as you see.
Oh, when will/Oh, ne'er can Pollio wedded be
To the pretty Adalgisa!
- Pollio.** Kindly — blindly be my love.
Oh leave, oh leave this sacred grove,
Pretty, pretty Adalgisa!
- Adalgisa.** I will beg great Norma's grace,
Though she wears a solemn face,
Her heart is in the proper place,
Says the pretty Adalgisa.
Blindly — blindly, O my love,
Oh, I'll forsake this sacred grove,
Says the pretty Adalgisa.
- Pollio.** Better far be taking wing,
And follow when I beckon;
Norma's grace is not a thing
On which to safely reckon!
- Adalgisa.** Pity, pity, take on me,
I'm distracted as you see;
Oh, when will Pollio wedded be
To the pretty Adalgisa!
- Both.** Bear me — bear me, oh my love,
Oh, bear me from this sacred grove,
Says the pretty Adalgisa!

Enter Flavius in great terror.

Flavius

Oh, lord! there's Norma's train — as I expected

Pollio.

Pooh — we're quite safe.

Flavius

Yes, safe — to be detected.

Oh, lord! oh, lord!

Pollio.

Come, hold your tongue, you muff.

Adalgisa. (*looking off*)

Oh, Pollio, it is Norma, sure enough —
Her train is coming to this temple votive,
Drawn by an anything, but *lucky motive!*

Pollio.

Confusion! Flavius — soothe her in her fright.

(*calling without*) What ho! there! Help! help! Murder! bring a light!

[*Enter Oroveso and Priestesses with lights. Flavius discovered
consoling Adalgisa.*]

Another victim for your mystic tomb!
A man has entered Adalgisa's room.
Take him and truss him, torture him and toast him,
Wrench him and wrack him, rattle him and roast him!

(*Two Priestesses seize Flavius.*)

Who *is* the monster?

Enter Norma.

Norma. (*looking at Flavius*)

Flavius, as he's named of you!

Pollio.

Flavius of ours! Oh, Flavius, I'm ashamed of you!

Flavius

Oh, come, a joke's a joke — release me, do!

Norma.

It probably will prove no joke to you.
He dies!

Oroveso.

'Tis said that all who bare the sting
Of such high treason, *high trees on* shall swing!

Norma. (*correcting him*)

Be burnt upon a faggot, is it not!

Oroveso.

Upon a faggot — just so — I *fagot*.
Let him escape a broiling, if he can —

A way, away with him!

Adalgisa.

But should the man
Conjure our mercy, or turn out a struggler?

Oroveso.

Then stop his *conjuring tricks* —

Adalgisa.

How?

Oroveso.

Cut his *juggler!*

Song and Chorus — Norma, Pollio, Adalgisa, Flavius, Oroveso, and others.

Air — “Hot Corn.”

- Norma.** Oh, my,
Never did I!
You're an uncommonly nice young man!
- Adalgisa.** Fly, fly,
Can if you try!
Terrible sacrifice, young man!
- Flavius** Do, do,
Pity me, you
Wouldn't much like to be hung, you know!
- Pollio.** Pooh, pooh,
Get away, do!
Better to hold your tongue, you know!
- Norma.** Out of my sight — I fret, I fume!
Terrible, terrible tortures loom.
Take him away to his dreadful doom —
He's found in Adalgisa's room!
- Chor.** Take him away to his dreadful doom —
He's found in Adalgisa's room!
Ah — ah — ah — ah!

Air changes to “Boolabang” (Ching Chow Hi).

- All.** Sound his knell, each outraged fury,
Ding, ding, ding, &c.
Let the trumpet loudly bray —
Ding, ding, dong, &c.
We will be both judge and jury—
Tzing! Tzing! Boom!
Take the wretched man away!
With a bang!
With a bang!
With a clang!
With a twang!
- Pollio. (trumpet.)** Ta—ta—ra—ra, &c.

Scene 2. — Norma's Home.

Enter Oroveso.

- Oroveso.**
A High Priest of Irminsul? am I so?
Perhaps — I don't say yes — I don't say no.
I temporise to see what news may go forth.
Humph. We shall see. Perhaps. Who knows? And so forth.
So long I've lived in different disguises,
In hats and cloaks, and wigs of divers sizes;
In big false noses and in whiskers sham,

I've quite forgotten who I really am.
 I had a card-case once, and took good care
 To hide it, but I can't remember where.
 I hid it — hoping to escape detection.
 Now, could I bring back to my recollection
 What secret hiding-place that card-case guards,
 I might find out my name — it's "on the cards."

Enter Pollio.

Pollio.

I saw her enter here, I'll almost swear.
 Is Adalgisa here?

Oroveso.

She is — in there.
 She waits an interview with Norma now,
 To ask her to release her from her vow.

Pollio.

This to her presence testimony bears, *(takes up a respirator.)*
 The very respirator that she wears
 When out of doors she takes her daily trips —
 Come let me press by deputy her lips! *(kisses it enthusiastically.)*
 What a delicious flavour — little traitor!

Oroveso.

You rather seem to like my respirator!

Pollio. *(in great disgust).*

Yours?

Oroveso.

Yes.

Pollio. *(overcome).*

I don't feel well; are there no seats?

Oroveso.

He don't feel well! Poor fellow! Cloyed with sweets! *(Exit Oroveso.)*

Enter Norma.

Norma.

So here you are at last. Six weeks have passed
 Since poor deserted Norma saw you last!

Pollio.

At Colney Hatch you ought to have a cell.

Norma.

In truth I'm nearly mad!

Pollio.

You look *han-well*.

Norma.

Oh, am I not your better half!

Pollio.

That's true!

Norma.

I am your mate.

Pollio.

My mate and captain, too!

Norma.

Yet when we meet, you meet me with a frown.
At your desertion I could shower down
Of tears a deluge if I took the pains.

Pollio.

A deluge? Yes; you always held the *reins*.

Norma.

Such love I've shown for you — such deep affection.

Pollio.

Console yourself, my dear, with that reflection,
Virtue's its own reward — the saying's true.

Norma.

All the reward it's like to get from you.
The bravo you employ to kill your foe,
Is he contented with a mere "*bravo?*"
Your light dragoons who fight for you afar,
Are they contented with a mere "*hussar?*"
Your tailor, too, who fits you for Pell Mell,
Wants payment more substantial than '*tis swell*.
The tradesman who supplies your cheap veneers,
Think tables cheaply bought if paid with *cheers*.
And so the wife, who cooks your food at one,
Deserves some better payment than "well done."

Duet. — Norma and Pollio.

"Egli gallo della checca."—*Elisir.*

Norma.

Oh, vile deceiver,
To go and leave her!
It would not grieve her
If she were wise!

Pollio.

What a clatter, what a clatter,
For an unimportant matter
She's as made as any hatter,
I've observ'd it ere to-day!

Norma.

Say, am I frightful,
Deformed or spiteful,
Of malice quite full —
A grim surprise?

Pollio.

Was there ever such a rattle!
To escape a wordy battle
Take my money, good, and chattel,
Take my all and go away!

At the end, exit Pollio L. Enter Adalgisa. R.

Adalgisa.

Oh, Norma, from my shackles set me free,
I love a Roman, and he worships me!

Norma.

A Roman, and a heretic, indeed!

Adalgisa.

No — I've converted him; he joins our creed.
 Be a conniver at my plan, I pray,
 And tell me I *can eiver* go or stay.

Norma.

You cannot be this Roman's legal wife,
 Your oath has bound you to our band for life.
 The tomb alone can free you from it now.

Adalgisa.

If that's the purport of my dreadful vow,
 Oh, cancel it.

Norma.

No need to make a scene,
 You'll only cancel it in *Kansal Green!*

Adalgisa.

Is there no way by which I may be gone?
 No line of conduct I can hit upon
 By which to free the chain by which I'm bound?

Norma.

No line at all — except the underground!

Adalgisa. (aside.)

There's nothing left for me, then, but desertion.

Norma.

How came *you* to engage in this conversion,
 You're a mere novice — (of our band the least),
 That was the work of an experienced priest?

Adalgisa.

For months our priests had laboured, but in vain,
 To win him to the faith that they maintain;
 Still from their mouths he would not hear one word.
 But as by accident I'd overheard,
 That though he proved himself, in word and deed,
 Deaf to the grand traditions of our creed,
 He seemed susceptible to youth and beauty,
 I volunteered for that unpleasant duty.

Norma. (aside.)

So, I remember, seven years ago
 I offered to convert my Pollio,
 And acting on a rarely failing plan,
 Converted him — into a married man!

Adalgisa.

I laboured hard, and he, I'm proud to say,
 Vowed he'd embrace my faith one summer day,
 If I'd bestow in yon Druidic shade
 On him one little kiss; and, as he made
 Upon my doing so depend his bid,
 I felt it was my duty — and I did.
 And then, declaring that his heart was mine,
 He posted me this perfumed valentine! (*showing valentine.*)

Norma. (*aside.*)

Hum! Strange that this facsimile should be
Of one that villain Pollio sent to me;
One that for years I every morning kissed,
And one which somehow I have lately missed!

Adalgisa.

For gallantry I found him well reputed.
He said such pretty things; that I refuted
The fallacy that Birds of Paradise
Do *not* descend upon the earth!

Norma. (*aside.*)

How nice!

That's strange; for when I in my best arrayed me,
That was the compliment he always paid me!

Adalgisa.

My eyes he'd praise in easy off-hand way;
It was a favourite joke of his to say,
He was so dazzled by their brilliant rays,
That on the darkest night he found them *daze*.

Norma. (*aside.*)

That traitor Pollio often used to see
The very same phenomenon in me!

Adalgisa.

My little boot he'd take and measure, thus;
And vow that if it were an omnibus,
In which six little inches wished to ride,
One inch at least would have to go outside.
Then, when I said that I was still too young,
In mimic anger he would stop my tongue,
And loudly vow that sixteen years were plenty.

Norma. (*relieved.*)

Ah, Pollio's favourite age was nine and twenty!

Adalgisa.

He praised my yellow hair, so neat and trim,
And wished this pretty blonde *b'lon'd* to him!
He'd snatch a tress — endeavour to secure it.

Norma. (*aside.*)

Light hair? Ah, Pollio never could endure it,
He much preferred my ebon locks extensive,
Light hair, he always said, was too expensive!
Her weakness I should be the last to blame.
I've also loved a Roman! (*aloud.*) Well, his name?

Adalgisa.

Behold him here! (*enter Pollio.*) My darling love (*embracing him.*)

Norma. (*pulling her away.*)

Audacious!

My husband Pollio, by all that's gracious!

Adalgisa.

Your husband? Oh, unhand me — let me go!

Pollio.

My conduct must seem singular, I know.

Norma.

So, then, it was upon *his* words you hung.
And you, for months, you've had upon your tongue
Five thousand pretty sayings, if you'd one,
For this phenomenon— *for Norma none!*

Norma.

This is the coloured hair you now think nice;
This is your present, “Bird of Paradise;”
This is the girl whose eyes are brilliant lights,
So brilliant that you find them days at nights;
These are the boots so small, that if inside
Six little inches ever wished to ride,
One inch must go outside, oh monster shady!

Pollio.

I only said it “to oblige a lady.”

Norma.

You said you'd always love me, and no other!

Pollio.

Love you — I'll always love you — as a mother.

Norma.

Am I mis-shapen, Pollio, or a fright?
Or even plain?

Pollio.

A face that's covered quite
With wrinkled seams cannot be called unseemly.

Norma.

Oh, are not these hard lines?

Pollio. (*looking into her face.*)

They are — extremely.

Norma.

So this is what I've heard of wedded bliss;
But I'll have heavy damages for this!

Pollio.

Oh, that's unnecessary, quite, my leddy —
You're damaged heavily enough already.

Norma.

He throws me over, in his reckless haste,
To wed this puny child!

Pollio.

Well, for my taste,
You're much too big — so Pollio, you see,
Inclines to smaller her.

Adalgisa.

That's bigger me!

Norma.

Your life, it's in my power to-day, to end.
You've married an Arch Druidess, my friend;
For which you may be burnt at any time.

Oh, can't you be content with one such crime?

Pollio.

Be burnt alive? That's hard! I do confess
I sinned in wedding an Arch Druidess;
Yet that same sin, you'll probably admit,
Is one that brings its punishment with it!

Adalgisa.

If it were known you'd married her, you would,
In truth, be roasted!

Pollio.

By my friends, I should.

Adalgisa.

If she's your wife, acknowledge her as such.

Norma.

Oh, am not *I* enough for you?

Pollio.

Too much!

Norma.

Your reckless insolence completely drains
The heated blood that dashes through my veins.
My blushing cheeks now offer a refuge to it.

Pollio.

You blush? Ha! ha! That's nothing when you're rouged to it!

Norma.

Perfidious monster!

Pollio.

Bless us, what a scold!

A priestess, worthy of the rank you hold,
Should be well pleased to see a man, in truth,
Repenting the mistakes of early youth!
A suppliant for divorce now begs your ear,
His grief's unfeigned — his penitence sincere.
Don't fear that he'll relapse — you may be sure
He'll never marry Norma any more!

Trio. — Norma, Pollio, Adalgisa.

(Air from "Euryanthe.")

Pollio.

See Norma bounding,
On Pollio rounding,
Pours forth her anger — a ll flather, and fury, and sound!
Who thought of meeting
With such a greeting.
Truly I quail, though for pluck I'm renowned!

Adalgisa.

Truly, I'm fearing
All her endearing,
Doesn't appear to appeal to his soul.

Pollio.

Pardon my jeering,
Bother your leering;

Keep your emotions more under control!

Adalgisa.

Oh, you traitor,
Human nature!

Such an unscrupulous, unconscientious individual, in the whole
course of my life, I never yet did see!

Norma.

Adalgisa,
Pray you cease, ah.

Please be good enough to recollect that the gentleman in question
belongs exclusively to me!

Pollio.

Oh, grant me power;
Oh, grant me power,

These angry ladies somehow to control!

I'm no traitor,
Human nature!

These angry ladies how shall I control?

Norma. & Adalgisa.

Great Norma bounding,
On Pollio rounding, &c.

Scene III. — *The Temple of Irminsul, prepared for a Fancy Fair. Stalls erected
between the uprights of Druidic temple. Roman Soldiers and Priestesses
discovered — the latter endeavouring, but in vain, to sell the usual trinkets.*

Bellina (to **Ingonda**.)

Well, are you doing business at your stall?

Ingonda.

Business? I can't sell anything at all!

Although all day the fair I walk about it!

(to **Arminia**.) How are *you* doing?

Arminia.

Doing? oh, don't talk about it!

The whole affair's a failure — that's quite clear.

They all complain that everything's so dear!

Enter Clotilda.

Clotilda.

The fair a failure? Oh, dear, not at all,
I've taken several shillings at my stall.

Arminia. (*spitefully.*)

Some people have such very *taking* ways!

Ingonda.

Some people have such fascinating *traits*!

Bellina

Some people are so bold-faced, I observe.

Arminia.

Some people have such great command of nerve.

Bellina

Some people have such eyes, with which to hint.

Ingonda.

Some people use them!

Clotilda. (*spitefully to Ingonda.*)

And some people squint!

(*Enter Oroveso with basket containing articles for sale. Soldiers and Priestesses gather round him.*)

Oroveso.

Come buy! buy! buy! — You're all too slow by half!

Who bids for Oroveso's photograph? (*holding up photograph.*)

These strawberries ought really to go down.

I kiss them (*kisses them*) and they're yours for half-a-crown!

(*Soldiers decline to buy them.*)

They don't like strawberries in Cæsar's ranks!

(*to a Soldier*) A portrait of Finette, my boy!

Soldier.

No, thanks!

I'm going to be married soon, old chap!

Oroveso.

Indeed? Allow me!

Sold.

What?

Oroveso.

A baby's cap! (*producing one*)

A bib — a rattle — or a caudle cup.

Try a perambulator (*Soldier hits him impatiently in the stomach*) — doubled up!

(*aside to Clotilda.*) I'm getting up a raffle — here's the list —

Clotilda.

For what?

Oroveso.

A piece of plate — that don't exist!

Clotilda.

A curious way true charity to kindle!

Oroveso.

A pious fraud, my dear — a holy swindle.

The secret's safe — enquiries cannot baffle it,

When once it's raffled — why you can't *unraffle* it.

Here are some curious autographs I've written.

Here's Presto John — the King of Little Britain —

Baron Munchausen — Mr. Justice Byles —

Moses and Aaron — Shakespeare, several styles —

The celebrated judgment signed by Paris —

Bombastes Furioso — Mrs. Harris —

Clotilda.

And are they genuine?

Oroveso.

Not that I'm aware.

Arminia.

You call that fair?

Oroveso.

I call it Fancy Fair.

Clotilda.

A slur on charity I'm much afraid.

Enter Pollio.

Pollio.

No — Charity's a shy retiring maid,
Who, fearing folks may give her too much laud,
Parades in Fancy Fairs disguised as Fraud.
But stay, my message hasn't yet been told,
The banquet's waiting — and it's getting cold.
And after that, to keep the game alive,
A Roman will be burnt to death at five.

All.

A Roman!

Pollio.

Flavius — sentenced to the tomb
For being found in Adalgisa's room.

Clotilda.

Found in her *room*? Ere charge like this you trump any,
Reflect — he p'raps preferred it to her *company*! *(All laugh.)*

Pollio.

To bring a charge like this I'm always loth —
Unfortunately he was found in both!

Oroveso.

Now to the mystic sucking pig draw near,
Uncork the sacerdotal ginger beer!
Incomprehensible rice pudding try!
Attack the sacrificial rump-steak pie!
The Fancy Fair accounts there's none to question.
Let all be revelry — and indigestion. *(Exeunt all except Pollio.)*

Enter Adalgisa, L.

Pollio.

My Adalgisa? This, indeed, *is* kind!

Adalgisa.

You here, you wretch?

Pollio.

I'm really pained to find
That evidently there is something wrong with you.
Are you not well, my love?

Adalgisa.

Oh, go along with you,
You bold, bad man!

Pollio.

Why bless us what a shine!
Come place that tiny little hand in mine.

Adalgisa.

Never again my hand shall there be placed
And don't attempt to take me round the waist,
For Adalgisa's anger you will rouse so —

Are you not Norma's spouse?

Pollio.

Well, yes, I *spouse* so,

But she don't count.

Adalgisa.

Oh, don't she!

Pollio.

Not a jot —

She is a Druidess, and — I am not.

That trifling fact, by hap or by intention,

When I was married I forgot to mention.

And so our courts — although she'll be annoyed —

Will probably pronounce the marriage void.

But more of this anon — those rolling drums

Inform me that the culprit Flavius comes.

(Music. Procession enters, with Flavius bound, headed by Oroveso.)

Oroveso.

Here at the fatal stake we take our stand;

If you have any favour to demand,

To grant that favour we will freely strive.

Flavius

I have — I'd rather not be burnt alive! *(Howls.)*

Oroveso.

Come, come, be cool.

Flavius

How can you ask me, pray,

To take it coolly on a *broiling* day?

These preparations I can't bear the sight of.

That dreadful pile!

Oroveso.

A matter to make light of.

Ascend the pile.

Enter Norma. — Chord.

Norma.

Stop! I've a word to say —

As burnings seem the order of the day,

Please tell me what our laws would make you do

If I could point you out a priestess, who,

Neglecting her irrevocable vows,

Had sworn to take a Roman for a spouse? *(Looking sternly at Adalgisa.)*

Adalgisa. *(aside to Norma.)*

Oh, mercy, Norma — let thine hand be stayed!

Norma.

Say, what would happen?

Oroveso.

Why, the perjured maid

Would then be punished as our laws require.

We'd strike the martial gong, and *bang the liar.*

Her name!

Norma.

Her name? her name is — Norma!

Oroveso.

Eh!

Norma.

Norma, the wife of Pollio!

Pollio.

Come, I say!

Norma.

No use — the fact I haven't over-stated,
Thus Pollio's course is checked!

Pollio.

Yes — checked and mated!

(Concerted piece.)

Duet—Norma and Pollio.

(Air—Gounod's "Berceuse.")

Norma.

Oh farewell, oh farewell all the friends —
Friends of my youth!
I've deceived you to compass my ends,
Oh, cruel truth!
And if fair Adalgisa you wed,
As you probably may,
Oh, my love, my love remember
For her I die to-day!
Good bye — good bye, for ever,
For evermore —
For ever—for ever—for evermore!

Pollio.

I confess, I confess that I share
Norma's disgrace.
For through me she has broken the fair
Vows of her race!
And if fair Adalgisa I wed,
As I probably may,
Oh, my love, I'll then remember
For her you die to-day!
Good bye, good bye for ever,
For evermore —
For ever — for ever, for evermore!

Norma.

Five minutes more, and they'll apply the link —
Can you, for five short minutes, do you think,
Be faithful to a wife as fond as I?

Pollio.

I think I can — at all events, I'll try!
All that five minutes shall with you be spent.

(to Adalgisa.) By Norma I'm re-borrowed and *re-lent!* *(Embraces.)*

Oroveso.

Before my very face! With rage I'm bustin';
 The tone that it's discussed in is *disgustin'*.
(furiously) You are no child of mine!

Adalgisa.

How can you say so?

Oh, Oroveso — don't turn *her avay so!*

Norma.

My mother died long since — my next relation,
 My father, now resigns his situation!
 And will not shield me from this angry storm, ah,
 Let me be known henceforth as “*Nor-pa, Nor-ma!*”

Oroveso.

Ascend the pyre, for mercy we refuse you all;
 And please let down your back hair as per usual;
 'Twill serve to hide each too attractive feature;
 Take out that hideous puff, *puff hideous* creature;
 With tar and turpentine shall Pollio scorch her.
 Apply the torch —

Pollio.

Oh, horror, this is *torch-er!*

Oroveso.

You hesitate? Come, come, apply the torch, man!

Pollio. (throwing down torch)

I shan't — I am a Roman — not a *Scorch man!*

Oroveso.

His frame of mind I find I've been mistaking.

Pollio.

Oh, Norma, I should like to save your baking,
 But, as it seems from what your people say,
 That there are difficulties in the way.
 I'll die with you, my little children's mother!
 This link shall serve to *link* us to each other!

Oroveso.

Then shall the task be mine, to fire the jade
 Thus perishes the false perfidious maid,
 The maid who swore for life, and can't denial it,
 To dress in white, and keep her vows *in violet*.

Small Priestess.

Stop! in that case we all deserve to die,
 We all have married Romans on the sly! *(All kneel in couples.)*

Arminia.

We have.

Ingonda.

We have, indeed!

Oroveso.

Oh, have you so!

Wherever do you all expect to go,
 You simple, unsophisticated daisies?

Arminia.

Alas, we all expect to go—to blazes! (*pointing to pile.*)

Pollio.

But stay — one word before you burn us.

Oroveso.

No!

Pollio.

This card-case, which I found some time ago,
With anxious care I've hitherto concealed it,
Take it to Rome, and to its owner yield it,
The name's inside.

Oroveso.

To me that trinket give,
My late-lamented card-case, as I live!
My life of late has been one long-drawn sham,
Now to discover who I really am!
(*opens case.*) Ha! ha! Of course! Away concealment, fled.
For I am Julius Cæsar in disguise!
(*Throws off disguise and appears as Julius Cæsar. All kneel.*)
Shrouded for years in calico and mystery,
Well, of this Gallic war I'll write a history,
If safely I return to land Italic, O,
And call it — let me see — *de bello Calico!*

Adalgisa.

My husband Julius!

Oroveso.

Yes, on one condition,
For Cæsar's wife must be above suspicion.

Adalgisa.

It's true I cared for Pollio, but consider,
I always fancied that I was a widder!

Pollio.

Come, please light up, or are you going, pray,
To keep us shivering up here all day? (*Priest about to apply torch.*)

Oroveso.

Stay, stay. Although it's written, I confess,
That every defalcating Druidess
Shall certainly be burnt upon a pyre,
It doesn't specify the kind of fire. (*struck by an idea.*) Red fire!

Norma.

Of course! Illumination mock,
We have a quantity of that in stock!

Pollio.

Come, light up, please! Fizz! (*red fire*) There, the thing is done;
We've all passed through the fire — yes, every one!
And rise, to bring about more social crashes
As rose the fabled Phoenix from his ashes!

Norma (*comes forward.*)

So ends our play. I come to speak the tag,
With downcast eyes, and faltering steps, that lag,

I'm cowed and conscience-stricken — for to-night
 We have, no doubt, contributed our mite
 To justify that topic of the age,
 The degradation of the English stage.
 More courage to my task, I, p'rhaps. might bring,
 Were this a drama with real everything —
 Real cabs — real lime-light, too, in which to bask —
 Real turnpike-keepers, and real Grant and Gask!
 But no — the piece is common-place, grotesque,
 A solemn folly — a proscribed burlesque!
 So for burlesque I plead. Forgive our rhymes;
 Forgive the jokes you've heard five thousand times;
 Forgive each breakdown, cellar-flap, and clog,
 Our low-bred songs — our slangy dialogue;
 And, above all — oh, ye with double barrel—
 Forgive the scantiness of our apparel!

Finale — Everybody.

Air— "Boolabang." (Ching Chow Hi.)

Please you, sirs, restrain your fury,
 Ding, ding, ding, &c.,
 Don't be hard upon our play,
 Ladies, you are judge and jury,
 Give a gentle verdict pray!

Curtain.