

THE GRAND DUCHESS OF GEROLSTEIN

a Comic Opera in Three Acts
English lyrics by Adrian Ross
English dialogue by Charles H.E. Brookfield
founded on the French of Messrs. Meilhac and Halévy
Music by Jacques Offenbach

Dramatis Personæ

The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein
Wanda (*a Peasant, betrothed to Fritz*)
Fritz (*a Recruit*)
Prince Paul (*Son and Heir of the Elector of Steis-stein-steis, etc.*)
Baron Puck (*Chamberlain*)
Nepomuc (*Aide-de-Camp*)
General Boum (*Commander-in-Chief*)
Baron Grog (*Emissary of the Elector of Steis-stein-steis, etc.*)
Officers in the Grand Duchess' Army
Colonel Macrobrunner
Captain Hochheim
Lieutenant Nierstein
Maids of Honour
Iza
Olga
Amélie
Charlotte
Ladies of the Court, Officers, Ushers, Soldiers, and Vivandières.

ACT I. — An Encampment. Morning.
(*Four days elapse*)

ACT II. — State Apartment in the Palace. Afternoon.

ACT III. — Scene 1. The Crimson Suite. Evening.

Scene 2. A Market Place. Dawn.

ACT I.

SCENE. — *An Encampment of Soldiers. GENERAL BOUM's Tent L.2.E.*

CHORUS. — SOLDIERS, PEASANT GIRLS, and VIVANDIERES.

Before their/our martial ranks they/we serry,
And march to face the foeman's host;
We'll drink to life that's short and merry,
For that's the proper soldiers' toast!
Sing on, quaff on, dance on, laugh on!
Playtime passes, court your lasses,
Fill your glasses;
Sing, and laugh, and dance, and quaff,
And drink and drink it down!
Then here's to joy, and down with sorrow,
Let's drink and drive dull care away!
Who knows if we shall meet to-morrow?
So let us have our fling to-day!

During the Chorus, some of the Soldiers waltz with the Peasant Girls, other play the drum, others drink. Vivandières serve out liquor.

Enter FRITZ and WANDA R.U.E., and come down C.

WANDA. Ah! my Fritz, I'm full of fears,
If you go so far away.
FRITZ. Don't you, now, shed any tears,
I'll return without delay!

SONG and CHORUS. — FRITZ.

Maidens, never mind us,
Twirling round and round,
You'll be left behind us,
You'll be safe and sound.
But your friends and neighbours
Have to march away,
Facing shot and sabres
For a bob a day.
If a bullet's billet,
You are doomed to fall,
Take your glass and fill it,
Laugh and drink with all!
Drink and sing a ditty,
Good-bye to the past —
All the more's the pity
If this cup's our last!

Come, girls that are winning,
Come, lads that can hop,
We'll dance till we drop,
Don't stop! don't stop!
Ah!

Waltz until we drop,
Waltz and never stop,
Like teetotum spinning,
Like a humming-top!
CHORUS. Dance till we drop,
Dance on, nor stop,
Like teetotum spinning,
Like a humming-top!

Waltz. While it is most animated, enter GENERAL BOUM by hill at back L. His cocked hat is surmounted by an enormous plume. He stops and looks indignantly at the scene.

BOUM (*coming down*).

What! women in our camp! How extremely improper!

The women run off R. and L.

FRITZ (*in front, aside*). Bah! Here's the good old bore!

BOUM. Look here, you scamp, to this I'll put a stopper!

FRITZ. A private soldier, too,
Can have a heart like you,
And love as others do!

BOUM (*coming towards FRITZ*). You again! Always you!

FRITZ. But, if you please –

BOUM. Don't answer!
One single word you will regret –
You know that I'm a martinet!

CHORUS of SOLDIERS. Remember that, lads, don't forget,
We know he is a martinet!

SONG. – GENERAL BOUM with CHORUS of SOLDIERS.

When I shout, through the battle's thunder,
Cannons may roar;
But I strike with fear and wonder
Whole army corps!
As corn that bends in stormy weather,
All grovel flat,
When they behold the warlike feather
On my cocked hat!
(*With a burst*) So pif, paf, poof, tarapapa poom,
For I am the General called Boum Boum!

CHORUS. So pif, paf, poof, tarapapa poom,
For he is the General called Boum Boum!

BOUM. And when victory's wreath has crowned me,
I reappear,
I have a crowd of ladies round me,
All fond and dear.
They try to kiss me, all together,
And I must say,
At such time my warlike feather

Is in the way!
(*With a burst*) So pif, paf, poof, tarapapa poom,
For I am the General called Boum Boum!

CHORUS. So pif, paf, poof, tarapapa poom,
For he is the General called Boum Boum!

OFFICER. Long live General Boum! (*Mild cheers.*)

BOUM. Thank you comrades! For we all serve the Grand Duchess,
our Sovereign.

ALL. Long live the Grand Duchess! (*Loud cheers.*)

BOUM. That's right, lads! I am proud to command such a
gallant set of fellows – with one exception. Where's
Fritz?

FRITZ (*aside*). H'm! Me, of course!

BOUM. Private Fritz – one pace forward – march!

FRITZ (*advancing*). General!

BOUM. You're no soldier!

FRITZ. Oh! I know all about that!

BOUM (*frowning*). Eh! What's that?

FRITZ. It's the old story – a young lady at the bottom of it
all.

BOUM. What are you talking about?

FRITZ. I wonder at a man of your experience, General, trying
it on with a little girl like Wanda. She's bespoke.
She'd never look at you!

BOUM. You infernal scoundrel!

FRITZ. Now, with all your epaulettes, you know, sir, to a girl
a young private's uniform is just as smart as an old
general's.

BOUM. I'll give you six months' cells for this.

FRITZ. That's not the way to please *her*.

BOUM. I'll have you jolly well shot!

FRITZ. That's one way to get rid of *me*.

BOUM. You're no soldier!

FRITZ. *She* don't think that.

BOUM. I don't even know your girl!

FRITZ. Excuse me, General, you know her right enough, and from
what she's told me – –

Enter NEPOMUC, L.U.E.

NEPOMUC. General!

BOUM (*fiercely*). Tell me that the enemy are approaching!
Where are the enemy? Let me get at 'em! (*Tugs at and
half draws sword.*)

NEPOMUC. No, General, I've been sent to tell you that her
Highness the Grand Duchess is coming to inspect her
grand army!

BOUM (*to men*). Attention!

NEPOMUC. Her Highness has graciously signified her intention of
camping with the troops.

Exit L.U.E.

BOUM. We'll put on an extra sentry. Private Fritz!
FRITZ (*aside*). H'm! Me again, of course!
BOUM. Private Fritz, you're for guard.
FRITZ. What?
BOUM. Go on sentry at once – post yourself!
FRITZ. I tell you frankly, General, it ain't a job I hanker after.
BOUM. Silence when you're speaking to an officer!
FRITZ. Where's my beat?
BOUM. Your beat extends round her Highness's tent.
FRITZ. Where's her Highness's tent?
BOUM. Idiot! it's not yet pitched. You have to guard the pitch.
FRITZ. Who's going to steal the pitch? It's a silly idea – to my way of thinking – to stand and guard a pitch. Why, a child wouldn't want you to do such a thing.
BOUM. Silence!
FRITZ. I was only going –
BOUM. Don't you dare to grumble when warned for duty! (*To the soldiers.*) – Fall in! Front! (*etc., words of command.*)

Drums roll. Soldiers take their arms and form into two ranks at back of stage.

FRITZ (*who has taken up his gun from the right-hand corner and stands looking on in an unconcerned way*). Going for a walk, General?
BOUM (*speechless with rage*). Now, 'pon my soul, this is too much! What I am going to do doesn't concern you. (*To soldiers.*) – By your left – quick march!

Exeunt soldiers R. and L. at back to reprise of "Pif, paf, poof."
FRITZ remains on sentry duty. While the soldiers go off, GENERAL BOUM approaches FRITZ.

BOUM. You're no soldier!

Exit GENERAL BOUM running to catch up his army.

FRITZ (*alone, on sentry duty*). Jolly hard lines – coming narking a chap when he mustn't answer back! But there, these old general officers, they're all alike. If there's a girl about the place they must be all for them. Then it's "Orderly, why the devil haven't you varnished my confounded boots" – or it's "Orderly, two days' cell for not cleaning my infernal epaulettes!" Poor old chaps! If they only knew – girls don't set store on epaulettes and Hessians. They far prefer a fine young fellow with only cotton facings and regulation boots, so long as he is a fine young fellow. (*Looks off R.*) There she is! My little Wanda! No, it's no good you beckoning, my girl, I can't leave here. Ah! here she comes. (*Enter WANDA R., and stands looking on*

for a moment.) If only the General could see us – he'd have a fit!

DUET. – WANDA and FRITZ.

WANDA (*still at a distance from FRITZ*).

Here I am! Here I am!
Fritz, I'm hot! I'm blown!
I'm out of breath, my pulse is double,
(*coming rather nearer*). But what a face! – oh, what a frown!
It seems I might have spared the trouble!
Say why? Pray why?

FRITZ *points to his gun, then lays a finger on his lips to show he must not speak while on sentry duty. WANDA comes nearer.*

Where are all your former graces?
Reply! and don't stand making faces.
Can you be dumb, my bold recruit,
Without a word to greet your beauty?
FRITZ (*standing quite still*).
I have to be, for I'm on duty!
Yes, I'm on duty, bother it!
And so I must be mute. (*crosses R.*)

WANDA (*drawing still nearer*).
I am not in the vein for joking,
And if you will be so provoking,
I'll try the virtue of a pinch!
If you don't speak, I'll spoil your beauty!

FRITZ (*still motionless*).
I really can't, for I'm on duty,
Yes, I'm on duty, bother it!
And mustn't stir an inch!

WANDA (*tenderly*). But when my looks, with longing laden,
Confess the passion of a maiden,
And call you hither to my side,
Ah! am I denied?
Will you not flinch?

FRITZ. No, I'm on duty – mustn't stir an inch!

WANDA. How now? You answer no?

FRITZ. Yes, I'm on duty, so
I answer no! (*crosses L.*)

WANDA (*coming close to FRITZ*).
But if to you, though you're so chilly,
I were to say, "You big, old silly,
Come, kiss me quick, you know, like this!"
Would you refuse such invitations?

FRITZ *puts down his gun L. and goes eagerly towards WANDA.*

FRITZ. Ah, no! our sentry regulations
Do not forbid a man to kiss!

WANDA. I knew the sentry regulations
Do not forbid a man to kiss!

FRITZ *kisses* WANDA.

BOTH. Then, devil take my/your duty!
 Yes, devil take my/your duty!
 Our pass-word is love!
 For when love's at war with duty,
 Duty has to yield to love!

FRITZ *again kisses* WANDA. At that moment GENERAL BOUM enters L.U.E.

BOUM *(who has seen the kiss)*. Aha!
FRITZ *(aside to WANDA)*. He's caught us! *(Seizes his gun and comes to attention.)*
WANDA *(trembling)*. Fritz – my own Fritz!
BOUM *(to FRITZ)*. Now do you know why I put you on sentry? Now do you know the object of my manœuvres? It was to steal a march on you; and I've succeeded.
FRITZ. Well, it's the first time I ever knew a manœvre of yours come off.
BOUM. You infernal scoundrel!

Shot heard without. WANDA falls into FRITZ's arms.

WANDA. Ah!
BOUM *(fiercely)*. What's that? The enemy? Let me get at 'em! *(Half draws sword.)*
FRITZ. General, let me first look after the women and children.
BOUM. What – little Wanda? Certainly! And take good care of her!
FRITZ. Yes, little Wanda. The girl you don't even know.
BOUM. Oh, wash out! Dismiss!
FRITZ. Come along, Wanda! If you've got any money we'll have a drink.

Exeunt FRITZ and WANDA into canteen.

More shots without. Enter L.U.E. BARON PUCK, running and shaking with fear.

PUCK. Rudolph – my dear old friend!
BOUM. What's happened?
PUCK. A sentry called on me to stand and give the countersign. Absorbed as I always am in affairs of State, I ignored his remarks, when all of a sudden –
BOUM. Ping!
PUCK. Precisely! Ping – as you very justly remark. They fired at me.
BOUM. Brave lads!
PUCK. But they shot right over my head.
BOUM. I'll put 'em in cells.
PUCK. Thank you. But I don't want them punished severely, you know. After all, they missed me.

BOUM. That's why I'll put 'em in cells.
PUCK. What?
BOUM. How dared they miss you?
PUCK. You mean you would like them to have killed me?
BOUM. As Commander-in-Chief, I should have been glad. As a friend of your boyhood, I should have been broken-hearted.
PUCK. Faithful old Rudolph! (*They shake hands.*)
BOUM. But to what am I indebted for the pleasure of this visit?
PUCK. You are aware that on the eve of battle it is our habit to neglect no means to rouse the enthusiasm of the troops.
BOUM. Certainly.
PUCK. Her Highness is one her way here to inspect her army, and camp with the troops.
BOUM. Capital!
PUCK. As soon as there is an opportunity, I want you to advance, as though on the spur of the moment, and to say, "By the way, would your Highness care to hear the song of the regiment?"
BOUM. Oh! I say that?
PUCK. Yes. And she will probably reply, "The song of my dear regiment? As if I didn't know it by heart!"
BOUM. You think she will say that?
PUCK. I'm - er - pretty sure she will. Then you lead her forward and you sing it together.
BOUM. Her Highness and I? (PUCK assents.) I am overwhelmed. But - between ourselves - *can* she sing it?
PUCK. Yes. I rehearsed her in it this morning.
BOUM. Delighted!
PUCK. Now let's have a chat. (*Takes our snuff-box.*) Allow me!
BOUM. Pah! Not that rubbish - I'm used to stronger stuff! (*Takes his two-barrelled pistol from his belt, fires it in the air, then carries each muzzle to each nostril, and sniffs energetically the odour of the smoke.*) That's my particular mixture!
PUCK. (*inhaling his pinch of snuff*). You know the real reason of this war?
BOUM. No!
PUCK. I will tell you. My royal pupil - for I supervised her education - (*takes off his hat and catches sight of bullet-hole, alarmed*) - Good heavens!
BOUM. What's wrong?
PUCK. (*almost fainting with fright, and pointing to the hole*). The bullet!
BOUM. (*gratified*). Aha! Not such a bad shot, after all!
PUCK. To think that but for my hat I should have been a dead man!
BOUM. You'd better put it on again.
PUCK. True! (*Replaces his hat.*) As I was going to say, the Grand Duchess, my pupil, has now attained her majority. She has lately begun to interest herself in affairs of State. Now, I know what young girls are.

BOUM. You do?
PUCK. Yes; I have read up on the subject. And I have come to the conclusion that her Highness needs distraction. Accordingly, I declared war.
BOUM. To distract her attention from your –
PUCK. To distract her generally. As a child I distracted her with toys. I now propose to distract her with a husband.
BOUM. Prince Paul?
PUCK. Exactly. But I'm not sure that I was wise in my choice. Prince Paul is an irreproachable young man, but her Highness seems to ignore him. He's been dangling about for six months, and she will not give him an answer. Last week the poor young man's father, the Elector of Steis-Stein-Steis-Laper-Bott-Moll-Schorstenberg –
BOUM. I didn't quite catch the name.
PUCK. The Elector of Steis-Stein-Steis – well, we'll call him the Elector – sent Baron Grog to advocate the cause of the young prince. Our beloved mistress, however, has retorted that the Baron may go upon a diplomatic mission to "another place" before she will see him.
BOUM. Good!
PUCK. But, my dear Rudolph, I tremble for the moment when the roar of battle shall be silenced by the whisper of love. Once allow Cupid to raid the territory of her affections – and what becomes of *us*!
BOUM. You alarm me!
PUCK. Suppose her Highness should bestow her favour upon some lucky young courtier, where should you and I be?
BOUM. We should be done. It mustn't happen!
PUCK. It must not!
BOUM. It *shall* not!

Roll of drums at a distance. Enter NEPOMUC L.U.E. BOUM rushes to him.

BOUM (*fiercely*). What's that? The enemy? Where are the enemy? Let me get at 'em! (*Business with sword as before.*)
NEPOMUC. No, no, no, sir! That is her Highness arriving!
BOUM. Good! Fall in the troops!
NEPOMUC. Certainly, sir.

Exit NEPOMUC L.U.E.

PUCK. Then, Rudolph, you understand our programme? First of all, the song of the regiment –
BOUM. I'll do my best.
PUCK. In a week, victory of our troops and declaration of peace –
BOUM. Triumphant return to Gerolstein –
PUCK. And, throughout, our secret motto shall be, "Office at any price!"
BOUM. "Office at any price!" (*They shake hands.*)

Enter Army L.U.E. and form line from front R. to back L. Peasants, amongst them WANDA, group themselves at back. FRITZ is in the ranks. PUCK crosses L.

CHORUS.

ALL. Carry arms! present arms! carry arms!
 Eyes right! dress! attention!

Enter GRAND DUCHESS L.U.E. in riding habit, with whip, etc., attended by IZA and OLGA, MACROBRUNNER, HOCHHEIM, NIERSTEIN, and NEPOMUC. Soldiers present arms. GRAND DUCHESS inspects troops, starting up L. and finishing down R. She is struck with FRITZ, who is down R. front between two comic-looking soldiers. Pantomime. FRITZ much disturbed by the attention of the DUCHESS, who dissembles her sentiments and comes C.

DUCHESS. You do not fear the foe,
 You revel in the fray;
 I know you'll all do your *devoir*!
To-morrow you must go,
 So now I've come to say –
 No, not good-bye – but *au revoir*!

SONG. – GRAND DUCHESS and CHORUS

Soldiers! I'm simply mad about 'em!
 With their glitter, glow, and glance,
 Swords that flash and plumes that dance!
Oh, yes! I'm simply mad about 'em!
Any country that's without them
 Doesn't stand a chance!
When I see my handsome troops,
 Eager for the smell of powder,
Drumm'd and drill'd with "Haups!" and "Houps!"
 I'm so proud I can't be prouder!
Whether or no they'll thrash a foe,
That I can't tell, but this I know –
 Oh, yes! I'm simply mad about 'em!
 Oh! I love my gallant soldiers,
 Gallant soldier boys!

I know what I'd like to do,
 I'd go as a *vivandière*,
I'd stand by my men all through,
 And keep them merry, too!
I'd follow them, everywhere,
In the fight, in the front, I would face the foe;
If war would seem such fun, when there,
 I cannot tell, but this I know –
 Oh, yes! I'm simply mad about 'em!
 Oh! I love my gallant soldiers,
 Gallant soldier boys!

On the word of command the soldiers shoulder arms.

DUCHESS. General, I am delighted — I am more than delighted with the appearance of my troops! I may even go far as to say — (*she takes a few steps and stops, looking at FRITZ, aside*), General.

BOUM (*with empressement*). Your Highness!

DUCHESS. Tell that soldier to step forward.

BOUM (*calling the man on FRITZ's left*). Schwartz!

DUCHESS. Good gracious, no! The — the — other one.

BOUM (*calling the man on FRITZ's right*). Schumacher! — (*to the DUCHESS*) — a little weak in the knees, your Highness, but —

DUCHESS. Schumacher! Good heavens, no! The — the smarter-looking one — the interesting one — the — (*BOUM indicates FRITZ in an interrogative way.*) That's the man I mean.

BOUM (*much irritated*). Private Fritz, three paces forward — march! (*FRITZ advances and presents arms.*)

DUCHESS (*to FRITZ*). What is your name, my good fellow?

FRITZ. Fritz.

DUCHESS. Have you seen any service?

FRITZ. No, your Highness — that is to say, not since I joined — only domestic service.

DUCHESS. Then you've never been wounded?

FRITZ. Never — that is, once, stealing apples, there was a bull-dog tried to cut off my retreat — but never what you call wounded.

DUCHESS. You're just an ordinary private?

FRITZ. Not more ordinary than ordinary privates. I'm just a — private.

DUCHESS. I promote you to corporal.

FRITZ (*delighted*). Me — corporal? (*Makes movement to go to WANDA, who is at back with the peasants.*)

BOUM (*checking him*). Halt! What the devil are you doing?

FRITZ (*soothingly*). All right! All right! (*Goes back to his former position.*)

DUCHESS. Where were you going?

FRITZ. I was just going to tell my little girl that I'd got my step.

DUCHESS. Well, look here — (*FRITZ looks at her*) — you can tell your little girl that you've got two steps — you're a sergeant. (*To BOUM.*) — Let them stand easy.

BOUM (*to troops*). Troops, stand at — hoise! (*Soldiers execute the movement.*) Fall out!

DUCHESS. Fall out? Certainly not! Fall out with my soldiers — my gallant boys! For aren't we one great family?

PUCK (*aside to GRAND DUCHESS*). Excellent, your Highness! Couldn't be better!

DUCHESS (*to soldiers*). Come, boys, gather round!

The soldiers come a little nearer — in centre. Peasants and WANDA come down R. and L., WANDA R. GRAND DUCHESS sits on a drum placed for her by a vivandière. The Maids of Honour sit on camp-stools. PUCK comes near to BOUM, and FRITZ, having put down his gun,

comes down L.

PUCK (aside to BOUM). Did you notice the marked favour she showed to that young soldier?

BOUM (aside). Yes, but I attach no importance to –

PUCK (aside). We must attach importance to everything.

BOUM (aside). We must keep an eye on her.

PUCK (aside). Two eyes. (Goes to R. of BOUM.)

DUCHESS (to FRITZ who is L). Come here, my man.

FRITZ (advancing). Your Highness?

DUCHESS (to FRITZ). Was your little girl pleased?

FRITZ. Pleased? She doesn't know herself!

DUCHESS. And your comrades?

FRITZ. Well, they're pleased, and they're not pleased – if you know what I mean. They'd just as soon it had happened to them. They're only ordinary men, you know.

DUCHESS. So tell me, do they feed you well? What kind of rations do you get?

FRITZ. First-rate rations – that is, not bad rations. Three-quarters of a pound of meat – weighed with the fat and the bone – and a little "japper" and a few "spuds."

DUCHESS. And are the officers good to the men?

FRITZ. Very good, your Highness. There's good and bad, of course – the General, he's a terror.

DUCHESS (to FRITZ). Is that so?

BOUM. Really, your Highness – –

DUCHESS. Don't interrupt him.

FRITZ. A fair terror he is. But he can't help it. It's the old story – a young lady in the case.

DUCHESS. A young lady?

BOUM. I can't allow this!

DUCHESS. General Boum, obey my orders! Let this man tell his story.

FRITZ. The General's been a perfect terror – ever since he made up to my little girl, and she wouldn't have anything to say to him.

DUCHESS. I must see this wonderful little girl that everybody falls in love with. Is she very pretty?

FRITZ. H'm! suits me. That's her. (Indicates WANDA.)

DUCHESS. Call her.

FRITZ. Here – Wanda! (Whistles.) Come on, don't be silly! (To GRAND DUCHESS.) – She's shy. Girls ain't like soldiers, you see.

WANDA comes down stage and stands before the GRAND DUCHESS.

DUCHESS. Well, my dear – so this gallant warrior's in love with you, is he?

WANDA (timidly). Yes, m'm – please, m'm. At least so he says.

DUCHESS. And are you in love with him?

WANDA. Why, m'm – of course I am, m'm!

DUCHESS (aside). What's the matter with me? – I'm as cold as ice. I never felt like this before. (To FRITZ.) – Did I – did I tell you that you are a lieutenant?

The GRAND DUCHESS rises, as do her Maids of Honour. WANDA goes back to her place.

FRITZ. No, your Highness.

DUCHESS. Well, I tell you now.

General surprise.

FRITZ. Well, all I can say is I – I thank you kindly.

PUCK (*aside to BOUM*). She's going it!

BOUM (*aside, looking at FRITZ*). If you want to see service, young fellow, I'll take care that you have a good place in the very front rank.

DUCHESS. The heat is overwhelming! (*To her Maids of Honour.*) – Aren't you fearfully thirsty?

IZA. Your Highness, I am.

DUCHESS. So am I.

PUCK (*with empressement*). I'll order some ices.

DUCHESS. Ices? In camp? No, no! I'll drink what my brave soldiers drink.

BOUM. I'm afraid, your Highness, that they drink – –

DUCHESS. Whatever the Vivandière gives them, I suppose! So will I. (*To vivandière R.*) – Vivandière – glasses. (*Vivandière gives her a glass and pours out.*) That's it! Up to the brim. Now then, boys! Here's to victory, and a safe return! (*She drinks. The other vivandière serve the Maids of Honour.*)

ALL. Hurrah! Hurrah!

PUCK (*aside, to BOUM*). My royal pupil's going it!

BOUM (*aside, to PUCK*). Do you think this would be a favourable opportunity for our duet?

PUCK (*aside*). Yes, go on!

BOUM (*advancing towards GRAND DUCHESS*). May I suggest that your Highness should hear the song of the regiment?

DUCHESS (*aside*). I had forgotten! (*Aloud.*) – The song of my beloved regiment? I know it by heart – every word of it!

BOUM (*pretending surprise*). You astound me!

DUCHESS. I'll sing it myself.

BOUM. Your Highness!

DUCHESS. Now then. (*BOUM prepares to sing.*) – Er – were you thinking of singing too?

BOUM. By your Highness's gracious leave.

DUCHESS. My Commander-in-Chief! D'you know, I *don't* think it would be quite wise. Bad for discipline. (*To FRITZ.*) – You come and sing.

BOUM. If I might venture an opinion –

DUCHESS (*turning round to him*). What's the matter?

BOUM. I *don't* think it would be quite wise – bad for discipline.

DUCHESS. For the Grand Duchess to sing with a subaltern? Then I'll give him his step. Will Captain do?

WANDA, delighted, comes L., and congratulates FRITZ in dumb show.

BOUM (bows formally). As your Highness pleases.

He crosses R. NEPOMUC has gone off L.U.E.

DUCHESS. Do me the pleasure to sing with me, Captain.

The Maids of Honour come down, IZA R., OLGA L. FRITZ comes nearer to the GRAND DUCHESS. Peasants come down L. and R.

SONG of the REGIMENT. – GRAND DUCHESS, FRITZ, and CHORUS.

DUCHESS. Oh, what a splendid regiment we are,
The Duchess's Gerolstein Rangers!

ALL. Ta ra, ta ta, ta ra, ta ta,
ta ra, ta ta, ta ta, ta tum!

FRITZ. Quick as an extra special shooting star,
We drop on impertinent strangers!

ALL. Ta ra, ta ta, etc.

DUCHESS. They say the Dragoons are a dashing set,
Pretty fellows they are!

FRITZ. And ladies declare that the smartest yet
Is the bold Hussar!

DUCHESS. The Gunners are ready for any chance,
So's the gay Engineer!

FRITZ. But none of the lot is a circumstance
To what we show you here!

DUCHESS and FRITZ. Then bang the drum and blow the fife,
And wave the flag above!
And let us live a soldier's life,
And love a soldier's love!

ALL. Then bang the drum and blow the fife, etc.

DUCHESS. Oh, what a splendid regiment we are,
The Duchess's Gerolstein Rangers!

ALL. Ta ra, ta ta, etc.

FRITZ. We are the boys for going fast and far,
Through nearly impossible dangers!

ALL. Ta ra, ta ta, etc.

DUCHESS. Whenever our regiment takes its way,
Through the streets of a place,

FRITZ. The girls, when they see it, are pleased and gay,
The men make *such* a face!

DUCHESS. Whenever the regiment goes away,
That's a different case:

FRITZ. The men it is now who are pleased and gay,
The girls who make the face!

DUCHESS and FRITZ. Then bang the drum and blow the fife,
And wave the flag above,
And let us live a soldier's life,
And love a soldier's love!

ALL. Then bang the drum and blow the fife, etc.

Re-enter NEPOMUC, L.U.E.

NEPOMUC. Your Highness!

DUCHESS. Well?

BOUM (*fiercely*). This time I trust it is the enemy! Where are they? Let me get at 'em! (*Business with sword as before.*)

NEPOMUC (*impatiently, to BOUM*). Please, please, please! (*To GRAND DUCHESS.*) – Madam, his Royal Highness Prince Paul and Baron Grog are waiting at the outposts for your gracious permission to present themselves.

DUCHESS (*annoyed*). Prince Paul. I don't want to see Prince Paul!

NEPOMUC. What answer shall I give?

DUCHESS. I suppose I must see him. But I certainly won't see his nasty old friend. Understand that I am never at home to Baron Grog. (*Exit NEPOMUC, L.U.E*) (*To FRITZ.*) – Captain, go and put on your uniform, to please me. I want to see how you look in it.

FRITZ. Oh! I shall look all right. Don't you worry. (*Exit L.U.E.*)

DUCHESS (*to soldiers*). Now – dismiss!

Exeunt MACROBRUNNER, HOCHHEIM, NIERSTEIN, and soldiers to reprise of the "Song of the Regiment," L.U.E. BOUM invites the Ladies of Honour into his tent. Two soldiers remain on duty at back. Peasants exeunt R. and L. at back. WANDA exit R.

DUCHESS (*to PUCK*). Don't go far away, old friend. Nor you, General. We must discuss your plan of campaign.

BOUM. It is a magnificent plan, your Highness.

DUCHESS. I hope so. *Au revoir!*

Exeunt PUCK and BOUM into tent.

DUCHESS (*alone*). This awful little Prince! I don't know why – but somehow I feel as if I loathe him at this moment more than I ever did before.

Enter L.U.E. PRINCE PAUL in bridal attire, with a large bouquet of orange blossoms. He is proceeded by NEPOMUC, who points out the GRAND DUCHESS and then retires.

PAUL (*advancing, with a piteous air*). Well, you cruel lady! I see by your frock it's not to be to-day!

DUCHESS (*looking at him*). My dear Prince, why have you got those things on?

PAUL (*pleased*). I'm glad you noticed them, at all events. I thought, perhaps, when you saw my nice wedding coat, you might make up your mind.

DUCHESS. To marry you to-day? My dear Prince, consider! On the eve of battle! I couldn't dream of marrying with my

head full of other business.

PAUL. You horrid thing! You're always full of excuses.

DUCHESS. But you must see that they are sound ones.

PAUL. But you've been pouring out sound excuses for the last six months. Grog – Baron Grog – who's a dear old thing, although you won't see him – Grog had a letter from papa this morning – quite an angry letter!

DUCHESS. And what has your – papa – got to say?

PAUL. Well, he says he's had about enough of it – that's all! You see, it's six months since I left home to marry you. Of course, he had to buy me a lot of little knick-knacks that one wants, and he had to give me a larger allowance – and so on and so forth; and when he finds we're just where we were at first, I'm not surprised to hear he's had about enough of it. I've had about enough of it myself. You see, we don't know where we are!

DUCHESS. Oh! that's what's worrying you, is it?

PAUL. Of course, it's worrying us, because if you've really made up your mind that you won't marry me, papa and I must find another Grand Duchess. That's the long and the short of it.

DUCHESS. You and your papa needn't worry. I'll marry you some day.

PAUL. Oh! but that's what you always say! You know my marriage has been talked about in every Court in Europe. And when it keeps on being postponed – well, I feel I look so silly, don't you know?

DUCHESS. (*looking at him and smiling*). Come, Prince, I'm not entirely to blame for that.

PAUL. But things have reached a climax now.

DUCHESS. Good gracious! How?

PAUL. (*taking a paper out of his pocket*). Look at this tiresome thing.

DUCHESS. What's that?

PAUL. It's a society paper, and it's all about me.

DUCHESS. Nonsense! About you?

PAUL. Certainly it is. There's a horrible race of creatures who call themselves society journalists. They're not really *in* Society, you know – they can't get nearer than the key-hole. But there's a lot to be seen through a key-hole – and what they can't see, they invent. Of course, when they write about other people's private affairs I feel it's not my business, and I laugh, don't you know? But when they write about *my* private affairs, I feel it's a public outrage, and I don't think any one ought to laugh. Just listen to this! (*He reads from the paper.*)

SONG ("THE SOCIETY COLUMN"). – PRINCE PAUL.

"They say Prince Paul has gone a-wooing
A fair Princess at Gerolstein;
But it appears he is not doing
Much in the matrimonial line.

He gloves in white his fairy fingers,
At dawn of every blessed day –
"She comes, my bride – ah, no, she lingers!"
And so he throws his gloves away!
The gloves must come a bit expensive,
The best French kid at four and three."
(*with indignation.*) That's what they dare to say of me!
Which I consider most offensive.

DUCHESS. They seem to know a bit, you see,
Although their style is *most* offensive!

The GRAND DUCHESS crosses L., laughing.

PAUL (*speaking*). But that isn't all. Just listen to the rest.

(*reading.*) "A very ardent lover made he
When first he went to court the maid;
When first he wooed that noble lady,
The Prince was ninety in the shade!
But time is long and love is cruel,
And now that half a year is done,
The Prince's love is out of fuel,
And down to zero in the sun!
It will not do, we're apprehensive,
So drop it, and go home to tea!"
That's what they dare to say to me!
Which I consider most offensive.

DUCHESS. They seem to know a bit, you see,
Although their style is *most* offensive!

The GRAND DUCHESS laughs more than ever.

PAUL. Now, I think you're horrid!

Enter FRITZ L.l.E., in Captain's uniform.

DUCHESS (*aside*). How splendid he looks! (*Aloud to PRINCE PAUL.*)
– Prince, don't you think it's a marvellously becoming uniform?

PAUL. He looks extremely well in it.

DUCHESS. Now you can understand how proud I am of my regiment.
(*To FRITZ.*) – Captain!

FRITZ. Your Highness?

DUCHESS. Tell General Boum and Baron Puck to come to me.

FRITZ. All right – I'll tell 'em. (*Exit into tent.*)

PAUL. Dear lady –

DUCHESS (*impatiently*). What is it?

PAUL. You haven't yet told me when —

DUCHESS. How unreasonable you are, my dear Prince. At present,
every second of the day and night is taken up with
affairs of state. The first time I've got nothing else
to do I will marry you.

PAUL (*with despair*). Oh, you cruel thing!

Enter BOUM, PUCK, and FRITZ from tent.

Soldiers bring in table and four chairs. They place the table on centre of stage a little to R., put two seats to R. of table, one to L., and the fourth in the middle. They put a map on the table and then exeunt.

DUCHESS. Come, Prince, you must give us the light of your views. We have to consider General Boum's plan of attack.

PAUL (*sulkily*). Oh, bother General Boum's plan of attack!

DUCHESS. Now, you're going to be sulky!

PAUL (*in the same tone*). Well, I am a little vexed. I'm not often allowed to see you, and in the middle of my visit you call a council of war. I don't think it's a bit nice of you!

DUCHESS. But think, Prince, this should give you hope. You must remember that the position of reigning consort has its responsibilities as well as its privileges.

PAUL. I thought the rule was, privileges first, responsibilities afterwards.

DUCHESS (*angrily*). Prince!

PAUL (*aside*). That's the worst of me with women, I'm always too impetuous. (*He goes towards R.*)

DUCHESS (*seats herself on the seat R. of table. To BOUM and PUCK*). Be seated, gentlemen. (*BOUM sits in the centre seat, PRINCE PAUL in seat R., next to GRAND DUCHESS, and PUCK on the seat L. of table. To FRITZ.*) – Captain! (*BOUM signs to him to go away.*) You shall be our body-guard.

FRITZ. Never you fear!

Draws sword and marches up and down. BOUM and PUCK annoyed.)

BOUM (*looking at FRITZ*). I don't know that I ought to discuss my plans in the presence of —

DUCHESS. That is my business, General. Now, what do you propose?

BOUM. My plan is simple. Your Highness must bear in mind that the whole art of war is summed up in two words — surprise and circumvention.

DUCHESS. It sounds to me more like the whole art of love.

BOUM. Excellent! First rate! They are sister arts, of course, and, like many sisters, both fair and both artful. Bearing this in mind, I am dividing my army into three corps.

PUCK. Sound idea!

BOUM. One of these corps will advance to the right — so! (*Indicates on map.*)

PUCK. Good idea!

BOUM. Another to the left — so!

PUCK. Excellent idea!

BOUM. And the remaining corps will advance in between the two.

PAUL. Amazing!

BOUM. My forces, thus distributed, will proceed by three different routes to one central point, where I have decided to concentrate them. There we shall probably —

DUCHESS. Where is that central point? (*BOUM puzzled.*)

PUCK (*pointing to map*). The enemy seem to be over here.

BOUM. I don't care where the enemy are, but what I do know is — (*loudly*) that I shall annihilate them!

DUCHESS. Sh! — sh!

PUCK. Please!

BOUM (*louder*). I repeat, I shall annihilate the enemy!

DUCHESS. But not if you exhaust yourself now.

BOUM. What care I, since it is in the service of my country. Where are the enemy? Take me to the enemy! (*Rising and half-drawing sword.*) Let me get at 'em!

PUCK calms him and persuades him to resume his seat.

FRITZ (*who has been marching up and down during the previous conversation, has stood still for a moment, laughing*). You'll get at 'em presently with your three routes! That's a funny way to do it! You and your three routes! Ho! ho! ho! (*Laughs.*)

PUCK (*rising, severely*). Silence, sir!

FRITZ (*still laughing*). You mustn't go by one. You've got to go by three! That's what tickles me!

BOUM (*furious*). What's he saying?

FRITZ. I sha'n't forget that! Three routes! What jolly rot!

BOUM (*rising*). I'll put him under arrest. I'll have him court-marshalled. I'll —

PUCK. A Captain to criticize his Commander-in-Chief! It's unheard of! (*Comes between BOUM and GRAND DUCHESS.*)

DUCHESS. One moment, gentlemen, please. (*To FRITZ.*) — You say, Captain, as far as I can gather, that the General's scheme of attack by three routes is not a sound scheme?

FRITZ (*approaching the table*). I say it's jolly rot — and I can prove it's jolly rot!

PUCK (*to GRAND DUCHESS*). With great respect, I would point out to your Highness that this person can take no part in the discussion. (*He goes near PRINCE PAUL.*)

BOUM. No part in this discussion — no, confound him! No part in anything!

PUCK. No one but an officer of superior rank —

PAUL (*rising*). And one who is also noble —

PAUL and PUCK (*together*). Is entitled to take part in a council of war.

DUCHESS (*rising imperiously*). Silence, gentlemen! As I am an honest woman, the first who interrupts shall die! (*To PUCK.*) — You said, I think, that he should be an officer of superior rank? I make him General of the Forces — (*To BOUM.*) — of equal rank with you. (*To PRINCE PAUL.*) You said, I think, he should be noble? I make him Baron Vermuth-von-Bock-bier, Count of Pilsener-Lager von Auld-Lang-Schweinstein. Are you satisfied, gentlemen? May the council proceed?

PUCK goes L. of PRINCE PAUL.

BOUM (bows formally). Your Highness —

PAUL (aside to PUCK). Oh, I say! Hang it all! You know, something ought to be done!

PUCK (aside). Sh! Wait! I'll talk to you presently. (He goes up stage. BOUM goes L.)

DUCHESS (to FRITZ, seating herself). Pray sit down, General, and let me hear your views.

PUCK indicates to FRITZ the seat vacated by GENERAL BOUM. PUCK and PRINCE PAUL resume their seats. BOUM remains alone standing in the left-hand corner.

FRITZ (taking seat). Well, instead of going by these three routes — three routes! — you'll excuse my smiling — (Laughs.)

DUCHESS (examining his uniform). How idiotically they cut these uniforms! You want quite an inch off that collar! Please forgive me interrupting you. (Aside.) — He's lovely!

FRITZ. If you want to fight, you want to get at the enemy. If you want to get at the enemy, you want to take the shortest road. (To BOUM). — None of your "three routes"! Then when you've found him, you want to keep pegging away at him until you can't find him. That's my idea of warfare. (Rises.)

DUCHESS (rising, as do PUCK and PRINCE PAUL). And the only idea, of course! General Boum, you understand? These are the tactics you are to carry out.

BOUM (coming to near FRITZ). Your Highness, I refuse.

DUCHESS. You refuse?

BOUM. As Commander-in-Chief, I am responsible for the lives of your Highness's troops. Had I been permitted to carry out my own plan of campaign, I would gladly have undertaken that responsibility, as no battle could have taken place. If you listen to this bloodthirsty butcher — I — I can't answer for the consequences.

DUCHESS. Then you refuse? Officially?

BOUM. Officially. You'd better ask Baron Absinthe — I can't remember his absurd name! (Crosses back to L.)

FRITZ. Baron Vermuth-von-Bock-bier, Count of Pilsener-Lager von Auld-Lang-Schweinstein. (To GRAND DUCHESS). — He remembers the name right enough. He's only worried because he can't forget it.

DUCHESS. Baron, can you undertake to execute the manœuvre you described?

FRITZ. Me? Why, of course I can!

DUCHESS. Really? And you will come back victorious?

FRITZ. Yes — or else the other thing. I'll come back, any way.

DUCHESS. Baron Vermuth-von-Bock-bier —

FRITZ. That's me!

DUCHESS. May Heaven steel your soldiers' hearts. Henceforth you

are Commander-in-Chief of all my army.

FRITZ (to BOUM). Might I trouble you for that feather?

BOUM *enraged*, PUCK *calms him; hands plume to FRITZ, and affixes FRITZ's smaller feather to BOUM's hat.*

FRITZ (to BOUM). Ugh! You're no soldier!

BOUM (*bursting with rage*). If ever I get the chance —

PUCK (*getting R. of BOUM, aside*). Sh — sh! Patience! We shall get the chance, and there are three of us who want it.

DUCHESS (*aside, looking at FRITZ*). Oh, he's lovely — lovely! (*Aloud.*) — General Fritz, I want personally to introduce you to your troops. General Boum, tell my entire army to fall in.

BOUM. I — to be ordered about like this?

The soldiers who brought the table and chairs re-enter and take them off.

PUCK (*aside to BOUM*). Patience, old friend! It's what I feared — love whispers louder than the cannon roars!

BOUM goes up L., gives signal and then comes down L. Military words of command are heard repeated outside. Re-enter MACROBRUNNER, HOCHHEIM, NIERSTEIN, and soldiers L.U.E. Drums roll. They take their arms and form in two ranks at back, facing audience. NEPOMUC precedes them and stands on level with second entrance, a little behind the GRAND DUCHESS. IZA, OLGA, AMELIE, and CHARLOTTE come out of the tent and place themselves in front R. Peasant girls re-enter at back from both sides and stand round. WANDA enters R. and stands a little behind FRITZ. PRINCE PAUL joins PUCK and BOUM, who are standing at the extreme L.

FINALE OF ACT I.

CHORUS.

'Tis the bugle call to remind them/us,
And beat of drum!
One look to all they/we leave behind them/us,
Then on they/we come,
To beat of drum!

DUCHESS (*to the soldiers*).

Listen all of you to what I'm now reciting!
Your new General stands here! (*Pointing to FRITZ.*)

ALL. What! He our General? Our General stands here?

DUCHESS. Yes, 'tis Fritz! In the coming fighting
He'll prove the victor, never fear!

She presents FRITZ to the soldiers, then to the Maids of Honour, who salute him.

PUCK, PAUL, and BOUM (*in a loud voice, in the corner L.*)
We'll have vengeance on the peasant,
Ere we have done!
We're the stronger at present,
Three against one!

WANDA (*to FRITZ, coming down near him*).

Oh, can it all be true?

FRITZ (*to WANDA*). Why, of course, can't you see?

WANDA. Ah! you're too good for me!

FRITZ. I'll be faithful to you!

WANDA. Then, will you love me still?

FRITZ. Why, of course, dear, I will.

WANDA. Oh, tell me that once more!

FRITZ. Yes, I'll take that encore!

DUCHESS. (*to FRITZ, impatiently, having heard what he and WANDA have said*). When your private affairs

You've quite finished, my friend,

You'll remember I wait,

Till you're pleased to attend!

CHORUS, etc. (*in a low voice*). How she eyes them askance,
What a terrible glance!

DUCHESS (*aside*). Calmly my heart

Slept till the present,

Why does it start,

Beyond all restraint?

The crowd observes —

That little peasant

Gets on my nerves,

Oh, I shall faint!

FRITZ. The Duchess finds the heat unpleasant.

WANDA. She's going to faint!

DUCHESS (*aside, restraining herself*).

But I have duties as a queen,

And it would seem unseemly —

Extremely unseemly —

To let ought be seen!

(*Aloud and gaily to NEPOMUC, who has come down R.*)

So, Captain, will you kindly go,

And bring here, at once — what you know!

Exit NEPOMUC L.

GRAND DUCHESS *signs to FRITZ to come near to her.*

ALL. What on earth can that be?

Enter NEPOMUC with a sword, which he carries high and with great respect.

ALL. The broadsword! The broadsword!

SONG of the SWORD. – GRAND DUCHESS and CHORUS.

DUCHESS (*to FRITZ, pointing to the sword*).

Here is my blessed father's sword!
Take it and wear it at your side;
Strong is your arm to strike or ward,
So in your valour I confide!
When, as our histories record,
My dear papa to battle hied,
My dear mamma, who he adored,
Handed him this weapon true and tried.
Here is the broadsword, the broadsword, the broadsword!
Here is my blessed father's sword!

ALL. Here is the broadsword, etc.

DUCHESS (*taking the sword*).

Here is my blessed father's sword!
Take it and wear it at your side;
And, when the victory is scored,
Safe and uninjured homeward ride!
(*With feeling*). Were you by brutal bullets bored,
Or should a sword your life divide,
My peace could never be restored,
Sorrow would be with me till I died!

(*Recovering herself – with dignity.*)

Here is the broadsword, the broadsword, the broadsword!
Here is my blessed father's sword!
Take it and wear it at your side!

She gives sword to FRITZ.

ALL. Here is the broadsword, etc.

FRITZ. You need not be afraid, for the lot of the blade,
The broadsword true and trusty, and just a rifle rusty—
With the bays I'll return, or in a marble urn!

GRAND DUCHESS, WANDA, MAIDS OF HONOUR, CHORUS.

A victor you'll return!

PUCK, PAUL, BOUM (*aside*). He never shall return!

CHORUS. He will return!

FRITZ gives the sword to WANDA, who looks at it admiringly.

ENSEMBLE.

FRITZ.

Victory earning,
I'll be returning,
Order every man on,
Horse and foot and cannon,
There will be no men
Left of our foemen,
For we'll chop 'em all
Very extra small!
With cheery band before us,

DUCHESS, WANDA, CHORUS.

Victory earning,
He'll be returning,
Leading every man on,
Horse and foot and cannon,
There will be no men
Left of our foemen,
How the foe will fall
Cut extremely small!
With cheery band before you,

March along!
Join the merry chorus
Of our song!
We will invade them!
Conquer and raid them!
Follow on their track
By the nearest route,
Then we'll burn and sack,
And go in for loot!
I will come back sound,
With the laurel crowned,
A conqueror renowned!

March along!
Gaily we'll encore you,
In our song!
He will invade them!
Conquer and raid them!
Follow on their track
By the nearest route,
Then he'll burn and sack,
And go in for loot!
He will come back sound,
With the laurel crowned,
A conqueror renowned!

PUCK, PRINCE PAUL, and BOUM.

Soon he'll be learning
There's no returning,
Folly leads the man on,
Horse and foot and cannon.
There will be no man
Spared by the foeman,
He will chop 'em all
Very extra small!
They're off with band before them,
Going strong!
How the foe will floor them –
They're all wrong!
If he invade them,
He'll be shot!
He will not be found,
We will all be bound!

During the following chorus the army begins to march, and, beginning from the right, defiles before the GRAND DUCHESS, who stands R. FRITZ at the head of the army.

MARCH.

CHORUS. March to the band that plays before you,
All along!
March for the honour of the land that bore you,
With a song!

DUCHESS (*seeing the sword in WANDA's hand*).
But you forgot my blessed father's sword!

ALL. You quite forgot her blessed father's sword!
Here is the broadsword, the broadsword, the broadsword!
Here is her blessed father's sword!
Go, crush our foemen hand to hand,
For Gerolstein, our Fatherland!

FRITZ returns to take the sword, and then puts himself at the head of the troops, brandishing it aloft. The soldiers resume the march off to reprise of the March Chorus. The GRAND DUCHESS and WANDA waft kisses to FRITZ, who returns them of WANDA. Tableau. Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE. — State apartment in the Palace. A door L., leading to the private suite of the GRAND DUCHESS. A portrait of a Knight in full armour L.2.E. concealing a secret door. Another picture R., facing the former. A door R.I.E. At the back a large opening looking on a gallery and closed by curtains. IZA, CHARLOTTE, AMELIE, OLGA, and other Maids of Honour discovered working on tapestry. An Usher stands on guard before the GRAND DUCHESS's door L.

COUPLETS of MAIDS of HONOUR, and COUPLETS of "the LETTERS." —
IZA, OLGA, CHARLOTTE, and AMELIE.

CHORUS. At last the war is really over,
 At last is ended the campaign;
 And each of us will see her lover,
 Before the night comes round again!

IZA looking R., and rising, as do all the other ladies.

IZA. It's the mail!

ALL. It's the mail!

IZA. Then after him in chorus!

 He's sure to have some letters for us!

They carry their tapestry frames to back.

NEPOMUC enters R., carrying letters.

NEPOMUC. Who wants letters? Here's a lot!

ALL. Give me mine!

 Give me mine!

 Please, sir, will you not?

NEPOMUC. Here's a lot! *(Distributing letters.)*

(To Usher at door L.)

 Now let me pass; my business touches

 No less a personage than the Grand Duchess.

Exit L., the Usher following him.

MAIDS of HONOUR *(each with her letter in her hand).*

 Before we, trembling, break the seal,

 Our timid hearts are quickly beating!

 But what delight we soon shall feel,

 In reading over and repeating!

OLGA *(opening and reading her letter).*

 "I carried your portrait here in my pocket,
 Right above my heart;

 It worked like a charm, that magical locket,

 Well it played its part;

 For every limb is safe in its socket,

 Just as at the start!"

 Ah! the words of my lover

I'll read you all over;
And ever, like this,
The writing I'll kiss!

CHARLOTTE (*opening and reading letter*).

"It seems that we don't want to fight each other
Any more this year;
I think, if we take one thing with another,
Now the coast is clear;
As soon as I'm back, I'll call on your mother,
And ask for your hand, my dear!"
Ah! the words of my lover, etc.

AMELIE (*reading letter*).

"My courage had sunk to absolute zero,
I never wanted to run, when cannon balls flew;
But, nevertheless, I fought like a hero,
And all on account of thinking of you!"

IZA (*reading letter*).

"To-day the enemy we fought,
And won, it seemed to me;
But, glory and fame I've never sought –
What are they to me?
For, all of these things I value as nought,
Compared with a kiss from thee!"
Ah! the words of my lover, etc.

AMELIE. What does he say, dear?

CHAR (*kissing letter*). Oh, he's a duck!

AMELIE. Is *that* what he says?

CHAR. No, that's what *I* say.

IZA (*to OLGA*). Show me!

OLGA. No; I don't think it's honourable to show love-letters.

IZA. No more do I; but – I'll show you my Ludvig's if you'll show me your Karl's.

OLGA. Will you? Oh, that's different! (*Giving letter.*) Karl writes rather a bad hand; but he has lovely eyes!

IZA (*giving letter*). Ludvig can't spell; but he has exquisite moustaches!

OLGA. After all, what does anything else matter?

They go up a little. Business of all the girls reading one another's letters.

Enter PRINCE PAUL and BARON GROG R.

PAUL. My dear Grog, you needn't have the least apprehension. I give you my word that she'll receive you to-day.

GROG. Prince, I ask for no sounder security.

PAUL. Where are your credentials from papa?

GROG. My august master's letter is in its usual place – next my heart.

PAUL. Well, you'd better take it out and smooth it, and have

it ready to present. How do you do, ladies? (*He bows.*)
AMELIE (*laughing and half aside*). Dear little Prince!
OLGA (*laughing and half aside*). Poor little Prince!
IZA (*laughing and half aside*). Silly little Prince!
PAUL (*to GROG*). Oh, I say – hang it all! I believe they're making fun of me!
GROG. Your Highness can never be mistaken.
PAUL. Oh! I don't care. Little things amuse little minds, you know. Ladies, let me present to you papa's envoy, Baron Grog. (*Introduction – the ladies curtsey, etc.*) The Baron is to have the privilege of an audience with her Highness this afternoon.

Enter NEPOMUC L.

NEPOMUC. Great tidings! General Fritz is returning at the head of his triumphant troops. He will be officially received in an hour from now. He has come back victorious, happy and glorious. And her Highness is uproarious! (*Takes four steps.*) Uproarious! (*Takes another four steps.*) Positively uproarious!

He has crossed the stage and exit excitedly R.

IZA. They're back! Our boys are back!

BOUM and PUCK enter R. The Usher follows them and remains standing at the door.

PUCK. Ladies, you're late – you're late! Her Highness is waiting!

BOUM. Now, ladies! Pass away, ladies – please!

Exeunt Maids of Honour L., singing "Ah! words of my lover," etc.

BOUM and PUCK salute PRINCE PAUL.

PAUL. Well! and how about our sweet Grog?

BOUM. Her Highness has ordered us to send Grog up to her. Usher! (*Usher advances.*) Attend the Baron! And remember your instructions. (*Aloud, to GROG, bowing and indicating the door L.*) – Baron!

GROG (*bowing*). Au revoir, General. (*Goes to door.*)

PAUL (*going after him*). Don't forget, Grog, old friend – pitch it into her.

Exit GROG L., preceded by Usher.

PAUL (*returning C., with great delight*). At last!

PUCK. What is it, Prince?

PAUL. You can't think how excited I am! Her Highness at last consents to receive Baron Grog. I see him now in my mind's eye. He goes along the passage, then into the little ante-room.

BOUM. That is so!

PAUL. He crosses the little ante-room —

PUCK. Yes!

PAUL. The usher lifts the tapestry — (*signs of negation from BOUM and BUCK*) — and announces the Baron. He bows reverently to the august presence in which —

BOUM. Steady, my young friend — steady, steady! You've gone too fast. Half-way across the little ante-room, before you get to the tapestry, there is an archway, through which he will be piloted with great deference. Confronting that archway is a marble staircase —

PUCK. Down which he will be personally conducted with great reverence.

BOUM. The usher will then guide him with extra deference through the Hall of a Thousand Mirrors, the Throne Room, the Arbitration Room, and the International Apology Room.

PUCK. Then extra-super-ne-plus-ultra reverentially across the yard to the back gate.

BOUM. Where he will find his carriage and the Royal Remembrancer, who will inform him with extra-superfine patent double-milled diagonal deference that the Baron's audience is postponed to another day.

PAUL. You mean to say that those are really her Highness's instructions?

BOUM. On my word of honour.

PAUL. She surely wouldn't *dare*!

PUCK. Wouldn't *dare*! My dear Prince, what an ass — (*recollecting himself*) — with the greatest — the most profound respect, what an ass your Highness must be! Have you forgotten that to-day is the day of General Fritz's return in his character of conquering hero? If you think that the Grand Duchess will have eyes to-day for anybody but him and her looking-glass, you are very much mistaken.

PAUL (*angrily*). I hate the very name of Fritz! He's a loathsome man, I think! So hideously muscular!

BOUM (*with meaning*). Whatever he may be, he is *the* man.

PAUL (*mysteriously*). The man of the moment — yes. But when that moment's over?

BOUM and PUCK. Yes; what then?

PAUL (*rather alarmed*). Oh, nothing! I didn't mean anything. (*Goes up stage.*)

PUCK (*aside to BOUM*). It hasn't taken yet!

BOUM (*aside to PUCK*). Why not tell him straight that — (*Cannon heard without*). The enemy! It is the enemy! Let me get at 'em! (*Draws his sword and gesticulates.*)

PUCK. No, no! (*Meaningly*). — That's the *Private* enemy, that was promoted to the position of *General* enemy.

PAUL (*coming down, aside*). He means Fritz!

BOUM (*sheathing his sword*). Forgive my excitement, gentlemen. I've been a fortnight doing nothing, and I feel homesick for the battle-field.

The curtains at the back are drawn aside. Enter Ladies-in-waiting, Officers, etc., preceded by two Ushers.

CHORUS and SONG. – FRITZ.

CHORUS. Our soldiers victorious
Now are coming back in state,
After exploits glorious
That we gladly celebrate!

During this Chorus the GRAND DUCHESS enters L., attended by IZA, CHARLOTTE, OLGA, and AMELIE. Her court train is carried by two little negroes. On seeing her, PRINCE PAUL, BOUM, and PUCK hasten towards her, bowing.

DUCHESS (*aside*). I shall see him again,
'Tis the hour of my fate!
Can I hide from him then,
That my love is so great?

The two Ushers have brought on from L. the ducal throne and a stool, and place them a little L. They then retire and stand on each side of the door.

CHORUS. Our soldiers victorious, etc.

During the reprise of this Chorus, the GRAND DUCHESS seats herself on the throne, surrounded by her Maids of Honour. FRITZ enters at back, followed by MACROBRUNNER, HOCHHEIM, and NIERSTEIN. He advances towards the GRAND DUCHESS and bends his knee before her. She represses her emotion with difficulty. FRITZ rises as the Chorus ends.

FRITZ (to GRAND DUCHESS).
Your Highness, all is done,
And peace is now restored;
Your gallant troops have won,
Your enemies are foiled!
Herewith I return you – unsoiled –

Takes the sword from the hand of Officer.

(*With emotion.*)
The broadsword, the broadsword, the broadsword!
The broadsword true and tried, your blessed father's sword!

DUCHESS (*with emotion, rising, taking the sword and kissing it*).
Here is the broadsword, the broadsword, the broadsword!
Here is my blessed father's broadsword!

ALL. There is her blessed father's sword!

DUCHESS (*with dignity, giving the sword to NEPOMUC, who has approached on her left*). So put it back into the armoury
Museum!

NEPOMUC takes sword and exit with it L.

DUCHESS (to FRITZ). Now, General, with victory crowned
Before my Court, who long to hear you,
Relate your triumph great,
And let the glory of your deeds resound!

The DUCHESS re-seats herself.

CHORUS. Relate your triumph great,
And let the glory of your deeds resound!

FRITZ. Then I the story will relate;
A true report,
Concise and short –
Of how by skill and tactics great,
Without a blow,
I floored the foe!

SONG. – FRITZ.

All in good order, banners high,
We marched away, some days ago,
When, in a camp, one day I spy
Full twenty thousand men or so!
Quickly I pass the word to halt –
A plan I had
That wasn't bad!
I didn't go in for assault,
I played on them
A stratagem!
I had two hundred thousand bottles,
Full of wine, spirits, and what not:
You meant them for your army's throttles –
I let their troopers raid the lot!
Oh, soon they were a merry rout!
"The wine – this way!
Hip, hip, hooray!"
The wine was in, the wit was out,
And I lay low
And made no show!
Well, on the morrow we were ready,
We challenged them to join in fight;
Out of the camp they rolled unsteady,
And, bless my soul! they were a sight!
Over the field they came to parley,
Shoving, wheeling,
Rolling, reeling,
Just like a great big field of barley
That wildly sways,
On windy days!
Then the commander, in the middle,
Their merry chief, with warlike wink,
Frolicked, as tight as any fiddle,
And called to me, "I'll stand a drink!"
I answered back, "No, I am paying!"

It did annoy
This poor old boy –
He waved his bottle, came on swaying,
And led a charge
Both fine and large!
Lord, how I laughed to hear the rows, and
To see this hero, half insane,
Leading his drunken twenty thousand,
And all a-singing this refrain –
La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
All were so full of wine and toddy,
You touched one clown,
They all fell down!
So we did not kill anybody,
It would have been
Extremely mean!
Still, in the coming age, that spot'll
Ever be known and famed by us,
For there, upon the field of *bottle*,
Your soldiers slept victorious!

ALL. Long live General Fritz!
DUCHESS (*rising*). General, we are pleased with you. You have an arm of iron and a silver tongue!
PUCK (*aside*). And a wooden head!
BOUM (*aside*). And a brazen cheek!
DUCHESS (*to the Court*). Ladies and gentlemen, we are compelled to terminate this function. The interests of our dear Grand Duchy oblige us to discuss certain intimate matters with our Commander-in-Chief – matters which must be for his private ears alone. We permit you to withdraw! (*They don't move at once.*)
PAUL (*aside to PUCK*). Why should she want to talk to him alone?
BOUM (*aside*). She *is* going it!
PUCK (*aside*). I can't think how you can stand it!
PAUL (*aside*). If only I saw a way —
BOUM. Perhaps we can show you one!

These sentences must be spoken very rapidly.

DUCHESS (*regally*). Ladies and gentlemen, we await your pleasure. (*Change of tone.*) – But we're not going to await it long, understand!

Exeunt Chorus, to refrain of "Our soldiers victorious," etc., through opening at back. PRINCE PAUL, BOUM, and PUCK follow arm in arm. The Ushers go out last, closing the hangings. The Maids of Honour and the negroes exeunt L. The GRAND DUCHESS and FRITZ are alone.

DUCHESS. At last we are alone!
FRITZ. Yes, there's nobody else here.
DUCHESS. I am so glad to see you again.

FRITZ. Thank you, m'm. Same to you, and many of 'em.
DUCHESS. Thank you.
FRITZ. Don't thank *me*, m'm. There's nothing to thank me for.
DUCHESS. How right I was. When you first attracted my attention you were simply a private.
FRITZ. Just a recruit.
DUCHESS. I promoted you to Commander-in-Chief. What's the result? The enemy is routed!
FRITZ. Yes, there's no mistake about that!
DUCHESS. The least I can do in return is to show you some further favour.
FRITZ. How do you mean? Here am I, Commander-in-Chief. What's the good of talking about further favours.
DUCHESS. You mean that you think you've got as high as you can?
FRITZ. I don't think it — I know it. I've found that Field-Marshal's staff that they say is in every private's knapsack. I've distinguished myself in the field.
DUCHESS. Certainly you have — in the field of battle! But there are other fields.
FRITZ. Of course there's other fields — corn-fields, turnip-fields, gold-fields —
DUCHESS. I mean — other fields of conquest.
FRITZ. Oh — ah — yes! Nice and green they're looking, too, for the time of year. (*Aside.*) — I don't know what she's talking about.
DUCHESS. A suite of rooms has been prepared for you in the Palace, at the suggestion of General Boum.
FRITZ. General Boum?
DUCHESS. Certainly! The idea occurred to him — by my orders!
FRITZ. Blow me pink! I should like to have seen his face when he got your orders to think *that* out; it must have been a picture.
DUCHESS. Shall I banish him? I will, if he annoys you.
FRITZ. Oh, no! He don't annoy me exactly. (*Laughing.*) It's the old story — a young lady in the case.
DUCHESS. A young lady?
FRITZ. Yes. The old one — I mean the one I told you about, you know.
DUCHESS. What strange creatures men are!
FRITZ. Beg pardon!
DUCHESS. You, for instance! — I wonder what you would really like?
FRITZ. Oh, thanks! I wasn't thinking of taking anything just now, but I don't mind a drop of something, if you're going to have some yourself.
DUCHESS. You don't understand me. I was wondering what form of female sympathy might appeal most to you.
FRITZ. Beg pardon! I don't quite catch.
DUCHESS. How I envy the simple-minded peasant girl! When Gretel loves Hansel, what does she do? She takes his strong hand in hers, lays her sunburnt cheek against his, and says —
FRITZ. My lad, I want a sweetheart.
DUCHESS. But in our world everything's so artificial. A girl

mayn't tell her love, she has to hint it. (*She gazes earnestly at FRITZ, who shows no sign of intelligence.*) Now, for instance, in this very Palace there's a lady who is madly in love with you.

FRITZ. In this Palace? A lady? Go on away!

DUCHESS. Well — she — poor thing! — mayn't take your strong hand

FRITZ. And shove her face against mine.

DUCHESS. Of course she mayn't. All she can do is tell her tale to me.

FRITZ. Has she told you?

DUCHESS. She has!

FRITZ. What! then she's — as a body may say — a bit gone on me?

DUCHESS. Madly!

FRITZ (*laughing*). Well, upon my soul, what a laughable state of things.

DUCHESS (*angrily*). Laughable?

FRITZ. No, I don't mean laughable. (*Aside.*) — She don't fancy me saying laughable. (*Aloud.*) — I mean singular — alarming — peculiar! I say, what's this lady like? A little bit of "all right" is she?

DUCHESS. My courtiers say she is the most beautiful woman in Gerolstein. About her rank I will say nothing —

FRITZ. Rank? A lady of rank? Oh, blow me pink!

DUCHESS. Except this: she can place within your reach everything that you can possibly desire. Surely you have guessed who the lady is?

FRITZ. Wait a bit! Very nearly! I'm warm — I'm burning! No, it's no good! I never could guess riddles. Tell me what she said.

DUET. — GRAND DUCHESS and FRITZ.

DUCHESS. She said, "When you next behold him,
Tell him all I would have told him;
Say to him —"

FRITZ. What?

DUCHESS. "What I say to you."

SOLO. — GRAND DUCHESS.

Say to him, his soldierly mien

I have seen;

Say to him, I think him distracting!

Say to him, if he answered so,

I don't know

With what folly I might not be acting!

Ah! if he would care to wage a war

Whose battles are lovers' quarrels,

How soon could the handsome conqueror

Win roses to mix with his laurels!

Say to him, my fancy he took

At a look –
Say to him, I'm silly with sighing!
Say to him, for hours at a stretch
– Oh, the wretch! –
I keep thinking of him till I'm crying!
Alas! it seemed a sudden chance,
No lightning could ever be faster!
My passion waked to meet his glance,
I knew that my life had a master!

Say to him, unless he would doom
To the tomb,
Say to him, (for her, mind, I'm pleading),
Say to him, he cannot say "nay,"
Only say,
I am fair and my love is exceeding!

Well now! what answer will you send?
FRITZ (*aside*). My future may depend
On what I tell her friend!

DUCHESS. Reply, reply;
In just two words you can, sir!
You know, to my friend,
I must send an answer!

FRITZ. Tell your friend I am tender-hearted –
DUCHESS. I will tell her so!
FRITZ. And I'm pleased by what you've imparted –
DUCHESS. I will tell her so!
FRITZ. And I beg with sincere professions –
DUCHESS. I will tell her so!
FRITZ. To return her polite expressions –
DUCHESS. I will tell her so!
FRITZ (*aside*). I say all that, but, truly I confess,
I'm as much at sea
As a man can be!
The devil take me,
Frizzle me or bake me,
If I her name at all can guess!

DUCHESS. Well, then –

FRITZ. Well, then –
Tell your friend I am tender-hearted, etc.

ENSEMBLE.

DUCHESS. (<i>aside</i>).	FRITZ (<i>aside</i>).
He's made it out,	I can't make out
Without a doubt,	What she's about.
For the heart, for the heart	For my part, for my part,
It can feel, and it can know!	Where I am, I don't know!

FRITZ goes up stage, then comes down thinking to himself. The
GRAND DUCHESS seats herself L.

FRITZ *(aside)*. Well, I fancy I've got the swing of it now. Here am I — Field-Marshal, Commander-in-Chief — all over honours and decorations. And this Court Lady, who fancies me, would see I don't lose 'em.

DUCHESS *(who is watching him)*. General!

FRITZ *(still to himself)*. But where I'm cornered is regarding Wanda.

DUCHESS *(louder)*. General!

FRITZ *(turning)*. Your Highness!

DUCHESS. Come here — near me.

FRITZ *(crossing to her, aside)*. It's jolly puzzling. *(He is about to kneel upon the footstool at her feet.)*

DUCHESS. No, no! Sit down. *(FRITZ sits on the footstool.)* Do you know, you look awfully well with your stars and medals and things. — *(Indicates the decorations on his breast.)* By the way, at any time you feel you'd like any more, you've only to say so. Where was I? — oh, I know! I was asking you about this poor woman who — cares for you. You didn't give me a definite answer. You only said in a general sort of way —

FRITZ *(laughing)*. A General's bound to talk in a general sort of way.

DUCHESS. How ready you are! But, seriously — I must have a definite answer.

FRITZ. Oh, I see! This lady's not only sent the message, but prepaid the reply, so to speak?

DUCHESS. Exactly. What am I to say? *(She nervously toys with the order that FRITZ wears around his neck.)*

FRITZ *(screams)*. Ah!

DUCHESS. What's the matter?

FRITZ. D'you know, you're tickling me. I can't stand being tickled. It was just the same when I was a kiddy. I never could stand it. Anything but that! I'd sooner have a shove in the eye than anybody come and tickle me, I don't care who it is.

DUCHESS. I'm so sorry!

FRITZ. Oh, that's all right! You couldn't know, you know.

DUCHESS. Well, but — tell me — about this poor lady. Supposing you were sitting close to her — as you're sitting now — what little answer would you whisper to her?

FRITZ. Well — blow me pink!

DUCHESS. That's very ready, too. It's a phrase you use rather often perhaps — but always with a charmingly varied inflection. But what would you say afterwards?

FRITZ. Afterwards? Well — I tell you — I — I — should feel jolly puzzled.

Enter NEPOMUC at back with message. He sees the DUCHESS, sneezes and retires behind curtain. FRITZ and GRAND DUCHESS rise. FRITZ goes up and takes the letter from NEPOMUC.

FRITZ *(coming down)*. A despatch, your Highness, from the Chief Superintendent of Police.

DUCHESS. Give it to me. *(FRITZ gives it to her.)*

FRITZ *(aside)*. It would have been all right if Wanda had never been born – but she *has* been born – and – well, it's jolly puzzling – that's what it is!

DUCHESS *(reading despatch, aside)*. "Disorderly conduct of General Fritz Public outrage Parading the town with a village wench – known by the name of Wanda." I must investigate this. *(To NEPOMUC.)* – Is my Chief Superintendent there?

NEPOMUC. He is, your Highness.

DUCHESS *(aside)*. Wanda! Oh, it can't be! *(Aloud, to FRITZ.)* – Will you excuse me for a moment?

FRITZ. Oh, that's all right!

DUCHESS. Don't go till I return. *(To NEPOMUC.)* – Captain, escort us.

Exeunt GRAND DUCHESS and NEPOMUC.

FRITZ *(alone)*. Well, it's jolly puzzling. Suppose this lady comes to me and says, "Here I am, General!" what am I to answer back? If I say, "Thank you, Madam, I *have* some – I'm not taking any," she'd get wild, very likely. Mind you, she'd have no right to get wild. When a lady writes and asks any one for "the pleasure of his company to dinner," he writes back saying that he "regrets that a previous engagement prevents him from giving himself the pleasure." Well, that's my point. He don't say, "He don't want your nasty dinner!" and I don't say "I don't want your nasty company!" All I say is, "A previous engagement" – by which I mean Wanda – "prevents me from giving myself the pleasure." So I shall just mention it to the Grand Duchess, and she can pass the word on to her lady friend.

Music in orchestra. PRINCE PAUL, BOUM, and PUCK enter mysteriously at back.

FRITZ *(aside)*. There's them three beauties!

PUCK *(aside to his companions)*. There's our man!

BOUM *(aside to PAUL)*. We can't initiate you while he's here.

Enter NEPOMUC at back.

NEPOMUC *(to FRITZ)*. General!

FRITZ. Hallo, Captain! How are you?

NEPOMUC. Her Highness is detained by affairs of State. She has instructed me to conduct you to your apartments in the palace – the Crimson Suite. *(He goes up and remains at back of stage.)*

PUCK *(aside to PRINCE PAUL)*. The Crimson Suite! *(PRINCE PAUL does not understand.)*

FRITZ *(to NEPOMUC)*. All right. *(Aside.)* – I shall just tell the Duchess that in self-defence I've made up my mind to marry Wanda at once. *(Aloud.)* – Where's the Crimson Suite?

NEPOMUC. I will escort you there.
FRITZ (salutes PRINCE PAUL, BOUM, and PUCK). Good day, gentlemen.
PAUL, BOUM, and PUCK. Good day, sir.
FRITZ (to BOUM). Well, he's got three somehow!
BOUM. Who's got — where?
FRITZ. Why, that "infernal recruit." He ain't where he was, and you ain't where you were. It's a funny world! (Going.)
BOUM (angrily). What the devil do you mean, sir?
FRITZ. Ugh! You're no General!

BOUM makes a gesture of rage. PUCK restrains him. Exit FRITZ at back, followed by NEPOMUC.

PUCK (meaningly to PRINCE PAUL). Did you hear? Her Highness has ordered the Crimson Suite to be prepared for the man Fritz. The Crimson Suite!
BOUM (meaningly). I thought it would come to that!
PUCK. I knew it! (To PRINCE PAUL.) — You don't understand!
PAUL. Not in the least!
PUCK. You shall! (Pointing to the picture L.2.E.) — Observe that picture.
PAUL. Oh, I can't bear it! I'm an Impressionist, you know.
PUCK. Never mind. Press you finger upon that weather-beaten hero's left spur.
PAUL (going towards picture, then hesitating). Oh — ah — I dare say.
BOUM. You have only to press it lightly.
PAUL. Oh, yes! I know! I've been had in that sort of way before. You go and press a spring, and something flies out and hits you on the nose. I don't think it's a bit funny.
BOUM. No — no; on my word of honour, it's nothing of the kind.
PAUL. I shall be really angry if it turns out to be a practical joke.

Goes to picture, touches spring, the picture ascends, and the panel slowly slides back. An icy blast forces PRINCE PAUL to retreat. Strange sounds — clarinet in orchestra imitates hooting of owls.

PAUL. Who's that giving farmyard imitations?
PUCK. No one. No human being would dare to tread those boards. The sound you hear is the cry of the screech-owl. Centuries have rolled since yonder panel last yawned. (With the manner of a person beginning a long story.) — Two hundred years ago —
PAUL (approaching PUCK). I have a kind of instinct that you're going to tell me a tale.
BOUM. A terrible tale.
PAUL. Oh, do! I belong to the Gerolstein Psychical Society, you know, and this is just the kind of thing that

impresses us.
PUCK. I will. You must understand that that corridor has two ends.
PAUL. How extraordinary! How weird!
PUCK. (*continuing*). At one end, is this room; at the other end, is the Crimson Suite – where General Fritz is to be lodged.
PAUL. Ah!
PUCK. There are two secret panels: this one concealed by the portrait of a warrior, the other by the portrait of a lady. To open our panel, you press the warrior's left spur. To open the further one you press the lady's left knee.
PAUL. Her left knee?
PUCK. Yes; a little fancy of the painter's. The subject of this portrait was one Max, Count Seidlitz von der Powdergestein. The picture at the other end represents the Grand Duchess Victorine, the ancestress of our Grand Duchess.
PAUL. Go on! Your story fascinates me.

BALLAD and TRIO. – PRINCE PAUL, BOUM, and PUCK.

BOUM. It will whiten your cheek,
A legend grim and gory!
PUCK. And if these walls could speak,
They might repeat the story!

BOUM. County Max in the world had to go forth,
With but his sword;
But his eyes and moustaches, and so forth,
Women adored!
And the Duchess bestowed on the rover
Her heart complete;
And, for lodging, assigned to her lover
The Crimson Suite!
And at midnight dark and shady,
Max, from his door,
Would hear the footsteps of his lady,
In that corridor!
PAUL. That corridor!
PUCK. That corridor!
TRIO. Hear, all ye new generation,
The awful relation
And terrible fate of the last of his line,
Of County Max – County Max Seidlitz –
County Max Seidlitz von der Powdergestein!

PUCK. County Max, as he hopefully sat there,
Heard, one dark night,
That the footsteps, that went pit-a-pat there,
Were far from light!
In his fright, for a way of escaping
Vainly he sought;

For he saw, through the wainscoting gaping
Those feet had brought
A dozen men in sable vizard,
With sword and axe,
Who let the moonlight through the gizzard
Of County Max!

PAUL. A dozen men –
BOUM. Thirsting for gore –
PUCK. Through that dark door!
TRIO. Hear, all ye new generation, etc.

BOUM *closes the secret door, and comes back close to PRINCE PAUL.*

BOUM. Now, you see what we're driving at?
PAUL. Oh yes, I see; but it's awful
PUCK. We mean to kill him like a rat!
PAUL. You think we should? Perhaps it's lawful!
BOUM. We'll see him lodged, this very day,
There, by the gloomy passage-way;
We'll put him where we said before,
There, at the end of the corridor!
TRIO (*very gaily*). We'll see him lodged, etc.
PAUL. Yes, to-night, our pretty Master Fritz,
Listening through the midnight shady,
Thinks to hear, as he waiting sits,
Steps of a tripping little lady.
BOUM. The step, the step, the pretty little step!
PUCK. Not if I know it, there's no fear,
That is a step he'll never hear!
TRIO (*more gaily still, and with a dance movement*).
We'll see him lodged, etc.
BOUM. When he dreams of love and of glory,
And says to himself, "You'll be a Grand Duke, my buck!"
With faces masked, for murder gory,
In come the three, Paul, Boum, and Puck!
PAUL. Comes the gallant Paul!
BOUM. Comes the fearless Boum!
PUCK. Comes the daring Puck!
TRIO. Yes – Paul, Boum, Puck!
(*With wild gaiety and a very animated dance.*)
We'll see him lodged, etc.

*Music continues during the ensuing dialogue until the last words,
"As he enters the Crimson Suite!"*

*The GRAND DUCHESS enters. Seeing PRINCE PAUL, BOUM, and PUCK, she
stands at back and overhears their conversation.*

PAUL. Then, if I understand you, this is a conspiracy.
BOUM and PUCK. A conspiracy!
PAUL. For the extermination of the man Fritz!
BOUM and PUCK. For the extermination of the man Fritz!
PAUL. Come to my rooms, then, in an hour's time. I'll order
tea.

PUCK. But, I suppose, as your guests, we can have something besides tea?

BOUM. Just ourselves – or will there be any ladies? Because, if so, I must go home and dress.

PAUL. Ladies! What? In a conspiracy?

DUCHESS (*coming down between PRINCE PAUL and BOUM*). Excuse me, Prince, there will be one lady there.

PAUL, PUCK, and BOUM (*much alarmed*). The Grand Duchess! (*Aside.*) – We're lost! (*Aloud.*) – Your Highness —

PAUL (*alarmed*). I shall say I don't know anything about it!

DUCHESS. Do not be alarmed, gentlemen! This league is directed, as I understand, against General Fritz?

BOUM. That was, to a certain extent, our original idea – but it's subject to alteration, of course.

DUCHESS. Say no more! I instal myself as Lady President of the League.

BOUM (*aside*). Hallo!

PUCK (*aside*). That's better!

PAUL. (*aside*). What a relief!

DUCHESS. Do you know what General Fritz has done? He has had the insolence to ask my permission to marry the girl Wanda. My friends, I have sent him that permission. In a few hours' time he and this – creature – will start for the Cathedral. It will be your business to check his progress.

PAUL, PUCK, and BOUM. At what point?

DUCHESS. You will strike – as he enters the Crimson Suite.

PAUL, PUCK, and BOUM (*with joy*). As he enters the Crimson Suite!

DUCHESS. We'll see him lodged, etc.

QUARTET (*dancing wildly*). We'll see him lodged, etc.

At the end of the dance PUCK gives "a back" to PRINCE PAUL and to BOUM, who go over him leap frog. The GRAND DUCHESS begins to tuck up her skirts, and gives a little run towards PUCK, who remains offering "a back," but she stops short as she gets up to him, looking round with a shocked expression and her finger on her lip, as if saying, "Oh, no, I mustn't!"

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE 1. — *Ante-chamber of the Crimson Suite. Evening. Doors L.1.E. (covered with tapestry) and R.2.E. Secret door R.C. concealed by full-length portrait of the Grand Duchess Victorine.*

Enter BOUM.

BOUM (goes to picture). Here we are! Now which is her knee?
(Touches knee — the secret panel opens.)

Enter mysteriously PUCK, PRINCE PAUL, GROG, and NEPOMUC.

BOUM (counting them). One, two, three, four. Right! (The panel closes.)

PUCK (to BOUM). Is Baron Grog aware of the object of the league?

GROG (with indifference). As I understand it, it is merely to "remove" some person in authority.

BOUM. Hark ye, all of you! (Draws his sword.)

PUCK (worried). Tut, tut, tut! What is it now?

PAUL (terrified). Put that horrid thing away!

PUCK, GROG, and NEPOMUC. Yes, yes! put it away!

BOUM (with energy). Whatever dark task I take up, I see it through! Understand, once for all, the man who backs out, I cut him in two!

PUCK. But nobody dreams of backing out.

BOUM (threatening PRINCE PAUL). If you want to back up, I cut you in two!

PAUL. Now please oblige me by putting that back in its sheath. It's most dangerous, especially when you're excited.

PUCK. Do, for goodness' sake, quiet down. When you get into one of your moods you're hopeless.

BOUM (putting back his sword in its sheath). I've said my say. If anybody doesn't like it, they can do the other thing.

PAUL. There, there! That's quite enough.

BOUM. And now, are you sure of your weapons?

PUCK. Absolutely! Every blade is branded in large type, "Sheffield."

PAUL. And in smaller letters, "Made in Gerolstein."

Enter GRAND DUCHESS L.1.E. She comes between BOUM and PUCK.

DUCHESS. Gentlemen, if your hearts are as true as your blades, I have no fear!

PUCK. Her Highness! (All bow.)

BOUM. I shall cut him in two!

DUCHESS. Sh! sh! I have a boon to ask of you.

PUCK. Your Highness has but to ask.

DUCHESS. 'Tis but a woman's whim. When you strike, spare his face.

GROG (in the corner L., masked by PRINCE PAUL, ironically).

It would never do to spoil his beauty!

DUCHESS. Who spoke?

GROG. I.

DUCHESS. Who is this? I do not know him.

PAUL. This is Baron Grog; Papa's envoy, you know, whom you always refused to see.

DUCHESS (*crossing to PRINCE PAUL, and scrutinizing GROG with interest*). I perceive that I was gravely in error. (*To PRINCE PAUL, BOUM, and PUCK*). — Go, and post your men. You, Baron Grog, will remain.

GROG (*as surprised as his imperturbability allows*). Your Highness!

DUCHESS. You have frequently, I believe, sought an audience. I grant it to you now.

PAUL (*aside to GROG*). Now's your chance, old friend. Find out what's really in her mind. Get into her head, Grog — get into her head!

Repeated melodrama music in orchestra. Exeunt PRINCE PAUL, BOUM, PUCK, and NEPOMUC R.C. The GRAND DUCHESS goes up stage with them a little way. GROG crosses L.

DUCHESS (*to GROG*). Baron, your frank face pleases me.

GROG. Your Highness —

DUCHESS. Frank faces are rare. Yours is absolutely frank.

GROG. We will talk, if you please, of his Highness the Prince.

DUCHESS. Presently. Do you know I've never talked with any one who interested me in the way you do? It isn't so much what you say, as your unique method of saying it. You say the most startling things, and your face never moves a muscle!

GROG. The result of education.

DUCHESS. Indeed?

GROG. When I was yet in my cradle, my father and mother decided that I was destined for diplomacy. In consequence my face had assumed an icy mask of Sphinx-like ambiguity even when I was a baby.

DUCHESS (*smiling*). Years ago, I suppose?

GROG. Years ago. If my baby face lost even for an instant its statesmanlike expression of bland inscrutability, I was — saving your presence — spanked by my sainted mother.

DUCHESS. Poor little dear! Will you do me a favour?

GROG. What is it?

DUCHESS. Let the others go in front of you. (*GROG makes a slight movement of the lip.*) Now what are you doing? What does that mean? — (*Imitates his grimace.*)

GROG. What does what mean?

DUCHESS. That little grimace, that hardly perceptible movement of the lips — like this. — (*Imitates him again.*) With any one else it would mean nothing, but with you it must be a roar of laughter.

GROG. Perfectly true!

DUCHESS. You see how well I know you already! Tell me, what was

it made you – split your sides with mirth – in that way?

GROG. I had rather not.

DUCHESS. Well, what was it?

GROG. A few minutes ago you were anxious about Fritz's beauty. Now you are anxious about mine.

DUCHESS. (*smiling, aside*). How absurd! But it's perfectly true.

GROG. If I wanted to draw conclusions —

DUCHESS. Sh! – sh! You mustn't draw conclusions!

GROG. No!

DUCHESS. Let's talk of something else. Talk to me about yourself. What is your position at the Elector's Court?

GROG. Chamberlain.

DUCHESS. Is that all? A man of your power and abilities! Now, if you would leave the Elector's Court and accept office here, I could offer you (*sighs*) a far softer billet.

GROG. Out of the question, I regret to say.

DUCHESS. How so?

GROG. Unless your Highness consents to marry Prince Paul.

DUCHESS. To marry Prince Paul! Why come back to that?

GROG. I thought, madam, that we had been talking of nothing else.

DUCHESS. My dear Baron, you're a diplomatist!

GROG. I wish I could persuade your Highness to take my Prince. He is really a most harmless young man.

DUCHESS. An ideal diplomatist!

Re-enter PRINCE PAUL, BOUM, and PUCK R.2.E.

DUCHESS. (*annoyed*). Who's there? Oh! it's you, gentlemen.

PAUL. (*aside to GROG*). Well?

GROG. (*aside to PRINCE PAUL*). We're getting on!

PAUL. (*aside, with joy*). Faithful old friend!

DUCHESS. (*to BOUM*). Have you located your men?

BOUM. I have, your Highness.

DUCHESS. Well, then dislocate them – – I mean, disperse them – (*glancing significantly at GROG*) – there will be no assassination to-night.

BOUM. (*stupefied with anger*). Nonsense!

DUCHESS. I have spoken. There will be no assassination to-night.

BOUM. Why not? (*Fiercely*.) – The enemy! Where is the enemy? Let me get at him! (*Business with sword*).

DUCHESS. I do nothing without a reason. On *this* occasion, my reason is – that I've changed my mind.

PUCK. But half an hour ago —

DUCHESS. Half an hour ago I was in a bad temper. Since then something or other – (*looking at GROG, with meaning*) the Baron's eloquence, perhaps – has put me in a sweeter mood. (*GROG bows.*)

PAUL. (*to GROG*). Dear old friend!

BOUM. (*working himself into a passion*). Your Highness, this fellow Fritz has fooled me. He stole the heart of little Wanda, a wench to whom I had shown some favour. He stole my General's feather, the oriflamme that many

a time has waved where the fight was thickest. I demand his blood! I shall cut him in quarters! (*With great energy.*) – I challenge him to single combat to-night!

PUCK. That will oblige him to put off his wedding till to-morrow.

BOUM. Put off his wedding till to-morrow! Put off his wedding for ever! Annihilate his wedding! Let me get at him! (*Business with sword.*)

DUCHESS. Oh, for that, as you please! I don't object to a duel.

BOUM (*slightly disconcerted*). What?

GROG. Cut him in six!

PUCK (*aside to PRINCE PAUL*). We shall still have our fun! We must keep old Boum up to this!

BOUM (*with less energy*). I've a – I've a perfect right to kill him!

PUCK (*aloud to BOUM*). Honour demands it!

DUCHESS. General Boum – or any one who values my favour – can challenge the upstart. Let the duel take place at once. And – (*with meaning, looking at GROG*) – when General Fritz is vanquished, let the victor come to me for his reward.

Bows to all, but with marked graciousness to GROG, and exit
L.1.E.

BOUM (*who is beginning to look very uncomfortable*). Look here, I say, I don't see how I can fight with a promoted private.

PUCK. Nonsense!

BOUM. It's all very well for you to say "nonsense"! (*Aside.*) – Old fool! I'll flog that sentry who missed him! (*Aloud.*) – After all, I can't help pitying the poor wretch – he didn't know any better. Perhaps a reprimand might meet the case.

PAUL. Hardly!

GROG. Cut him in eight!

BOUM. How can I ask any friends of mine to wait on any friends of his?

PUCK. Nepomuc's the man. He'll do it.

BOUM (*aside*). Old idiot! I'll give that sentry penal servitude!

PAUL. I shall be happy to represent General Fritz.

GROG. Well said!

BOUM (*who is trying to get towards door*). I must just go and have a look at the Grand Duchess's regulations to see whether —

PUCK. No, no. Let's find Nepomuc, and arrange preliminaries. Come along!

BOUM (*aside, as he goes off*). I'll hang that sentry!

Exeunt PRINCE PAUL, GROG, and PUCK R.I.E. BOUM following unwillingly.

Enter FRITZ and WANDA L.1.E.

FRITZ. Come along, Wanda. What do you want to be nervous about?
WANDA. Don't talk silly! Anybody would be nervous!
FRITZ. I could understand it if you were going to marry a stranger. But it's only *me* you're going to marry!
WANDA. Quite enough too!
FRITZ. Perhaps you're nervous at marrying a Commander-in-Chief? Well, that I can understand. Still, there's many a girl's done it before.
WANDA. What! You don't mean to say you've been —
FRITZ. No, no! I mean, many a girl's had to marry Generals, and Admirals, and Commanders, and all such things as that. It's only the uniform what dazzles 'em. But, bless you, a uniform's only skin deep. We Commanders-in-Chief, we're only men.
WANDA. Don't keep talking about your rank and your uniform.
FRITZ. How do you want me to talk?
WANDA. You know — at least you do sometimes — when you're nice. I want you to talk — more loving.
FRITZ. Oh! that's all right!

DUET. — WANDA and FRITZ.

WANDA. It seems so strange to be together,
In such a grand and splendid place.
With Fritz's coat all golden lace,
And then that monster of a feather!
It seems so strange to be together!
But why on earth should that annoy?
For he's my boy!

FRITZ. With feathers waving proud above you,
I am a hero, I confess;
But underneath this awfulness,
You'll find a husband fond to love you!
Yes, there's a husband fond to love you!
So why should fear your peace destroy?
For I'm your boy!

Enter HOCHHEIM, NIERSTEIN, Soldiers, Peasants, and Vivandières
R.2.E.

SOLO and CHORUS. ("COME TO CHURCH").

NIERSTEIN. Come to church, noble lord, come to church!
ALL. Come to church!
NIERSTEIN. And when the ceremony's o'er,
ALL. At the church!
NIERSTEIN. You will not care to rove any more,
ALL. Come to church!
NIERSTEIN. Or leave your lady in the lurch.
ALL. Come to church!
HOCHHEIM. You, my lady, we bid you to church!

ALL. Come to church!
HOCHHEIM. And when the ceremony's o'er,
ALL. At the church!
HOCHHEIM. You will live happy evermore,
ALL. Out of church!
HOCHHEIM. Two little love-birds on one perch.
ALL. Come to church!

They prepare to escort FRITZ and WANDA to the Cathedral.

Enter quickly R.2.E. PRINCE PAUL, GROG, NEPOMUC, and PUCK. (Music continues during the ensuing dialogue.)

PUCK. Stop!

Soldiers and Peasants express surprise and annoyance.

PAUL (to FRITZ). General, I have the honour to represent you.
FRITZ. It's very kind of you, but I don't see the likeness. (Aside.) – I should be jolly sorry if I did!
PAUL. It's an affair of honour.
FRITZ. Honour? You've come to the wrong shop. We're quite out of it. Come on, Wanda. (*Preparing to go.*)
PAUL. General Boum has sent you a challenge.
FRITZ. Has he? It's the first wedding present I've had.
NEPOMUC. I had the honour to be the bearer of the General's message. (*Bows.*)
PAUL. I had the honour to receive it. (*Bows to NEPOMUC.*)
FRITZ. Then you can have the honour to accept it. (*Bows.*) Come on, Wanda!
PAUL. I have accepted it –
FRITZ. Good luck to you. Sorry I have to go.
PAUL. On your behalf.
FRITZ. On my behalf? Well, I call that jolly impertinence, if you ask me. I don't want to fight General Boum. I'll attend to the matter in a week or two. (*Going.*)
NEPOMUC. Pardon me, General. You must attend to it now.
PAUL. The duel is to take place at once – in the market-place.
HOCHHEIM. A duel! How exciting!
NIERS. May we come and see it?
PUCK. Certainly not. (*Soldiers, etc., express disappointment.*) This is a private duel. You can all wait in the Cathedral.
WANDA. Fritz, promise you won't fight?
FRITZ. I promise I won't, if I can help it.

CHORUS and SCENE.

CHORUS. Now, to the fight you must proceed,
It is no use for you to tarry!
Then, in the church, should you succeed,
All of us soon will see you marry!

Away! away! away!

WANDA (to FRITZ). Do not go, don't, my dear!
FRITZ (to WANDA). Never fear, never fear!
WANDA. Don't go, don't go, my dear,
I am shaking with fear!
PUCK and PAUL. Come along! Don't delay!
We really cannot stay.
FRITZ (to WANDA). What do you think I ought to do?
WANDA. Stay with me, dearest, do not go!

PUCK separates FRITZ and WANDA.

PAUL. Come outside, come outside,
You'll have to go and leave your bride!
CHORUS. Come outside, come outside,
You'll have to go and leave your bride!

PUCK (to FRITZ). I'll back you up and see you through,
I'll bet my ruffled shirt on you!
And if in combat you should fall,
I'll see about your funeral!
CHORUS. We'll back you up and see you through,
And put our latest cent on you!
And if in combat you should fall,
We'll all attend the funeral!
HOCH (to FRITZ). You robbed him of his honour bright,
You stepped into his martial shoes!
He's challenged you to single fight,
To end in death – no matter whose!
CHORUS. You robbed him of his honour bright, etc.
FRITZ (to PUCK). Look here, you know, I much prefer
To marry her to-night –
So we'll adjourn the fight!
PUCK. You'll have to fight ere dawn of day,
And only one will go away!

FRITZ (to WANDA). My dear, I fear I've got to go.
NIERSTEIN (to WANDA). It's all right! We'll take care of you!
PUCK (to FRITZ). So now prepare your foe to face!
CHORUS. Yes, now prepare your foe to face!

Exit NEPOMUC L.1.E.

FRITZ (worried and annoyed). Where have I put my leather belt?
CHORUS. Where has he put my leather belt?

As FRITZ asks for a thing, MACROBRUNNER passes it to PUCK, who gives it to FRITZ and helps him put it on. These movements must be very rapid and without confusion.

FRITZ. Oh, you must find my belt of leather,
I cannot fight without my belt!
CHORUS (while PUCK, gives FRITZ the belt).

See, here it is, your leather belt!
FRITZ. My sabretache! They go together!
CHORUS. They go together! (PUCK gives it to him.)
FRITZ. And now, my feather – yes, my feather!
Pray bring it here, my lofty plume.
(PUCK puts the helmet on.)
Now I'm in full costume!
CHORUS. Now he has his plume,
He's in full costume!

NEPOMUC (entering L.1.E. carrying the sword).
Wait a bit, my lord, do not go,
I've got it here for you – you know!
FRITZ (speaking). Oh! it's her blessed father's sword again!
(Takes it and angrily addresses it.)
You wretched sword, if you but knew
The rage I feel at seeing you!
CHORUS. Forth to the fray, forth to the strife!
FRITZ. Oh, ain't it gay, a soldier's life!
ALL. To the field! to the field!
And vow to die before you yield!
To the field!

NEPOMUC has gone a little up stage. During the final chorus PUCK has tried to lead FRITZ away R.2.E. PRINCE PAUL holds WANDA, who tries to escape and throw herself in FRITZ's arms. GROG separates them, and, just as FRITZ is being led off by PUCK R.2.E., the Curtain falls.

Scene 2. – A Market Place with Cathedral. Dawn. Entrance to Cathedral L.C. R. and L. are drinking-booths, etc. Entrances R.2.E. and L.2.E. The Officers, Soldiers, and Villagers are supposed to be inside the Cathedral awaiting the arrival of FRITZ and the wedding party. PUCK, PRINCE PAUL, and NEPOMUC are awaiting the arrival of BOUM and FRITZ. PUCK is looking off. PRINCE PAUL and NEPOMUC pacing up and down. The music continues during opening dialogue.

PAUL (to PUCK). Any sign of him?
PUCK. No.
PAUL. I do hate people who don't keep appointments. It's just as easy to be punctual as to be late.
NEPOMUC. Did you thoroughly explain where he was to come?
PAUL. Certainly. We said "the Market Place."
NEPOMUC. He must be under some misapprehension.
PUCK. He's much more likely under the bed.
NEPOMUC. Where's Fritz?
PAUL. Our man was here at the time appointed. He's hunting for Boum.

Enter FRITZ R.2.E. Music stops.

PUCK. Well?
FRITZ. Well, I've done all *I* can to find him. I suppose his honour's satisfied. I know mine is!
PUCK. Hardly.
FRITZ. Well, I don't care! Boum hasn't turned up. I sha'n't wait any longer; I'll find Wanda and get married at once.

Goes towards R.U.E. The others draw him back.

PUCK. No, no! You must get the fight over before you marry.
FRITZ. How can I fight when Boum's not here?
NEPOMUC. I'll run and see if I can find him.
FRITZ. Well! I'll give you five minutes and that's all. In five minutes I marry; fight or no fight. (*Exit NEPOMUC R.E.2.*) Would it do if I fought somebody else?
PAUL. Silly.
PUCK. Stop! That's given me an idea.
PAUL. What's that?
PUCK. (*to PRINCE PAUL*). Why shouldn't Fritz fight you?
PAUL. Fight me? For the very good reason that it takes two to make a fight, and I'm certainly not going to be one of them.
FRITZ. I shouldn't get any credit for fighting a little chap like that!
PUCK. But you would get cash, which is much better than credit.
FRITZ. Ah! now you're talking!
PAUL. But I don't understand; what shall *I* gain?
PUCK. Unless I'm very much mistaken, you'll gain the hand of the Grand Duchess.
PAUL. No! How?
PUCK. (*to PRINCE PAUL*). I'll explain to you in one moment. (*To FRITZ.*) – Three thousand thalers wouldn't make a bad little dowry for Wanda.
FRITZ. (*eagerly*). I should think it would! (*Recollecting himself.*) What should I have to do?
PAUL. Yes, what would he have to do? *I'm* concerned in this.
PUCK. Listen and I'll tell you my plan. I propose that it shall appear that, in your pursuit of General Boum, you have met with a masked adversary, who challenged you in single combat and defeated you.
PAUL. Why masked?
PUCK. To conceal your identity, and appeal to her Highness' romantic fancy. (*To FRITZ.*) – You shall present yourself before her wounded and disgraced.
FRITZ. Here – I shall want a bit more for that!
PUCK. How much? I don't want to quarrel over terms.
PAUL. (*aside*). That's very liberal of him.
FRITZ. Well, shall we say five hundred thalers for the "wounded" and twenty thalers for the "disgraced"?
PUCK. Very well, that's settled. First of all you have your bogus duel —
FRITZ. Three thousand thalers!

PUCK *(aside to PRINCE PAUL)*. Three thousand thalers, please!
PAUL *(aside to PUCK)*. Have I to pay that?
PUCK *(aside to PRINCE PAUL)*. Who else? *(PRINCE PAUL fumbles in his pockets.)* I'll hold the stakes.
PAUL. Here you are. *(Gives it to PUCK.)*
PUCK *(continuing, to FRITZ)*. In which duel you are wounded and disgraced —
FRITZ. Three thousand five hundred and twenty! *(PUCK signs to PRINCE PAUL.)*
PAUL *(fumbling in another pocket)*. Oh dear! There! *(Gives money to PUCK.)*
PUCK. Her Highness will probably dismiss you from her presence with an imperious glance of concentrated scorn.
FRITZ. That's worth another twenty! Three thousand five hundred and forty — to include the concentrated scorn.
PAUL. *(fumbling in a third pocket, and handing money to PUCK, aside)*. This is the silliest game I ever played!
PUCK. Her Highness will ask for the masked hero, who will turn out to be none other than his Highness Prince Paul!
PAUL. What a capital idea!
FRITZ. Well, when I come to think it over, I shall want extra money if I'm to be beaten by *that*!
PUCK. Shall we say four thousand thalers inclusive?
FRITZ. H'm! Well, I suppose I must say, yes.
PUCK. But you must do thoroughly well for that.
FRITZ. Oh! that'll be all right!
PUCK *(to PRINCE PAUL)*. And you must be waiting round the corner, ready to appear the moment I signal you.
PAUL *(to FRITZ)*. But you must promise not to hurt me!
FRITZ. Oh! that's all right!

Exeunt PUCK, FRITZ, and PRINCE PAUL, R.2.E.

Enter MACROBRUNNER, HOCHHEIM, NIERSTEIN, Soldiers, Peasants, and Vivandières from Cathedral L.C., weary of waiting for the wedding party.

DRINKING CHORUS.

To remain in cushionless pews,
In these purlieus,
We must refuse;
Nought can excuse
Such an unus-
-ual delay in giving the news!
Be the winning man who he may,
Here we will stay,
Try to be gay,
Drinking away,
Till it is day,
Singing a Bacchanalian lay!

NIERSTEIN. It is very provoking,
Fritz and Boum are lost, I think!
CHORUS. We are all of us choking,
Come what may, we want a drink!
HOCHHEIM. Of who'll conquer I'm not a predictor,
But, never mind which it may be,
We'll all of us drink to the victor,
So you shall drain a glass with me!

The Vivandières have got glasses from the drinking booths, filled them and handed them round.

HOCHHEIM (with glass). Here's his health!
ALL. Here's his health!
Here's a health to Fritz and his foe!
Let the wine flow
Golden in glow!
Drink to the way the fight will go,
Drink to the victor that time will show!

Enter the GRAND DUCHESS R.U.E., attended by IZA.

DUCHESS. I hope the duel's done?
PUCK (re-entering R.2.E.). General Boum is not there!
NIERSTEIN. How vexing!
Boum is not there!
HOCHHEIM. We're almost in despair,
General Boum is not there!
CHORUS. We drink to drown our care,
General Boum is not there!
DUCHESS. To make the minutes pass,
I'll join you in a glass!

PUCK offers her a goblet.

SONG of the GLASS. — GRAND DUCHESS.

I had a good old ancestor,
A man, if I remember rightly,
Who everywhere was famous for
The liquor he could toss off nightly!
He had a mighty glass, they say,
And you could pour a hogshead in it;
His servants filled it night and day,
And never let it stand a minute!

ALL. Not he! Not he!

DUCHESS. Ah! good old man, how he could drink,
And drain his glass without a wink!
Oh, what a glass! Oh, what a glass!
And how he filled it to the brink!

ALL. Oh, good old days, when men could drink,

And drain their glass without a wink!
And what a glass a man could drain,
And fill again!

DUCHESS. One day, not long before he died
(Perhaps his hand was growing weaker),
He dropped his glass, and sadly sighed,
"I've gone and broke my blessed beaker!"
They made another like the first,
A remarkable green and gold glass;
But he preferred to die of thirst,
Because he could not have his old glass!

ALL. His own! His own!

DUCHESS. Ah, good old man, how he could drink,
And drain his glass without a wink!
Oh, what a glass! Oh, what a glass!
And how he filled it to the brink!

ALL. Oh, good old days, when men could drink,
And drain their glass without a wink!
And what a glass a man could drain,
And fill again!

Noise without.

PUCK. Who's this? Why, it's Boum!
BOUM (*feebly, without*). Where is he? Let me get at him!
(*Enter R.2.E. BOUM, dragged on by NEPOMUC. BOUM is looking dishevelled and frightened.*) Where is he? I will cut him in quarters!
DUCHESS. So, General, you have defeated your adversary?
BOUM. He wasn't there!
PUCK. This was the rendezvous.
BOUM. Pardon me; he said the Market. As the aggrieved party I have choice of markets; I chose the other one. I adopted my usual tactics. I approached it by three routes.
PUCK. None of which led to the meeting place.
BOUM. None of which led to the — no, no, I don't mean that! There wasn't a meeting place, because he wasn't there.
PUCK. No, he was here!
BOUM. Ah, well, that accounts for it. At all events, it was a glorious victory.
PUCK. Bloodless —
NEPOMUC. But glorious!
DUCHESS. That's not my idea of victory!

Derisive shouts without. Some of the soldiers and peasants go off to see what it is.

HOCHHEIM (*looking off*). It's Wanda: what's the matter with her.
NIERS. And who is that wretched creature following her?

WANDA runs on R.U.E. and comes down C.

SCENA. – WANDA, FRITZ, and CHORUS.

WANDA. Oh, see my poor Fritz how he's battered
His uniform all torn and tattered!
It's because his warlike brags,
They have gone and torn his clothes to rags!
CHORUS. They have gone and torn his clothes to rags!

FRITZ has entered during above. He is surrounded by the peasants, etc., who are jeering at him. He is in a pitiable state, dishevelled, no epaulettes, his plume broken, the broadsword twisted up.

SONG. – FRITZ.

Your Highness, I came at your call,
My fortune has met with a fall;
It's really too cruel,
To force such a duel,
On one who's not practised at all!
The broadsword your father once wore
Is a corkscrew, and nothing more!
Nothing more!

DUCHESS., PUCK, NEPOMUC, BOUM (*laughing at him*).
Nothing more!

FRITZ. Blow me pink! I've come to grief,
By playing Commander-in-Chief!
ALL (*laughing at him*). Blow him pink! He's come to grief,
By playing Commander-in-Chief!

FRITZ. I went to the Market to fight,
My foeman has taken to flight,
A chap with a mask on,
Said he'd take the task on;
Of course I made answer, "All right!"
It wasn't all right; but all wrong –
Though he was small, he was beastly strong,
Beastly strong!

DUCHESS., PUCK, NEPOMUC, BOUM (*laughing at him*).
Beastly strong!

FRITZ. Blow me pink! I've come to grief,
By playing Commander-in-Chief!
ALL (*laughing at him*). Blow him pink! He's come to grief,
By playing Commander-in-Chief!

PUCK gives some instructions to NEPOMUC, who goes off R.U.E.

DUCHESS (*to FRITZ*). I am displeased with you!
FRITZ. Well, I'm not particularly gone on myself.
DUCHESS. Who was your antagonist?
FRITZ. I can't tell you. He wore a mask; a little man, he was.

DUCHESS. And my blessed father's sword! How did it get like that?
FRITZ. That's all through resisting. If I hadn't resisted —
DUCHESS. I beg your pardon, Colonel?
FRITZ. I beg yours. I fancied I was General.
DUCHESS. Did I say Colonel? I meant Captain.
FRITZ. Why not Lieutenant?
DUCHESS. Or, Sergeant!
FRITZ. We're getting on! We're getting on! There's only one more step to common soldier.
DUCHESS. That's the word I couldn't think of! Common soldier — of course! That's what you are!
BOUM (to FRITZ). Ugh! Common soldier! (*Aside.*) — At last I shall be back again in the dear old War Office!

Enter GROG L.2.E.

DUCHESS (*seeing GROG*). Ah, Baron!
GROG. Your Highness!
DUCHESS (*taking the plume from FRITZ's hat*). Accept the plume of Commander-in-Chief. (*She gives it to GROG.*) — Take it!
BOUM (*aside*). Thunder and furies!
DUCHESS. Accept my blessed father's sword — take it!
BOUM (*aside*). Rage and despair!
DUCHESS. Accept, Baron, the Freedom of the City! Accept —
GROG. I thank your Highness. The Baroness Grog will bless you!
DUCHESS. The Baroness Grog!
PUCK (*delighted*). Oh, yes, your Highness. Didn't you know? He has a wife and four children!
GROG. Six, General. I had a message from home this morning.
DUCHESS. But how —
GROG. Thank you. As well as can be expected. A boy and a girl. My wife's a marvel. I remember, last time —
DUCHESS. A wife and six children! Baron!
GROG. Your Highness?
DUCHESS. Give back the plume! — (*He gives it back.*) Now the sword! — (*He gives it to her.*) General Boum, the plume is yours again. (*BOUM approaches with empressement and takes the plume from the GRAND DUCHESS.*)
BOUM (*aside, going back to his place*). This time I'll have it nailed on!
DUCHESS (*to PUCK*). Baron Puck — (*PUCK approaches*) — take this corkscrew. (*She gives him the sword.*) I institute you Lord High Keeper of my blessed father's sword!
PUCK (*aside, taking the sword*). Now for the masked hero! (*Goes up and beckons off R.U.E. Shouts heard without. Some of the Soldiers and Peasants run off R.U.E.*)
DUCHESS. What is that?

Re-enter NEPOMUC R.U.E., followed by Peasants, etc., walking backwards and cheering loudly. Then enter PRINCE PAUL, in cloak and masked.

PUCK. Your Highness, the hero of the day!
DUCHESS (*much interested*). Oh, the masked conqueror!
FRITZ (*pointing to PRINCE PAUL*). That's him, right enough!
DUCHESS. Ah! (*Looks with great interest at PRINCE PAUL, aside.*)
— Who can it be? (*Aloud.*) — Brave Sir Knight, what
reward do you ask?
PAUL (*in a deep melodramatic voice*). May I be bold in my
request, your Highness?
DUCHESS. As bold as you have proved yourself on the field!
PAUL. Then I crave the right to protect your honour — always!
DUCHESS. To marry me? Really, this is so sudden! But — after
all, you have proved yourself worthy; and a girl's
heart is really her best guide!
PUCK. Wouldn't you like to know who it is?
DUCHESS. I never thought of that! Certainly, I shall be most
happy. (*PRINCE PAUL throws off his mask and cloak. He
is in wedding clothes.*)
PAUL (*in his ordinary voice*). It's only me!
DUCHESS. Prince Paul!
PAUL. Dear lady!
DUCHESS. This is too ridiculous! Very well! (*Gives her hand to
PRINCE PAUL.*)
PAUL (*preparing to lead the GRAND DUCHESS to the Cathedral*).
This is quite too sweet of you! (*The DUCHESS pinches
his arm.*) — Aie! aie!
DUCHESS (*glancing at FRITZ and GROG, and shrugging her
shoulders*). When you can't get what you like, you must
like what you get!

FINALE OF ACT III.

BOUM (*aside*). At last I recover my plume!
PUCK (*aside*). At last I recover my place!
PAUL (*to GRAND DUCHESS*).
At last to your hand I presume!
GROG. At last I'll see my latest Groglet's face!
FRITZ (*to WANDA*). Now, my dear, our wedding day we'll make it!
WANDA (*to FRITZ*). Then, at home, our cottage we'll share!
DUCHESS (*aside, looking at PRINCE PAUL*).
For, what fate gives, we've got to take it,
And, who knows? happiness perhaps is there!
FRITZ (*to the air of "The Song of the Glass"*).
Let other men to battle go,
I much prefer a humbler station;
We'll train our sons to face the foe,
And so we'll serve the nation!
ALL. He'll train his sons to face the foe,
And so he'll serve the nation!
DUCHESS. I've played my part — with some mistakes,
But they've ended in a wedding day!
It's unexpected, but it makes

The proper ending to the play!
ALL. It's unexpected, but it makes
 The proper ending to the play!

DUCHESS. My ancestor, how glad he'd be,
 If he could only look at me!

ALL. Her ancestor, if he could see,
 How very, very glad he'd be!
 How glad he'd be!

Gladly we'll celebrate this happy wedding day,
We'll make the merry cannons roar, we'll wave
 the banners gay!
Hail we the bridegroom who at last has won his bride!
And loudly hail our country's Queen, our glory
 and our pride!

CURTAIN.