

THE
EXPOSITION.

A SCANDINAVIAN SKETCH,
CONTAINING AS MUCH IRRELEVANT MATTER AS POSSIBLE.

In One Act

BY
SHIRLEY BROOKS,

*Author of the " Daughter of the Stars," " Honours and Tricks,"
&c. &c.*



HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

*First performed at Punch's Playhouse, the Strand Theatre,
on Monday, April 28th, 1851.*

Characters.

SUPERNATURALS.

ODIN (<i>the Scandinavian Jove</i>)	MR. NORTON.
THOR	MR. JOHN REEVE
BALDER } <i>Brothers</i> }	MR. J. ROGERS.
HEIMDALL (<i>the Celestial Porter</i>).....	MR. ROMER.
VIDUR (<i>God of Silence</i>).....	MR. WHITE.
FREYA (<i>Wife of Odin</i>).....	MRS. C. HORSMAN
FYLLA (<i>her Maid</i>).....	MRS. C. MELVILLE.
NARMA (<i>Wife of Balder</i>).....	MISS DIBDIN.
SNOWTRA (<i>expectant Wife of Thor</i>)	MISS M. TAYLOR.

PRETERNATURAL.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.....	MISS MARSHALL.
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NATURAL.

AN AUTHOR, <i>who, wishing to be strictly anonymous, will be represented by</i>	MR. ATTWOOD.
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SCENE.

*Alternately on a Scandinavian Mountain and in Hyde Park
Date, 1851.*

TIME—impossible to count.

Costumes

The GODS and GODDESSES—tunics of various colours, and fleshings; some of them with crowns. FYLLA has a wreath of gold. THOR (until going on Earth) carries a huge silver-headed hammer. On Earth, the three Gods in morning dresses—ODIN, as a gay elderly gentleman, with eye-glass; BALDER with long hair and turn-down collar; THOR as a young guardsman.

The LADIES in fashionable morning dresses.

The SPIRIT—a little velvet shooting-coat, hat and feather, fleshings, embroidered waistcoat, turned-down collars, very smart red boots, little white wings, white gloves, a fancy cane.

AUTHOR—a white nightgown over dress suit, smart.

THE EXPOSITION.

SCENE I.—THE SUMMIT OF A SCANDINAVIAN MOUNTAIN.

Pinnacles of rock glittering with frost, and various colours in the stone. The Gods of Scandinavia are all ranged at the back, as subsequently mentioned, but at the rise of the curtain, clouds entirely conceal them. Lights down. Voices of SPIRIT OF THE AGE, and of the AUTHOR, heard—SPIRIT laughingly calling to him to come on, and he grumbling.

Enter AUTHOR, L., in his nightshirt.

AUT. Where wilt thou drag me? Stop; I'll go no higher.
And pray where are we, if one might enquire?
Over these mountain passes I've been jolted
Till— But where *are* you? Bless my soul—it's bolted.
(*bewildered*) I know I'm in a dream, but the deuce take me
If I can shake it off. Will (*angrily*) some one wake me?

Enter SPIRIT, R. 1 E.

SPI. What for?

AUT. Ha! there again!

SPI. What means your rage?

AUT. What *are* you?

SPI. I'm the Spirit of the Age.

AUT. Why have you brought me here?

SPI. To do you good.

All must succeed when I am understood.

Where were you, when I found you? Come, avouch!

AUT. In gentle slumber, on my virtuous couch.

SPI. (Ahem!) Having dined—well—with certain "fastish" men,
Snoring like one o'clock at half-past ten;
At least three dinner napkins in your pocket,
The burnt-out candle smoking in its socket;
Your fire lit up when there was no occasion,
Your boots, all mud, thrown in the washhand basin;
Your watch upon the hob, your door ajar,
(Signs that a man is gone—and rather far);
And, one more proof of intellectual riches,
Your nightgown on, over your new black—trousers.

- AUT. 'Tis true; I feel it here (*puts hands to forehead*) that whiskey
toddy,
Would steal the soul out of a Solon's body.
- SPI. And the burlesque which you were pledged to write
Which must be played, you know, on Monday night—
You, who with fast young men go out to dine—
How much burlesque is written ?
- AUT. Not a line;
To-morrow I'll sit down to joke and rhyme.
- SPI. (*solemnly*) " Procrastination is the thief of time."
- AUT. (*contemptuously*) That's old.
- SPI. The ready sneer on folly's tongue,
Just read the "Night Thoughts," and you'll find it's Young.
But what's your subject?
- ACT. Hang me if I know.
The " Arabian Knights " were used up long ago;
The Genii, Planche's genius makes his own,
Ere we can say (his name) " James Robinson."
Smith's hammer has been beating, as I'm told,
Alhambra's ore into good fairy gold.
Most of the Operas are atrocious stuff,
And the Bohemian Girl's eloped with Brough.
There's nothing left but the old track to follow,
With Jupiter, and Juno, and Apollo.
They'll do again, and every one confesses
The ladies look so well in classic dresses.
- SPI. Drop your conventional inventions, do,
At least affect to give folks something new.
- AUT. But there is nothing new, and as is writ
In Greek (I think) *ex nihilo nihil fit*.
- SPI. The Gods of Greece at once to exile sentence !
Have you no other heathenish acquaintance ?
- AUT. Yes, with the Roman idols I'm at home.
- SPI. No, England wants no Idol-farce from Rome.
If you need fables, surely history's mouth
Tells more than worn-out legends of the South.
- AUT. Does it? My few historic lights want feeding,
For we smart writers have small time for reading.
Still, if we take without it, what's the odds ?
- SPI. Why don't you try the Scandinavian Gods ?
- AUT. The Scandy— how much ?
- SPI. (*sneeringly*) Oh! how new and witty !
The jest of ignorance indeed claims pity.
- AUT. But this mythology—if one could work it—
Does seem a track out of the beaten circuit.
- SPI. In the old days, that is, as history states,
About the year—
- AUT. O, bother, sink the dates.
- SPI. Well, stupid, well—but as I must get near a
Point—long before what Christians call the Era,

- AUT. The Era—yes, I know; I take it in!
It keeps a dog that tells what horse will win.
- SPI. Blockhead—past teaching—how I waste my pains !
Pray, did you ever hear of folks called Danes ?
- AUT. Danes ! Let me see— Oh yes (*thinks*) I've heard of two—
Hamlet, and Schleswig-Holstein—
- SPI. That will do.
These Danes, you see, in olden time, adored
Gods of their own—a wild, fierce, jolly horde,
Who drank, sang, quarrelled, bullied, laughed and flirted,
Much as Greek Gods were pleased to be diverted,
When to the invader we were forced to give in;
These gods were worshipped, in the Land we Live in.
Of Grecian gods an English public tires,
Shew it the jovial idols of its sires.
- AUT. Not a bad thought, by Jove ! but then you see
One must read up;—now reading don't suit me.
- SPI. I know it—so, to move that fatal bar,
I'll set the set before you—here they are.

(*Music—SPIRIT stamps, and the clouds open, shewing ODIN
in centre, with THOR, BALDER, TYS, VIDUR, FREYA, FYLLA,
NARMA, SNOWTRA, &c, on couches, with goblets, and laughing;
AUTHOR retires to L. corner*)

*Chorus of GODS. Nigger Air—" There was once a little man, and
his name was Uncle Ned."*

We're a jolly lot of Gods, and our names, it is said,
Were held in awe long ago;
And old Odin, there, was our king and our head,
And he ruled with a word and a blow.
Hang it, but the age is slow!
Blow it, what a little folks know!
There's nobody seems to have heard or read
Of the days of the good king O * * * , O * * * , O * * *
Of the days of the good king O * * * .

We drank without fear that our heads would ache,
We spurned bitter ale and tea;
And a sober cove was no better than a cake
In the eyes of the gods you see.
Hang it, but the age is slow!
Blow it, what a little folks know !
There's nobody seems to have heard or read
Of the ways of the good king O * * * , &c.

ODIN. Well sung, my children. Odin praise accords you.

ALL. Thank you.

ODIN. Moreover, Odin drinks towards you.

ALL. Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

ODIN. And now for serious business. (ALL laugh) Cease that clamour, (laugh)

Thor! keep them quiet.

THOR. (L. pointing his hammer) Do you see this hammer?

Notice! whoever doesn't hold his row

Will get a wunner. (gives a great bang) Pa, (to ODIN) they're quiet now.

ODIN. 'Tis well. Now gods, attend! Before we sup, There is a something which we must fill up—

TYS. The goblet—I'm agreeable, (goes to ODIN'S seat, takes up vase, and fills his own cup with wine) Yes, champagne. (is turning to go back, when ODIN, who looks astonished at his impudence, signs to THOR, who gets up and hits TYS with the flat side of his hammer; cup falls, and he scampers to his place)

THOR. Is that agreeable? if so, come again. (GODS laugh)

FREY. (deprecatingly) Thor, Tys, sit down—don't let your passions rise,

You're not much hurt.

TYS. (pouting to THOR) Hit one of your own size.

THOR. (going up to him) Ha!

TYS. (same manner) Ha!

THOR. Ha!

TYS. Ha!

(like two boys afraid to hit each other—they go back to their places)

ODIN. That little matter pleasantly arranged, I vote we have the conversation changed.

I said I'd something to fill up. This paper, The offspring of some queer new fangled caper, Has been sent here! (indignantly)

SPI. (steps forward) Well, governor, and why not? There's nothing there to make you look so hot.

ODIN. Ha! what—what's that?

SPI. The Spirit of the Age— How are you all (takes up a goblet) good tippie, I'll engage.

Song, SPIRIT. Air—"Mrs. Johnson."

Yes, I'm the Spirit of the Age,
Of progress I'm the pretty page;
Though light and slight, I'm quite as sage
As Burke or Doctor Johnson.
I counsel people not to fight,
I am like Chesterfield, polite,
Though, by the way, he chose to slight
The aforesaid Doctor Johnson.

In dress I study all I can,
To follow out a novel plan.
For "dress doth indicate the man,"
And so says Doctor Johnson.

This shooting coat I did devise,
To make it clear to people's eyes
I shoot at "Folly as it flies—"
And so did Doctor Johnson.

Upon my head I could not bear
That odious thing, a hat, to wear,
Such as the pictures all declare
Was worn by Doctor Johnson.
I'm seldom known to swear, I am,
But hats would aggravate a lamb,
And "beavers often raise a dam,"
I've read in Doctor Johnson.
This year will smash those hats a bit.
By shewing how a cap can fit
On any head with half the wit
Possessed by Doctor Johnson.
When England sees upon her shore
Those Turkish caps and twenty more—
"Hats off!" she'll bellow, with a roar
Like that of Doctor Johnson.

ODIN. I see an enemy among us.

SPI. Fiddle.

Who told you that told a tantaradiddle.

ODIN. Do you mean you're not?

SPI. An enemy—not I—

The day of enmities has all gone by.
We've found that it's no use to fight and quarrel;
It's jollier to be friends, and much more moral.

THOR. A milksop doctrine—that don't suit my book.

SPI. It would, if you'd come down and take a look!
We'll talk of that directly—where's this paper
That makes your father bluster, blow, and vapour.

ODIN. Here, take the document—it seems a ram one—
Take something else—wine to the spirit, some one.

(a GODDESS hands wine)

SPI. (*takes goblet*) Wine into good spirit (*drinks*)—down you go!

Bad spirit into wine's the rale below.
Odin—permit me to present a friend (*pulls AUTHOR forward*)
Come on, you goose—what do you apprehend!
Your usual apprehension's not so quick.

AUT. (*confidentially in terror*) Are you quite sure that cove is not
Old Nick? (*points to ODIN*)

ODIN. You're welcome.

SPI. There—come on, I say—all's right.

THOR. Who and what are you, stranger? Can you fight?

AUT. Thank you, I'd rather not.

BAL. (*sleepily*) Well, can you sing?

ALT. I fear my voice would not be quite the thing.

ODIN. Ha! the new comer's no great shakes I think,
But still there's one accomplishment—for drink.

AUT. Try me. (*laughs*)

ODIN. That don't sound ill, that laugh of scorn;
Go, three of you, and fetch the Hirlas Horn.

Exit TYS, VIDUR, and SNOWTRA

AUT. (*aside*) Three of 'em for one drink—that's past a joke!
It should be XXX and triple stroke.

ODIN. There's something to go on with—quench your thirst:

AUT. (*aside*) 'Twere something to go off with—I shall burst.

TYS, VIDUR, and SNOWTRA *re-enter with an enormous horn, on which
is painted "A PRESENT FOR A GOOD LITTLE GOD"*

Chorus, "Robert le Diable."

Drink, sir, drink, and don't be frightened!

Drink, you'll find it a wholesome brew:

In the proportion cups are lightened,

Man's sad heart becomes lightened too. (*again*)

(*a seat has been placed for AUTHOR, L. C, and he takes horn between
his legs, sometimes sipping during the following*)

SPI. This paper, Odin, is the heavenly census—
Blockheads alone in this can find offences:
Jupiter's filled up his; that pig-tailed file
Fo, the Chinese, and Isis, from the Nile,
And Juggernaut, let numerators call on 'em;
(The last has twenty hands, and wrote with all on 'em.)
Don't you stick out from information giving,
(*sotto voce*) Unless ashamed, sir, of the way you're living.
I'll fill it up for you—quite plain the pages is;
I only want your names, pursuits, and ages.

ALL THE GODDESSES. Ages!

FRE. Did you say ages ?

SPI. 'Twas my word.

FRE. Impertinent, as well as most absurd.

Chorus. Air, "Come fill up my cup, come fill up my cup."

Come fill up your census, fill if you can—

What, put down ^{their} ages, you impudent man:

our

Look in ^{their} faces, write what you see—

our

That's all the help that you'll get out of me.

SPI. Head of the family, I call on you—

Answer the questions, and make answer true.

ODIN. My name is Odin, and my age (I'm thinking)

About two thousand; my pursuit is drinking.

To save mistakes (with which my history's loaded)

Mention that I've an *alias*, which is "Woden,"

From whence comes Woden's-day, which mortals call
Wednesday, like asses, as they are. That's all.

- SPI. (to AUTHOR) Here, write that down, you undramatic youth—
For once in all your life you'll write the truth.
- AUT. (*who is getting drunk*) Don't bother me.
The Saxon word of courtesy, "Drink hael." (*raises cup*)
- ODIN. Stranger, you should not fail
- AUT. How that old man exasperates his aitches—
I am a-drinking hale.
- SPI. (*aside to author*) No, no, he teaches
Manners. Reply "Waes hael," he waits for you.
- AUT. (*rises, half drunk*) "Waes hael," old man, and many of
'em too.
- SPI. Now, Thor—
- FRE. (*interposing*) Before the question's further carried—
Odin has quite forgotten that he's married.
- ODIN. No fear of that, my dear, while you survive—
Write that I married her in *anno* 5.
- FRE. Odin! (*angrily*)
- ODIN. My Freya.
- FRE. (*in high disdain*) Your's indeed
- ODIN. I bow—
Whoever's Freya you may be—what now ?
- FRE. Insulting creature! talking in that way,
Making your Freya a friar of ringlets grey.
- SPI. Thor, who and what are you ?
- THOR. My name is Thor,
This is my hammer—my pursuit is war.
As for my age you'd better ask my mother,
Thor's day's my day, that's Thursday, so don't bother.
- AUT. (*to the audience*) I see a joke, one which will be approved,
Jack Frost must be *thaw's* cousin—once removed.
- SPI. Odin's next hope must our attention claim,
I bawl to Balder, answer to your name.
- AUT. Another joke—what lots of hair, I trow,
He must have had, if he is Balder now.
- BAL. I hate the revels my relations keep,
(*sleepily*) My occupation is to go to sleep.
My age I never asked, the entry's blundered,
But of new nightcaps, I've worn out nine hundred.
This will enable you to guess—I've done. (*sleeps*)
- AUT. The seven sleepers all rolled into one.
- SPI. Vidur, the God of silence, speak up.
- VID. (*very gruffly*) Shan't.
- SPI. Tell us how old you are, old fellow ?
- VID. Can't.
- SPI. Who is your nearest blood relation ?
- VID. (*points to FREYA*) Aunt.
- SPI. You might as well request (except in lark)
A civil answer from a railway clerk.
Now for the ladies.

(*the GODDESSES all scream slightly*)

- FRE. On their part and mine,
I beg to say the ladies all decline.
- SPI. What, all? You, Freya, wife of Odin bold?
Fylla, her handmaid, with the wreath of gold.
My gentle Narma, next to you I come,
(Spouse of this sleeping beauty) (*points to BALDER*) you too
dumb?
And Snowtra, goddess of good manners, she
Have the bad manners to be dumb to me!
(they all wave him off)
- Then I fill up the census with a rhyme—
"They are not of an age, but from all time."
But are these all—are any out of sight,
Of those who slept in Odin's house last night?
- THOR. The old night watchman's only out of view,
Here (*calls loudly*)! Heimdall! watchman, blockhead, where
are you?

Enter HEIMDALL, with ear trumpet, L.

- HEIM. Here! master Thor, I'm here—you needn't bawl,
A whisper brings me, I aint deaf at all.
And with this here auricular assistance,
I can hear sounds at any given distance.
- SPI. I'll put him down.
- THOR. And now, with pa's permission,
We'll have a dance.
- ODIN. (*indulgently*) We grant our boy's petition.
*(the GODS and GODDESSES stand up; the ORCHESTRA begins a minuet;
and they make the first stately motion; SPIRIT rushes at the
middle and signs to ORCHESTRA to stop)*
- SPI. No, no, on such stale stuff I place my veto,
Except when danced by Ellsler and Cerito.
Cast it aside (that is if you'll permit, sir) (*to ODIN*)
In favour of the very last Gorlitz.

The GORLITZA is danced.

- HEIM. (*who has been listening through his trumpet*) By George—by
Jove, by jingo, and by gum,
Strike me outrageous! Well, if that aint rum!
- SNOW. (*starting up*) Manners, good Heimdall, manners; don't you
know,
Such language is exceptionably low?
- HEIM. I beg your pardon, ma'am, but take this horn,
You never heard such rows since you were bora.
(All evince curiosity except BALDER)
- THOR. A row, that's my delight (*rushes to HEIMDALL*), give me the
trumpet,
(listens a few moments)
Bah! where's your head? I've a good mind to thump it.

Call that a row indeed?

ODIN. Where, and what is it? (*listens*)

THOR. It's all the world, I think, paying a visit.
Thousands on thousands crowding ships on ships—
And "England" is the word on all their lips;
But there's no clash of arms, no beat of drum—
Signs that its not as enemies they come—
And England don't seem manning her defences;
What is the mad world come to?

SPI. To its senses.

We've thrown away the scabbard many a day,
But now the sword's thrown after it—away.

ODIN. I think these new arrangements most absurd!

Of course they're all among the vulgar herd.

SPI. We know no vulgar herd—that folly's dead—
We honour all who work for honest bread.
But those you hear are gathering to a scene
Planned by a prince—directed by a queen—
Where princes, queens, and presidents will lead
Their peaceful armies to a fight indeed;
To the great fight where hatred and distrust
Shall be struck down and trampled in the dust.

ODIN. New-fangled notions ! they won't answer long.

Rely on this, whatever's new is wrong.

THOR. Peace is all stuff, and man was made to fight,
As bulls were made to toss and dogs to bite.

BAL. (*sleepily*) No, I'm for peace, I am. True happiness
Is doing nothing (*yawns*) and thinking less.

SPI. Three old opinions which I hope to shake,
If you'll but condescend a trip to take.
Odin, my jolly bigot, you'll behold
Many new things much better than the old.
Thor, the bold type of violence, shall see
That reason teaches peace and unity :
And indolence, in Balder, own, with shame,
That energy's the trump in all life's game.
I'll do it—(not to keep you in the dark)—
At the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park;
Where I invite the three. To pass the wickets—
I beg to offer you three season tickets.

ODIN. You're very good, but no, I must refuse,
I cannot countenance these novel views.

SPI. (*gives one to FREYA*) The sight will be a splendid one on
May-day,

And Odin's ticket will admit a lady.

FRE. That's settled—Odin goes. My will, as you know,
Is law.

ODIN. Henpeckery! Worse than cousin Juno.

Well, if I must, I must. In what disguise
Shall I conceal the god, from mortal eyes ?

- SPI. Don't waste a miracle or work a spell—
 Tick at a tailor's answers just as well.
 Or, if you think the expedient not below you—
 Dress seedily, and then your friends *won't* know you.
- THOR. I shall go down in hopes there'll be a riot.
- SPI. There won't. And if there were, you'd best be quiet,
 For the Blue Crushers are a vigorous race,
 And you might, perhaps, get pepper for that mace.
- BAL. Can anybody sleep there ?
- SPI. If you please.
 Roost with the sparrows in the imprisoned trees.
 No doubt some visitors will close their peepers—
 There is a railway, so there must be sleepers.
- GODDESSES. Ain't we to go ? (SPIRIT *shakes his head*)
- ALL. O! isn't that a shame
- NAR. Spirit, you're quite unworthy of your name;
 The Spirit of the Age, I've heard, delights
 In recognising all a lady's rights.
- SPI. True, she has rights, but she has also duties—
 Who wouldn't fill the census up, my beauties?
 But come, my malice is exceedingly small,
 Ladies, I've season tickets for you all.

(Repeat of the Opening Chorus; as it ends clouds come down in front, forming

SCENE II.

Enter THOR.

- THOR. This scene's a carpenters—it won't take long,
 But while it lasts, I'll just attempt a song,
 Which (in accordance with the rules of art)
 Has not the least connexion with my part;
 But will allow the carpenters behind
 To set next scene, as when I've done, you'll find.

Song, THOR. Air, "In the merry month of May."

In the merry month of May
 Stranger crowds to England come,
 Marching, all, I'm happy to say,
 To better tunes than the sound of the drum.
 A few old women whose wits are lame,
 (And better far if their tongues were dumb)
 Alone thought fit to abuse and blame
 The exhibition to which all come.

Flags are flying, not for fight,
 And greetings leap from the cannon's bore,
 As a jolly host, with friends in sight,
 Welcomes them all with a cordial roar.
 In the merry month, &c.

Old John Bull he can hold his own,
 Enemies never found him shy,
 But he wisely hopes that in peace alone
 His future mettle the world will try.
 In the merry month, &c.

Up with cups—may the best man win,
 To borrow a line in Shakspeare found,
 We'll cup us while the world goes in,
 And we'll "cup us while the world goes round."
 In the merry month, &c.

Health to the prince whose thought designed,
 The fairy hall for the great world's fair,
 And health to all who may feel inclined,
 To take their chance of a fairing there.
 In the merry month, &c.

Exit THOR, L.

SCENE III.—PART OF THE PARK.

*The whole stage. Drop View of the Great Exhibition in the distance;
 visitors walking about, who gradually clear off.*

Enter FREYA, NARMA, and SNOWTRA, in morning dresses, L.

FRE. And now, my dears, thanks to the spirit's aid,
 We have found out the plot these—gods have laid,
 Who would have thought it?

NAR. I couldn't have believed it,

SNO. Such artfulness. One could not have conceived it.

FRE. Disguised as men they're wandering up and down,
 Taking their pleasure everywhere in town,
 While we are left without a man at all
 To hail an omnibus or hold a shawl.
 Ought it to be endured?

NAR. It ought not, true.

But what can three poor helpless women do?
 A helpless woman! Word of aggravation—
 There is not such a thing in all creation;
 We'll help ourselves, don't fear!

SNO. But let's take care

Not to say more to them than they will bear.

FRE. Snowtra. I understand you. Narma here,
 Has, like myself, nothing that she can fear;

We're married, so defy our lords.

NAR. Of course.

SNO. Yet angry lords sue sometimes for divorce.

FRE. No—while that luxury costs a thousand pounds,
It keeps the men's vile temper within bounds!

NAR. We've made our minds up, and declare for war.

NAR. You, Snowtra, having set your cap at Thor,
Fear to offend him, female; vengeance wreaking?
Would I—Oh, *would* I show myself so sneaking?

SNO. The phrase is vulgar, and the charge unjust.

NAR. (*tauntingly*) Tears—pretty dear—she's paid to lay the dust. (*bursts into tears*)

SNO. (*tauntingly*) It's natural that one shouldn't care to keep
A husband who spends all his time in sleep.

NAR. Oh, is it, miss? Your knowledge is but small,
Better a sleepy spouse than none at all.

FRE. You silly girls, what foolish taunts to throw,
Can't you unite against the common foe?
Kiss, and be friends, my dears.

NAR. Mamma, you're right,
Snowtra, I did not mean to speak in spite.

SNO. You're pardoned, dear, I'd add a kiss unto it,
Were there one envious man to see me do it.

FRE. Now for revenge!

Enter SPIRIT.

SPI. A lady spoke, I'm sure,
Framing a plot your faithless friends to cure?
I'm at your service.

FRE. But may we rely
Upon your truth, and that you're not a spy?

SPI. Spy? nonsense! I'll stand by you, never fear,
Now look! your lords will presently be here.
Each is in costume, and they trust your eyes,
Though you should meet, won't see through their disguise.
And now they're from connubial bondage free,
They mean to have what people call a spree.

FRE. Thor's single—Balder's young,

NAR. (*indignantly*) And so's his wife.

FRE. But as for Odin, at his time of life—
Talking of "sprees," with one foot in the—gout,
Excuse the coarseness, but I'll serve him out.

SPI. In other days the remedy was easy,
A new spouse, if the old one didn't please ye.
But husbands now are scarce, the prudent way
Is, patch up what you've got, as best you may.

FRE. And pray what special sin does my old sinner
Select—a night at cards, a Blackwall dinner?

- SPI. Why no, not that, his money and digestion
Are safe, but—
- FRE. Ha! sir, you evade my question.
Speak, will you?
- SPI. (*gruffly*) Would it give you pain to learn,
His taste takes—quite—an—amatory turn?
- FRE. I'll—I'll—I'll—yes—no—I'll, I'll—never mind.
(walks about)
- NAR. (*anxiously*) Dear Balder never could be so unkind.
- SPI. If anything I think he's rather worse,
Just now he met a baby and its nurse.
- NAR. (*eagerly*) Yes, he likes babies. Well? (*aside*) I'm all on pins,
- SPI. He chucked the child under its various chins.
- NAR. No harm in that.
- SPI. No, and declared it fairer
Than any child he'd seen, so kissed the bearer.
- NAR. He did, and not one thunderbolt descended
To punish him—my dream of life is ended.
(walks about)
- SNO. I hardly like after these tales of woe,
To ask what Thor is doing.
- SPI. Thor, don't know.
Fresh from the new "Symposium" there, I met him—
Looking at some one, drinking has upset him.
'Twas not the poor god's fault, you mustn't blame him,
Though used to "Nectar," Soyer's overcame him.
You'd hardly know him, reeling through the streets,
Winking at every pretty girl he meets.
- SNO. Farewell, good manners, since his love's a mockery,
Geese have been cooked ere now—I'll study cookery.
(walks about)
- SPI. A sporting picture, one that should be seen,
In Mr. Ackerman's Green Magazine.
Here are two wives both coming to the scratch,
And Snowtra clearly walking for a match.

Chorus, THREE GODDESSES, Air—"A Poor Simple Maiden am I."
(sung with violent gestures of anger)

No poor simple maiden am I,
And no poor simple maiden am I,
But a lady, who knows
To herself what she owes,
And holds up her head wherever she goes.
For no poor simple maiden am I.

I know of these men the ways
How in raking they'd spend their days,
And I know right well
That their love's a "sell,"
And I'll show the wretches I dare rebel,
For no poor simple maiden am I.

SNO. Ah! don't you hear that laughing. They're in view.

GODDESSES. Away!away!

FRE. (*to SPIRIT*)

We've settled what to do.

Exeunt GODDESSES *hastily*, L.

Enter ODIN, THOR, and BALDER, *arm in arm, laughing*, R.

ODIN. Now, boys, we'll separate; each one take his way ;

Take my advice too—be discreetly gay.

Good men are happy. Knowledge comes from reading.

Evil communications spoil good breeding.

Prudence commands respect. Delay brings danger.

A horse eats off his head at rack and manger.

Bounty ensures esteem. A bird in hand

Is worth two birds not caught, you understand.

Virtue's a sure foundation, build upon it—

(*aside, looking off*) Hang it, I've quite lost sight of that pink
bonnet!

Exit, L.

THOR. (*drunk*) These earthly wines must be adulterated—

I almost think I feel ob—ob—fuscated.

BAL. Whether or not it's parting from one's wife,

I never felt so brisk in all my life. (*sits on bench*, L.)

SPI. Well, gods, how *are* you ?

THOR. Gods, sir! what d'ye say ?

I'll knock your head off if you talk that way.

I think you're drunk, sir. It's an awful sign

To see a young man overcome by wine.

Stand still, sir, will you ? or I'll lay you flat;

And don't keep walking round and round like that.

SPI. You know me, Thor?

THOR. (*fiercely*) No, nor don't want to know you!

Pray tell me if there's anything I owe you ?

Nothing? I thought as much. Sir, how d'ye dare

To stop a gentleman ? Stand still, sir—*there!*

If there's one sight more horrid than another,

That sight's a drunkard. Make a point to smother

Your passion for the bottle—cure such cravings—

Study George Cruickshank's excellent engravings.

The world turns round—

SPI. More proof of your discerning ;

The Polytechnic people show it turning:

Thor, you *must* know me.

THOR. (*becomes maudlin*) Oh, my heart will burst!

My boy, I knew you from the very first.

I love you—'pon my soul my boy, I do.

You don't believe it, but I swear it's true.

We should all love each other—what a place

The world would be if that could be the case—

Loving each other like the innocent lambs

Sporting about beside their blessed dams.

Yes, I said dams, sir! I don't care a jot.

(*fiercely*) Do you believe I love you, sir, or not

- Tell me the truth, sir, without fear or dread,
And if you say you *don't*, I'll break your head.
- SPI. A lady wants to see you.
- THOR. (*laughing cunningly*) Oh, no doubt.
You sly young dog, take care what you're about.
A lady—well, it would not be a crime, (*conceitedly*)
There's many a lady's liked me in her time;
This leg's not bad—this waist's not very thick—
But, manner traps them—manner does the trick.
Copy my manner and you'll win the day.
Where is the lady, you young rascal, eh ?
- SPI. Coming. On yonder bench take up your station—
Spare her the pain of the first declaration.
- THOR. Bless her, I will. I'll tell her that I see
No wonder in her madly loving me.
One should be delicate, discreet, and civil—
These benches are as slippery as the devil.
(*goes to bench, R., and is soon asleep*)
- SPI. (*to BALDER*) What are you doing, Balder ?
- BAL. Why, sir, waiting
To gain an object very captivating.,
I want a place where I can take my seat,
Free from all bustle, trouble, noise, and heat,
Be just amused with what goes on around one,
But without sharing in it, and I've found one—
The man's to meet me here about it, soon.
- SPI. Pray may I ask what man?
- BAL. The Man in the Moon.
- SPI. I see, but if I read your riddle right,
That House won't answer your description quite.
Some years ago your bargain had been fair,
But they're beginning now to know me there,
And where the Spirit of the Age is seen
The idle men are few and far between.
Do you see yon monster building?
(*Houses of Parliament in the distance*)
- BAL. It appears
Unfinished.
- SPI. Aye, and will be so for years.
That's where you want to go.
- BAL. And how get in ?
- SPI. Some men do that by brass, and some by tin;
The first requires hard work, the next hard cash—
The latter is your plan—but don't be rash.
Folks may get in with tickets made of gold,
But if the ticket's cancelled, folks are sold.
- BAL. Yes, but I'm told that there *are* ways—
- SPI. There are—
Direct to Newgate, from the Commons' bar.
Whether with crowded sail a slaver runs
Swift from an English cruiser's shattering guns,

Or home-bred knavery meaner man-traps tries—
Kidnapping's awkward work in English eyes.
But I've a notion (*aside*) yes, I think 'twill do—
The rising moon gets a rise out of you.

Exit, R.

BAL. There's no repose about that restless spirit,
Vires eundo, as they say, *acquirit*.

Enter ODIN, L.

ODIN. I can't meet that pink bonnet, high or low.
It's owner's a coquette to treat me so.

Enter a large PARTY of both sexes, with tickets; in costumes of all ranks and nations; some of the men with moustaches, others with Oriental caps; a WORKMAN with a brown paper cap; one in a blue blouse; they are led on by the SPIRIT OF THE AGE; THOR comes up.

Chorus (as they come on), 1st verse of THOR'S song.

In the merry month of May
Stranger crowds to England come;
Marching all, we're happy to say
To better tunes than the sound of the drum.

ODIN. Misguided creatures, whither do ye stray ?

SPI. To yonder palace, and I lead the way.

Come with us.

ODIN. I! The company I see

Is—you'll excuse me—far too mixed for me.

SPI. Yet it's the " Prince's Mixture." Your rebuff

Shows you by no means up to social snuff.

ODIN. (*moodily*) The good old days !

SPI. A phrase, with nothing in it—

Surely the world gets older every minute;

Wiser and happier—

ODIN. No, the thought is sad;

These are bad times.

SPI. The best we've ever had.

Ask yonder workman.

ODIN. Come, friend, tell me true,

How do these boasted times agree with you ?

How go the things the labourer wants to buy ?

WORK. Sir, we've cheap food—and *know the reason why*.

ODIN. The country's ruined—they'll soon feel it, won't they ?

SPI. The Excise and Customs look like ruin, don't they ?

John Bull likes grumbling, but his ledger mends it,

Shewing he makes no end of cash—and spends it.

ODIN. That's a French rival I see standing there !

WORK. Sir, he's my friend and brother.

FRENCHMAN.

C'est mon frère.

(*they shake hands*)

WORK. Yonder's a watch we wish that you should see:

He chased the case, the works were made by me.

THOR. Ha ! a French watch with English works, old cock,
Will quickly show all Europe what's o'clock.

SPI. Friends from all corners of the earth have come,
Our cousin Germans are of course at home.
Our great glass beehive ample cells supplies,
Alike for Attic bees and Spanish flies.
We've Sandwich Islanders and sons of Ham,
And what's three thousand miles to uncle Sam !
His seven-leagued boots cleared at a nine-day's Leap,
The ditch we used to call the Atlantic deep.
The more the merrier. England's flag unfurled,
Welcomes the friendly flags of all the world.
Come with us to the palace.

ODIN. It's outrageous,
But sociality must be contagious.

(they go off singing the verse of THOR'S song with which they came on; waving hats, handkerchiefs, &c.

BAL. *(rises from bench)* That row's detestable. I'd make it death
For any snob to speak above his breath.

Enter SNOWTRA, veiled, she comes up to him.

SNO. *(confidentially)* You are expecting some one. I am here,
Instead of that same person—

BAL. Well, my dear.

SNO. Business is business.

BAL. Is it? I don't doubt it.

It's deuced little that I know about it.

SNO. You want a seat in—hush ! you know the figure, 

BAL. If so, I'm an unmitigated nigger.

Ma'am, I know nothing.

SNO. Cautious! well, that's right, *(holds up three fingers)*

BAL. Three fingers—yes, ma'am, they seem very white.

Two POLICEMEN and SPIRIT come on and watch.

SNO. Three thousand. Do you take ?

BAL. No, I do not.

SNO. I said three thousand.

BAL. But three thousand *what?*

SNO. Lodged at the banker's—sovereigns are the best—
That's all you know, your friends will do the rest.
If they're so naughty as to bribe or treat,
You didn't do it, so you'll keep your seat.

BAL. Still I don't think I understand you well,
What do you bring to market ?

SNO. *(with cry of fishwoman)* Votes to sell.

Song, SNOWTRA, Air, " I'm afloat, I'm afloat."

I've a vote, I've a vote, and your price shall decide,
 Whether you or your rival, the nation shall guide.
 I've a conscience elastic, from prejudice free,
 I've a vote, I've a vote, so fork over to me.
 I heed not the oath, and I dread not the law,
 No fear of a check, while a cheque you can draw.
 I'm a patriot waiting a patriot's fee,
 I've a vote, I've a vote, so fork over to me.

BAL. I thought that ladies had no votes, ma'am.

SNO. Pity!

They sell 'em somehow—ask the last committe.

BAL. I see— *(he pays her some sovereigns)*

1 OFF. And so do I. *(they seize him; she runs off)*

2 OFF. A thorough rascal.

1 OFF. Thorough.

Conspiring to bribe some virtuous borough;
 Off with him.

2 OFF. To the treadmill for a century.

" M. P." indeed—yes—Millbank Penitentiary.

(they drag him off, R.)

SPI. Corruption's jacket's better for such dustings—
 We'll have no golden stairs to English hustings.
 I'll bail him out, though.

Exit, R.

Enter THOR, making love to NARMA, veiled.

THOR. Come, my dearest creature,
 Remove that veil and show each lovely feature.

NAR. *(affectedly)* You men are all so false.

THOR. Don't say all, pray.

NAR. You know you don't mean half the things you say.

THOR. All, and much more. I love you to distraction—
 I'll swear it, if that's any satisfaction.

NAR. *(aside)* It would be if my Balder only heard—

(he tries to take her hand)

I won't allow it—don't be so absurd.

Why, you're a stranger to me, and you know
 We girls can't be too prudent.

THOR. Can't you, though ?

I'm glad of that. My love, my name is—a—Brown—

I'm Captain in the Guards—well known on town ;

I'm rich, my drag and horses are the thing,

My cab's about the neatest in the ring,

As you shall say. We'll go and buy a dress,

Or bracelet, just my passion to express,

And then I'll drive you down the road to dine—

Richmond—or Kew—or Greenwich—choose your line—

Believe me I adore you, and I'm your's
For life (*aside*) which means but while the whim endures.

NAR. (*aside*) Such baits may do for milliners, dear Thor—

I'm not the sort of thing you take me for.

THOR. I take you for an angel, both in face
And feelings—so, permit me one embrace.

BALDER *is brought on by* SPIRIT.

BAL. My wife, my wife—the unfraternal buffer.

(*gives THOR a tremendous slap in the face*)

Sir, that is conduct which I will not not suffer.

THOR. Ha! a vile blow. (*tucks up his sleeves*)

Look out—my first one, two
Will certainly be one too much for you. (*falls into attitude*)

BAL. (*tucks up his sleeves*) I'm no great dab at fists or the cold iron,
But now you've roused the Scandinavian lion.
(*they spar a little*)

SPI. You foolish lads, remember where you are—
We're much too near that Crystal for a spar.

THOR. No, 'twill remind this inconsiderate elf
He made an exhibition of himself.
Come on. (*they scuffle*)

Enter FREYA, beating on ODIN with her bonnet.

FRE. So, sir, I'll teach you morals.

ODIN. Freya, stop--
What have I done to merit such a whop?

FRE. He tried to kiss me.

ODIN. Well, upon my life
It's something when a man mayn't kiss his wife.

FRE. Ha! monster, but you didn't think 'twas me
That you were making love to.

ODIN. That may be.

FRE. (*bitterly*) He put his arm so fondly round my waist
And whispered—

ODIN. Yes, small credit to my taste.

FRE. But I will be revenged, you brute, I will. (*flies at him*)

THOR. (*to BALDEN*) Come on, I say?

SNOWTRA *rushes in and throws her arms round* BALDER.

No, you shan't treat him ill.

NAR. What's that? Her arms about my husband's neck.
(*throws off veil*)

THOR. What, Narma—here's an unexpected check—
Almost checkmate.

NAR. No, there's my mate, (*to SNOWTRA*) I say,
How dare you touch my husband, come away!

SNO. How dare you flirt with *him*, that's pretty, truly,
Married too!—Take your poppy.

(pushes BALDER to her)

NAR. Take your bully.

(pushes THOR to her)

(they all use violent gestures to each other)

EVERYBODY *at once*. I'll tell you what it is—it seems to me,
You're all no better than you ought to be.

SPI. This state of things admits of one solution,
Earth's air don't suit a heavenly constitution.
Take my advice, take too the earliest train,
And get to Scandinavia back again.
Do penance there, like hermits, saints, or dervises,
Until some other author wants your services.
I'll make it easy for you. Clouds, descend,
And with a chorus let our trifle end.

*(clouds come down as SPIRIT speaks, and the ORCHESTRA plays,
" We fly by Night;" suddenly clouds rise and discover the GODS,
as in SCENE I.; coloured fire)*

Chorus—"Long live the King, Gustavus III."

Home, all home, in our halls again
We'll sing with all our might and main
The old, but well remembered strain,
" No place like home!"

But strangers on our coasts
Will meet a welcome here;
They'll find us cordial hosts,
They'll leave us friends sincere.
Home, all home, in our halls again,
We'll hope the public won't disdain
Our new-found home.

Curtain.