

'THE BIRDS'
OF
ARISTOPHANES;
A DRAMATIC EXPERIMENT.

IN ONE ACT,

Being an humble attempt to adapt the said "Birds" to this
climate, by giving them new names, new feathers,
new songs and new tales,

BY J. R. PLANCHÉ, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"Fortunio," "The White Cat," "Beauty and the Beast,"
"The Sleeping Beauty," "The Drama at Home,"
"The Fair one with the Golden Locks,"
"The Bee and the Orange Tree, &c. &c."

~~~~~  
"A jest's prosperity lies in the ear  
Of him that hears it, never in the tongue  
Of him that makes it.

*Shakespere.*

~~~~~  
Correctly Printed from the Prompt Book,
with Exits, Entrances, &c.

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—  —  
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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

The King of the Birds..... Mr. JAMES BLAND,  
Jackanoxides..... Mr. HUDSON,  
Tomostyleseron..... Mr. CAULFIELD,  
A Poet..... Mr. TILBURY,  
AnArchitect..... Mr. BRINDAL.  
A Senator..... Mr. T. F. MATHEWS,

The Nightingale { "*MostMusical*"  
                          *but not "Most*  
                          *Melancholy'* } Miss P. HORTON,

*Who on this particular occasion, has consented in the hand-  
somest manner, to Mis-lead the Chorus, and although  
a single Soprano, to supply a Parabasis.*

Other Birds by a Flock of Auxiliaries from the  
Zoological Gardens.

## P R E F A C E .

IT is related of Charles II., that, being present at a meeting of the Royal Society, he very gravely requested to know the reason " Why the insertion of a fish of three pounds weight, into a bucket of water, made no difference in the weight of the bucket?" A vast quantity of learning and ingenuity was immediately put in requisition to account for the phenomenon; at length, one gentleman observed that, before they endeavoured to ascertain the reason, they should establish the fact, and that, with submission to his majesty, he believed that the insertion of the fish would make a difference in the weight of the bucket. " You are quite right," said Charles, " it would."

The exceeding favour which has been shown to this Drama, by nearly the whole of the Metropolitan Press, flatters me into the belief that the verdict wou'd have been unanimous if the two or three dissentients, before they discussed the merits of the piece, as *a burlesque*, had ascertained that it *was a burlesque*.

It has never been advertised or officially entitled " a burlesque." It is an humble attempt to imitate or paraphrase (but not burlesque or travesty) such portions of the Comedy of " the Birds," as were capable of being adapted to local and recent circumstances. To new set the teeth of the old *saws*, and make them cut through "modern instances." " An experiment," (as it is called in the bills) undertaken with the view of ascertaining how far the theatrical public would be willing to receive a higher class of entertainment than the modern *Extravaganza* of the English stage, or the " *Revue*" of the French. To open a field—not for myself alone - but in which much abler men might give the reins to their imagination and their wit in a dramatic form, unfettered by the rules and conventionalities of a regular Comedy, and assisted to any extent by Music and Decoration. Notwithstanding the probable disappointment of the lovers of mere absurdity, and the natural mystification of a few good humoured holiday spectators, the experiment, I am happy to say, was as successful as my poor abilities could make it, and, what is of more consequence, it ensures the future triumphs of superior writers, if such will make the trial. The kind and complimentary manner in which, even my censors, have expressed their opinions, demands my best acknowledgements, and if I do not bow to their decision, it is because, as I have stated, I deny the fact upon which they found their arguments. One Critic, for instance, who insists on comparing " The Golden Fleece," a burlesque of a tragic subject with " The Birds," a paraphrase of portions of a comic one, is shocked at the introduction of Jupiter, and remarks that his language " was far too earnest; too literal; it was no longer burlesque; it was no less than the voice of offended Heaven." My only answer is that I never contemplated burlesque. The fable is ended; the allegory over; the moral to be drawn, however trite, is a serious one, I could not too earnestly, too literally point out (the sole aim of the piece).

What dire confusion in the world 'twould breed,  
If fools *could* follow whither knaves *would* lead.

And it is the feebleness, and not the strength or gravity that I regret, of the language in which the concluding exhortation is couched :

"On wings *forbidden*, seek no *idle* Fame,  
Let men BE men ! and WORTHY OF THE NAME !"

APRIL 20TH.

J.

R.

PLANCHÉ.

THE BIRDS  
OF  
**ARISTOPHANES.**

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SCENE I.—THE APEX OF A WOODY  
MOUNTAIN.

*Enter* CHORUS (L).

*Cho.* From ancient Athens, upon Fancy's wing  
To modern Babylon, these scenes we bring;  
Their import, merely guessed at in the Greek,  
We venture in our vulgar tongue to speak ;  
With sundry variations I acknowledge,  
Which may astonish men just fresh from college,  
But to the million, prove less caviare,  
Than if we stuck to Bekker, Brunck, or Carey:  
In fine, we hope, by mimic means, and choral,  
To draw from ancient saws a modern moral,  
The truth of which may serve our piece to save,  
E'en, if for Easter, thought a shade too grave ;  
Not that with gravity we mean to teaze you,  
Our birds have merry thoughts, we hope will please  
you.  
The centre of their gravity is mirth,  
Which if they lose they tumble flat to earth;  
With cheerful song they'd wile an hour away

I act the nightingale, I beg to say,  
 Behind the scenes; but, when before your faces,  
 I venture out to speak the parabasis,  
 I come as now, in *propria persona*.  
 A sight, the author swears, worth all the money ;  
 For bless the men, they can be so gallant,  
 When a poor woman's services they want,  
 And thus much he entreated me to say,  
 By way of introduction to his play.  
 From Fairy Land awhile he has flown off, and he's  
 Trying to catch the Birds of Aristophanes  
 For your diversion. If, alas! he fails  
 In putting attic salt upon their tails,  
 He knows against him will be turned the laugh,  
 For you are not birds to be caught with chaff,  
 So hear him patiently before you frown,  
 Nor let his first shot bring the " Big Bird" down.

AIR—- " *Should he Upbraid.*"

Do not upbraid, kind friends, though I should fail  
 To sing as sweetly as the nightingale :  
 Critics be mute—nor scare the birds you view,  
 Or I shall have a crow to pluck with you!  
 Say some must frown—I hope the mass will smile,  
 Nor, for foul play, our playful fowl revile.

*Enter JACKANOXIDES and TOMOSTYLESEROM, following a  
 Raven and a Magpie.*

Now to begin,—two citizens are these  
 Of—we'll say—any town, in short, you please,  
 Who, being discontented with their station,  
 As people may be found in every nation,  
 Seek from the sovereign of the Birds to know  
 Where for the better, they had best to go.  
 The rest, in their own words, they will make plain,  
 If not, the Birds I'll cut, and come again ! [*Exit* L.

## QUARTETTE—"Gavotte de Vestris."

JACKANOXIDES, TOMOSTYLESERON, A MAGPIE AND A  
RAVEN.

*Mag.*           There, there, there!  
*Jack.*   What is't this cursed magpie chatters ?  
*Raven.*       Here, here, here !  
*Tom.*     This cannot be the way.  
*Mag.*       There, there, there!  
*Jack.*   'Tis not the way to mend our matters.  
*Raven.*       Here, here, here!  
*Tom.*     Is't here you'd have us stay ?  
*Jack.*   A mighty pleasant ramble !—  
*Tom.*     Through bush, and briar, and bramble;  
*Jack.*   Up such a rock to scramble.  
*Tom.*     This unexpected gambol—  
*Both.*   Is to our act a sweet preamble.  
*Magpie.*   Here, here, here!  
*Raven.*   There, there, there!            }  
*Jack and Tom.* Where, where, where ? } Together.

*Tom*   Two precious fools we were to leave the town,  
       With guides like these to wander up and down,  
       In search of the wise king of all the birds !  
       This comes of taking people at their words.  
       The rogue from whom we bought these gabbling  
       guides,  
       In selling them, sold us, I think, besides.

*Jack.* There is no truth in man ! Else, wherefore, pray,  
       Have we resolved no more 'mongst men to stay ?  
       But seek out some blest corner of the earth,  
       Where folks are not weighed by what gold they're  
       worth,  
       Where there's no care, no fraud, no toil, no strife,  
       And we may settle down in peace for life.  
       If there be such a land, it must be known  
       To the Bird King, who round the world has flown ;

If, in his flight, he never saw the spot,  
Why then I give it up,—but till then not!

*Tom.* Look, Jack ! both birds have settled on yon rock,  
The King, perchance, lives there.

*Jack.* Suppose you knock.

QUARTETTE *continued.*

*All,* Rap, rap, rap!

*Tom.* Come open quick thy marble dome here.

*All* Rap, rap, rap !

*Jack.* Knock louder, man, I say.

*All.* Rap, rap, rap !

*Tom.* Hollo ! Is any one at home here ?

*All.* Rap, rap, rap !

*Jack.* Methought the rock gave way.

*Tom.* Yes ; behold, oh, wonder!

*Jack.* The granite splits asunder.

*Tom.* And see. what bird is yonder ?

*Jack.* An eagle or a condor!

*Tom.* By Jove he looks as black as thunder.

*Both.* Back, back, back !

[*Rock opens—King of the birds appears in C.*

*King.* How now ! who wakes me from my sweet repose ?  
Hah! two vile fowlers! ye shall feed the crows.

*Jack.* We are no fowlers, mighty king, I swear,  
Behold, we carry neither gun nor snare.

*King.* But ye are men, and therefore full of guile,  
Creatures that smile, and murder while they smile!  
Foes to the feathered tribes, o'er which I reign,  
Thousands of whom ye for your sport have slain,  
Or pent in cages all their sad lives long,  
To cheer their cruel captors with their song!

*Tom.* 'Tis true we've the misfortune men to be,  
But are quite sick of men's society!  
And hither come in hope that you would tell us  
Where we might live untroubled by our fellows.

*King.* Untroubled ! nowhere, if within their reach;  
 The mountain summit, and the wild sea beach,  
 No longer limit their audacious strides,  
 Their steam-boats set at nought the winds and tides  
 And in balloons they scale the azure sky,  
 Not doubting they will rule there by and bye.

*Jack.* But are states all alike ? all men enrolled  
 Slaves of ambition—worshippers of gold ?  
 Is there no city now, for instance, where  
 To eat, and drink, and sleep, is all men's care ?  
 Where those who have to those who have not give,  
 Unlaboured for, the means, at least, to live ?  
 Where there's no pandering to wealth or station,  
 No war, no politics, no litigation;  
 No bitterness between the great and small—

*King,* I never saw one, and I've seen them all.

*Tom.* One question answer in the fewest words,  
 What sort of life is it amongst the birds ?

*King.* Why much like that which you desire to lead,  
 They neither pay for water nor for seed;  
 Do little work, except make their own beds;  
 With politics have never plagued their heads ;  
 With fashionable tailors run no scores;  
 Have no tax-gatherers knocking at their doors;  
 Bet on no races ; dabble in no stocks;  
 Need not a carriage or an opera box ;  
 Stake not a fortune upon cards or dice;  
 Keep no late hours, scarce practice any vice.  
 Sometimes a rival in a passion flies out,  
 And pecks, occasionally, a friend's eyes out.  
 But, barring little accidents like those,  
 Nothing can be more peaceable, heaven knows!

*Tom.* Charming ! I wish I were a bird—dont you ?

*Jack.* Well, really, now you mention it, I do.

On pinions light to follow pleasure's call,  
But that's impossible!

*King.* Oh, not at all;  
If you're sincere in such a wish, my power  
Can make birds of you both in half an hour.

*Tom.* You dont say so ? I've a great mind, by Jove!

*Jack.* But must we live and die then in a grove ?

*King.* Why you abused the city just this minute !

*Jack.* No, pardon me, 'twas but the people in it;  
The rogues who wouldn't let us live at ease,  
But houses are much better, sure, than trees  
To live in.

*King.* What, for birds?

*Jack.* So I should guess.  
Just ask the pidgeons, they'll, I'm sure, say yes;  
And oh! a bright idea, one that shall place  
The birds above the haughty human race,  
Who have long held them at most shameful odds,  
Nay, give them power equal to the gods !

*King.* Indeed! out with it!

*Jack.* Just cast up your eyes,  
And tell me what you see.

*King.* Naught but the skies.

*Jack.* Well, are not they the winged tribe's dominions?

*King.* On that point, there cannot be two opinions.

*Jack.* To build on trees then is it not a pity,  
When you might found a splendid airy city  
Midway 'twixt earth and heaven, so that admission  
To either would depend on your volition ?  
Both gods and men you thus would check with ease,  
And make with either any terms you please.

*King.* Oh exquisite design ! O rare device!  
I'll summon all the birds here in a trice.  
You shall explain your plan : if they approve,

We'll build the city and forsake the grove.  
 What ho! my Nightingale ! with thy sweet song,  
 Call a full meeting of the feathered throng;  
 Bid them, from woods and marshes, dells and brakes  
 Fly hither in a brace of your best shakes.

[*Flageolet behind scenes.*]

TRIO.

NIGHTINGALE, JACKANOXIDES *and* TOMOSTYLESERON.

" *Mocking Bird.*"

*Nightingale.* Tio, tió, tio; jug, jug, jug, &c.

*Jack.* Pretty warbler, soft and clear,  
 Pretty nightingale, thy voice I hear,  
 Filling all the vale with its descant dear.

*Enter* CHORUS.

AIR—CHORUS,

" *Little wot ye wha's coming.*"

All the birds are here coming!  
 All the birds are here coming!  
 All the birds are here coming!  
 Land and sea birds all coming.  
 Storks are coming, cranes are coming,  
 Crows are coming, finches coming,  
 Larks are coming, linnets coming,  
 Ruffs and reeves and all coming.

All the birds, &c.

The bird o' paradise is coming,  
 The heron and the quail are coming,  
 The parrot and the lory's coming,  
 And all the fine macaws coming,  
 Hark, how the bittern's crying,  
 See how the kites are flying;  
 Kingfisher and cassowary,  
 Yellowhammer and canary!

All the birds, &c.

The pelican was sore opprest, sir,  
 Talked of water on the chest, sir—

The owl would fain have been let off, sir,  
 Swore he'd got the hooping cough, sir,  
 But whip-poor-will, the whipper in, sir,  
 Said he didn't care a pin, sir.  
 Of the whole house 'twas a call, sir,  
 So they're coming—one and all, sir.

All the birds, &c.

CHORUS OF BIRDS IN THE AIR.

Toro, toro, toro, toro, tinx,  
 Kickabau, kickabau,  
 Toro, toro, toro, loli, lolink. \*

*[All the birds enter at a scream of the mind instruments.]*

*King.* Stay, and fear not! Hold, feathered subjects all,  
 Nor on your friends, and champions madly fall;  
 These learned men have hit upon a plan  
 To free us from our vassalage to man,  
 And make us equal to the gods in might!  
 Speak, friend. *(to Jack)*

*Jack.* But will they understand me ?

*King.* Quite

As well as men, and men of some pretence,  
 And many parrots speak much better sense.

*Jack.* Most potent, grave, and reverend owls and widgeons,  
 My very noble and approved good pigeons,  
 Gulls, peacocks, parrots, pelicans, and plovers,  
 Whom I would fain call countrymen and lovers,  
 Though very little of an ornithologist,  
 It seems I am to be my own apologist,  
 For this intrusion ! Hear me kites and daws,  
 Hear me, ye rooks, for I espouse your cause !

*\* As any translation of the above might weaken the force and beauty of the original, it has been thought advisable to request the chorus to sing it in Greek, particularly as any language in which a chorus is sung behind the scenes must be equally incomprehensible to the audience.*

" Arms and the man" to sing I deem absurd,  
 A nobler theme is mine, " Wings and the bird!"  
 The bird ! a being before man created,  
 And in the world far higher elevated!

*Parrot* Hear, hear.

*Jack.* The honourable bird may cheer,  
 But I will make my case as noon-day clear !  
 Born before man, I say 'tis my opinion,  
 By eldership, you claim o'er him dominion.  
 Still shall the plumeless biped crow o'er you,  
 Cock of the walk——

*Birds.* Hear!

*Cock.* Cock-a-doodle do.

*Jack.* Sir, I am not to be put down by clamour,  
 Nor knocked down by a factious yellowhammer.

*Birds.* Chair—order, order—name !

*Jack.* Sir, I contend I am in order.

*Birds.* No, no.

*Tom.* Yes, you are.

*King.* Order ! order there, below the bar!

*Jack.* Were ye not kings before the human race !  
 Why on their standards do they eagles place ?  
 Doves on their sceptres ? Are ye not ashamed  
 To be by these barbarians kill'd or tamed ?  
 Like slaves or madmen do the villains treat ye ?  
 Shoot ye, if on the open moors they meet ye.  
 Lime-twigs beat bushes, hunt through brakes and  
 briers,  
 Lay snares, gins, meshes, traps, and traitorous wires,  
 Sell you in shops and markets, strung by scores;  
 Hawk you about in carts, at tavern doors;  
 Alive—in cages coop, on perches post you—  
 Dead—pluck and skewer, and lard, and stuff, and  
 roast you!

*Birds.* Hear, hear.

*King.* These facts are known to every grouse,  
There is no motion yet before the house!

*Jack.* I'm ready, Sir, before the house to bring it,  
But, 'stead of saying, I prefer to sing it.

AIR—JACKANOXIDES.

" *O think not lewd Jove*" (MIDAS.)

Man long has the birds held, I say it with shame,  
But as marks for him to pop away at;  
Of some he makes captives, of others makes game,  
But he'll find 'tis a game two can play at.  
Turn about is but fair; who on earth pray is he,  
That all goods upon earth thus he gathers :  
Deprived of his tailor, the dandy would be,  
But a poor stupid fowl without feathers.

My plan is a city to build for the birds,  
Out of reach of man's vile fowling pieces ;  
Put boards up directly, upon them these words,  
" This sky to let on building leases."  
Soon covered'twill be with streets, crescents, and squares  
Though the houses, a breath down could shake 'em.  
Just see how the builders on earth n up theirs,  
And yet gulls they find plenty to take them.

A palace, of course, you must have for your king,  
Nothing easier is 'neath the sun done;  
Only if you would build the right sort of a thing,  
Don't look for the model in London.  
Of parliament houses you'll want a fine pair,  
Though your funds by them may be diminished ;  
But if run in debt for, you needn't much care,  
For you never will see them both finished !

With walls you must circle the city about,  
And, if after some suburban beauty,  
Sly Jove should come sneaking a permit without,  
By Jove, he shall pay transit duty!  
If Fate any mortal would raise to the stars,  
She must take out a passport, by jingo!

No monarch on earth shall pass our Temple-bars,  
Without leave from the Lord Mayor, Flamingo!

Then man, if his crimes he would have us o'erlook,  
For the past must make full reparation.

He shall alter the game-laws to suit the bird's book,  
And to pheasants give true preservation.

No pie make of partridge, of pigeon, or grouse,

No soup make of birds'-nests at Canton.

He shall pull down " the Poultry," and burn the " Red  
House,"

And abolish the name of " Joe Manton !"

*[Great cheering from the Birds on all sides of the house.]*

*King.* Hark to those notes of joy and exultation !

Your scheme has met with perfect approbation-

*Jack.* About the building then, without delay.

*King.* Storks, martins, swallows, to the work away;

You've carrier pigeons will materials bring,

And cranes enough to hoist up anything!

By woodpeckers the timber shall be found,

And Yellow-hammers make the floors around.

The pelicans will bring up pails of water,

Spoon-bills and horn-bills help to mix the mortar.

'Twere hard, indeed, if birds could not compare,

With men, in building castles in the air.

AIR.—KING AND CHORUS.

" *Bartlemy Fair, O.*"

Come, bustle, small and big,

Take your leaves and hop the twig ;

Cut your sticks and plume your crests,

Leave off feathering your nests;

Build a city in the sky,

Which with any one shall vie,

London, Paris, Rome, Vienna, or Grand Cairo!

Go to work—rival Smirke—

Make a dash, à la Nash—

Something try at, worthy Wyatt—  
 Plans out carry, great as Barry—  
 With a hey down, ho down, derry derry down,  
 'Tis so easy to build castles in the air, O!

*[Exeunt all the Birds*

- King.* Meanwhile if still you feel the inclination,  
 We will to birds, effect your transformation.
- Jack.* Stop,—just one moment,—must I have a bill ?
- King.* Of course.
- Jack.* And loose our speech ?
- King.* You may speak still  
 As parrots, magpies, daws, or starlings do.
- Jack.* No better!—why not speak as well as you ?
- King.* Oh, I'm a genius, whom the birds for king  
 Elected. That's another sort of thing.
- Tom.* But we are geniuses, too, in our way.
- King.* Then, as you are, why not contented stay ?
- Jack.* Because our talent's not appreciated  
 By the vile herd with whom we were located.
- Tom.* A bird !—the thought with fear my bosom fills;  
 We left the city to get rid of bills.
- King.* Call it a beak.
- Jack.* That's worse almost—Heaven knows,  
 The beaks have always been our deadly foes.
- Tom.* Can't we have wings, and be as gay as larks ;  
 Yet keep the form of men ?
- King.* You're pretty sparks.  
 No,—either men in every point remain,  
 Or be as birds should be.
- Jack.* Let's think again  
 'Ere we decide.
- King.* Well,—by the time the town  
 Is built, make up your minds, and call me down.

*Tom.* Stop; I'm for wings and feathers, come what may

*King.* And what bird will you be—a poppinjay ?

*Tom.* No, no; they pop at him [*to* JACK.] What kind  
would you be ?

*King.* [*Aside.*] The bird you're most akin to is a booby.

*Jack.* For fear of accidents, some fowl I'd be,  
That folks don't shoot or eat.

*Tom.* Humph !—let me see;  
There may be one I never heard the name of.

*King.* [*Aside.*] You can't be anything, they won't make  
game of

*Tom.* I have it—yes, the very thing—'twill do!

*Jack.* What have you fixed upon ?

*Tom.* A cockatoo!

*King.* Bravo—walk in ; I'll fit you in a trice.

*Jack.* Before I settle, I'll at least think twice.

TRIO—KING, JACKAMOXIDES. AND TOMOSTYLESERON.

*" Here's a Health to all Good Lasses.*

Who can doubt of wings the uses,  
When with one quill from a goose's,  
People born in lowest station,  
Have risen up to rule a nation—  
Let the praise of wings resound.

Hey for pinions !  
Who'd not bear 'em?  
Fortune's minions  
Always wear 'era.

Time has wings, and Love, and Pleasure—  
Life itself's a fleeting treasure;  
All our joys with wings are found.

*Enter* CHORUS (L.)

PARABASIS.

*Cho.* Good, sensible folks, if there be any here,  
Inclined at these classical fancies to sneer,  
Be just, if not generous. First look at home,  
Without going either to Greece or to Rome.

Could not projects as airy, and visions as vain,  
 Be proved to have sprung from an Englishman's  
 brain?

Have no speculations, as monstrous almost,  
 Been seen advertized in the Times or the Post?  
 Has no Jackanoxides, deemed to have *nous*,  
 Ever championed a scheme as absurd in the house?  
 Nay, are there none present, who've given support  
 To a bubble as empty, blown through Capel-court?  
 Now to take t'other side up, with questions as  
 leading,

And show I'm a dab at what's called special  
 pleading:

Having seen what we've seen ; seeing still what  
 we see,

Who can venture to swear such things yet may  
 not be ?

What in men turned to birds, is too strange to be  
 funny,

When they make every day, ducks and drakes of  
 their money.

Why should not the fowls, in the air build a palace,  
 When there's hope of a submarine railway to  
 Calais?

In the days of Queen Bess, did our forefathers  
 dream,

Of the glories of gas, and the marvels of steam.

And if a Utopia, man could secure

In Harmony, birds would beat Owen, I'm sure!

AIR— "*An alteration, a wonderful alteration.*"

And so I come to tell you, that the wondrous work's begun,  
 The airy city, from the earth, will soon block out  
 the Sun.

The birds have sent to Jupiter himself, a supersedeas,  
 And messengers to man to say, they now are gods  
     " in medias."

Henceforth in common parlance, when expressing fears  
     or wishes,

Folks must say " Gods and little birds," not " Gods  
     and little fishes!"

    For there's an alteration, an alteration,  
     A wonderful alteration!

No longer offering sacrifice, to Venus or to Love,  
 The amorous youth's divinity will be the turtle-dove,  
 The eagle 'stead of Jove himself, will wield the awful  
     thunder,

The magpie lead, for Mercury, the sons of trade or  
     plunder;

The game-cock be the soldier's idol, " *vice* Mars dismist,"  
 The owl preside for Pallas over all the learned list.

    Though *that's* not much of an alteration,  
     Not much of an alteration.

Nor need we wonder living birds such power should  
     possess,

When even dead their influence, o'er man is scarcely less.  
 A box of grouse has had its weight, when justice idly  
     pleaded,

Where wisdom's voice had urged in vain, a good fat  
     goose succeeded;

A Christmas turkey, hearts may move, when Christian  
     feelings fail,

The feathers of a woodcock even serve to turn the scale!

    And make an alteration, an alteration,  
     A wonderful alteration.                   [*Exit* (L. )

*Enter* JACKANOXIDES (R.)

*Jack.* By Jupiter the work goes bravely on ;  
     A luckier day for mortal never shone.  
 The birds have sent me, with a grateful ditty,  
 In a gold egg the freedom of their city.

And more my services to set a mark on,  
 Have made me of their new-form'd state the Archon.  
 Archon !—a pretty title to begin with;  
 And the first thread, a golden webb to spin with.  
 If Tomostyleseron begins to grumble,  
 I'll make him eat, of all pies, the most humble.  
 As to the king, as some low birds adore him,  
 He may be king, but I'll be viceroy o'er him.

[*Enter* CHORUS (L.)

*Cho.* Hail, Archon of the birds, whose glorious name,  
 Stands foremost on the the new made list of fame!  
 Not only 'mongst the feather'd race, but those  
 Who have so long been found their cruel foes.  
 On Change, no sooner was your project known,  
 Than every other scheme aside was thrown.  
 The bulls and bears, on pinions forth would sally,  
 The lamest duck is worshipped in the alley!  
 All are agog for wings; the stags in herds  
 Have taken flight, quite crazy, to be birds.

*Jack.* Into our state 'twere madness to admit them.

*Cho.* I question if we've wings enough to fit them ;  
 For half the nation upon flying bent is.

*Jack.* Here comes one, looking scarcely compos mentis.

*Enter* A POET (R.)

Who may you be?

*Poet.* " You are, a  do not know it!"  
 As Shaksperé has it—sir, I am a poet.

*Jack.* A poet! Well, suppose you are, what then ?

*Poet.* Like you, disgusted, from the haunts of men  
 I fly;—and hearing of your airy scheme—

*Jack.* How heard you of it ?

*Poet.* In a Poet's dream.

"For lack of more substantial gifts, consoling  
 The poet's eye, in a fine phrenzy rolling,

Glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven !"  
 As Shakspere has it—one so often driven  
 To live on air—in air may surely claim,  
 "A local habitation, and a name,—"  
 As Shakspere—

*Jack.* Pray a truce with your quotation;  
 What offering bring you for our acceptation ?

*Poet.* My deathless songs, in which I'll celebrate  
 The new bird city, and its founder great.

*Jack.* Songs to the birds? Why my good friend, that'  
 bringing  
 Coals to Newcastle. Who that heard their singing  
 Could fancy yours ?

*Poet.* Their melody—but birds  
 Seldom sing words.

*Jack.* Words ! What's the use of words ?  
 Who ever hears the words when people sing.  
 The music, sir,—the music is the thing !

*Poet.* But poetry—

*Jack.* Poh, poetry, what stuff!  
 For music any words are good enough.  
 If you doubt me, sir, go and ask the trade,  
 How much for *poetry* they've lately paid.

*Poet.* But without music, sir, I'll sing your praise,  
 In ode Pindaric; or what's more, in plays.

*Jack.* In Plays!

*Poet,* Yes ; I'm a dramatist.

*Jack.* Indeed,  
 I thought there was an end of all that breed.

*Poet.* O, pardon me, there you're mistaken quite,  
 A piece of mine was,—damned the other night.

*Jack.* Come, there's some hope then of the stage at last

*Poet.* Sir!

*Jack.* No offence;—I know that in times past,

There was a public, and we had a pit,  
 That fired at poetry, and warmed at wit:  
 But I have heard so many people say,  
 " O dear, we never now go to the play ;"  
 That I was really quite rejoiced to find,  
 There was an audience left of any kind.

*Poet.* A base, an ignorant, malicious set;  
 But I'll be even with the rascals yet!  
 Of course you'll build a theatre—and there  
 I'll satirize them all.

*Jack.* Apply elsewhere.  
 I build a theatre above,—no, no,  
 There are too many to be let below.

[*Exit* POET (R.)

AIR.—CHORUS.

" *Lucy Neal.*"

In dust at Covent Garden,  
 The mourning muses sit,  
 Misfortune floored the management,  
 And Jullien floored the pit.  
 The Northern Wizard conjures,  
 And reckless maskers reel,  
 On boards so oft' by Kemble trod,  
 By Siddons and O'Neill.  
 Kemble, Young, and Kean,  
 Siddons and O'Neill!  
 If now ye graced the drama's side,  
 How happy she would feel.

*Enter an* ARCHITECT (R.)

*Jack.* Here comes another. Pray, sir, what are you ?

*Arch.* An architect.

*Jack.* And what come here to do?

*Arch.* Offer my service to erect your city,  
 On a new plan, approved of by the committee

For the establishment of the metropolis.  
 I've measured every inch of the Acropolis ;  
 Been up the Pyramids, and what is more,  
 Reached actually in one day, the fifth floor  
 Of a new mansion, near the Albert gale.

*Jack.* Impossible!

*Arch.* Sir, if it hadn't been so late,  
 I should have mounted to the attic story !

*Jack.* That story would have covered you with glory.  
 You would have gained by every one's concession,  
 The very greatest height in your profession.

*Arch.* Sir, I have always had a wish to rise,  
 And therefore seek employment in the skies.

*Jack.* But surely such a rising man as you,  
 Might find on earth enough of work to do.

*Arch.* I could, of course; but to reveal a fact,  
 My quarrel is with the new building act:  
 I feel my genius cramp'd sir, upon land,  
 They stipulate that houses now should *stand*,  
 A fallacy exploded long ago,  
 As ruinous to architects, you know,  
 For if your dwellings are to last for ages,  
 The half of us will not get workmen's wages.

*Jack.* Sir; to be frank with you, I think a swallow,  
 Would beat the best half of your builders hollow  
 To talk of architecture is a joke,  
 Till you can build a chimney that won't smoke!

*Arch.* Then you won't call me in at any price ?

*Jack.* No,—but I'll give you this piece of advice ;  
 To take so high a flight as you expect,  
 Don't build your own wings, Mr. Architect,  
 Or take my word for't, the first windy weather,  
 You and your wings will all come down together.

[*Exit Architect, R.*

AIR—JACKANOXIDES.

"A *life by the galley fire.* "

Of building they'll never tire,  
 Each end of the town's run wild ;  
 And the rents, like the houses, grow higher,  
 Which are mortgaged before they are tiled !  
 But though tenants they get for all,  
 The knowing ones wink their eye;  
 For they fancy the rents must fall  
 With the houses themselves bye-and-bye.  
 Of building they'll never tire,  
 Each end of the town's run wild ;  
 And the rents, like the houses, grow higher,  
 Which are mortgaged before they are tiled!  
 Yes, mortgaged—  
 Yes, mortgaged—  
 Mortgaged before they are tiled.

*Enter* LEGISLATOR (R.)

A third.—Your business ?

- Legis.* I'm a politician,  
*Jack.* A politician ! Then there's no admission  
 For you here. I'm of politics a hater!  
*Legis.* But I'm a senator,—a legislator;  
 One who can mend or make a constitution.  
 And as below they hint a dissolution,  
 I have pair'd off, and come with these laws span  
 new,  
 To offer to the birds.  
*Jack.* The deuce you do!  
 What are your politics, my learned brother;  
 Tory,—or whig?  
*Legis.* Sometimes one—sometimes 'tother;  
 In short, 'tis rather difficult to say,  
 What any one exactly is to-day.  
 But if in your new senate, you'll admit  
 Me, as a bird, for any place to sit,  
 My vote, for any measure —

*Jack.* Hence, sir, hop!  
 Or take your seat, the senate house a top  
 There, as a bird of tin, and not of feather ;  
 Turn as the wind blows—vary with the weather.  
[Exit. LEGIS.]

DUO—JACKANOXIDES AND CHORUS.

" *When the wind blows.*"

As the wind blows,  
 So the vote goes,  
 In hopes of a place so merry,  
 When the place drops,  
 In the man pops,  
 And laughs and sings hey down derry !

*Jack.* I shall be plagued to death, by all these bores;  
 Yonder I see them coming now by scores.  
 You madam, whosoever you may be,  
 For really that's a mystery to me—  
 But as you seem to have some power about here,  
 Can't you prevent these rogues from flocking out  
 here?

*Cho.* I fear not, you have set the folks the fashion,  
 Ornithomania now is quite a passion.  
 I tell you half the world is on the wing,  
 And taking bird 's-eye views of every thing :  
 For restless man, the mail train now too slow flies;  
 From point to point he'd travel as the crow flies.  
 None in their own sphere, will contented stay,  
 All would be birds *de la plus haute volée*;  
 All who are dunn'd for debts, or sick of troubles;  
 All who have blown, or been blown up by bubbles,  
 Are hastening hither. This one, pluck'd at college  
 Would plume himself upon superior knowledge;  
 That tired of flying kites, would be a kite,  
 To take up his own bill, for once, at sight.

The pluralist, Boyle Roach's bird—for he,  
 In two places at once contrives to be.  
 Then there are all those, who are forced to fly,—  
 Poor souls—so recently, in feather high !  
 Two hundred joint stock company projectors,  
 And 20,000 new rail-road directors.

*Jack.* O, monstrous! Such excessive emigration,  
 Would drain to death the most plethoric nation!  
 King of the birds, fly hither to my aid,  
 Give me a pair of pinions ready made,  
 That I may take my flight before they come—  
 You, madam, please to say I'm not at home.

*Scene changes to*

BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF THE CITY OF THE BIRDS.

KING OF THE BIRDS *appears on the branch of a tree.*

*King.* Where's Jackanoxides I come to tell,  
 The city's built—

*Jack.* 'Tis well!

*King.* I would 'twere well—

*Jack.* Is't not well built!

*King.* Yes.

*Jack.* Well, then, what's the matter ?

*King.* The rooks are making a confounded clatter ;  
 They want a rookery—

*Jack.* In my new town!

By Jove, if they build one, I'll pull it down.

*King.* They can't afford to live in Peacock-square ;  
 Where can they go to?

*Jack.* Go to ?—any where !

*King.* The sparrows think you at the rooks should wink,

*Jack.* What can it signify what sparrows think!

What say the parrots, goldfinches, and lorys ?



*Jack.* Hollo! How dare you talk this way to me,  
King of the birds, altho' you chance to be.

*King.* Peace, worm!—the king of Gods and men behold !

[Changes to JUPITER.

*The Scene at the same time changes and discover*  
OLYMPUS WITH THE PRINCIPAL DEITIES  
ENTHRONED.

*Jack.* [Falls on his knees.] Jupiter's self. By Jupiter,  
I'm sold!

Oh, Tomostyleseron—where, where are you ?

[A large COCKATOO appears (L.)

Merciful powers ! Can this be—

*Cock.* [In a melancholy tone.] Cockatoo!

*Jup.* Observe ye deities, these desperate fools,  
Who fain would rise, and push us from our stools.  
These brittle things—these images of clay;  
Poor shadowy shapes,—mere creatures of a day,  
Who born to trouble,would from trouble fly,  
Yet know not how, unless they scale the sky.  
Who discontented ever with their lot,  
Sigh only to be something, they are not.  
Hence, let wild theorists, a lesson take,  
And see what monsters, of themselves, they'd make.  
What dire confusion in the world 'twould breed,  
If fools could follow, whither knaves would lead.  
Ye mortals, fear the Cods, and trust the wise,  
Virtue alone can waft you to the skies.  
On wings forbidden, seek no idle fame,  
Let men be men, and worthy of the name!

FINALE.—CHORUS AND JACKANOXIDES.

"*Crusaders.*"

If you, our dear and constant friends, approve  
The moral here, to mortals read by Jove,  
Let no rude breath our new fledg'd hopes destroy,  
But fill each poor bird's flutt'ring heart with joy.

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