

## **Erminie**

[Musical comedy, in two acts; text by Bellamy and Paulton. First produced at the Comedy Theatre, London, November 9, 1885; in New York at the Casino, March 10, 1886.]

### PERSONAGES.

Marquis de Pontvert. Eugene Marcel, the Marquis' secretary. Vicomte de Brissac. Delaunay, a young officer. Dufois, landlord of the Golden Lion. Chevalier de Brabazon, guest of the Marquis. Ravannes, }  
Cadeaux, } two thieves. Cerise Marcel, Erminie's companion. Javatte,  
Erminie's maid. Princesse de Gramponeur. Erminie de Pontvert.

[Soldiers, peasantry, guards, waiters, etc.]

The scene is laid in France; time, the last century.

The story of "Erminie" is based upon the old melodrama "Robert Macaire," the two vagabonds, Ravannes and Cadeaux, taking the places of the two murderers, Macaire and Jacques Strop. Few melodramas were more popular in their day than "Robert Macaire," in which Lemaitre, the great French actor, made one of his most conspicuous successes. It is also true that few musical comedies have been more successful than "Erminie." At the opening of the opera, a gallant on the way to his betrothal with a young lady whom he has never seen is attacked by two thieves, Ravannes and Cadeaux, who carry off his wardrobe and tie him to a tree. Later, Ravannes arrives in the midst of the betrothal festivities, and passes himself off as the expected guest. He introduces Cadeaux as a nobleman, and explains their lack of proper attire with the statement that they had been robbed while on the way there. Erminie has an affection for Eugene, her father's secretary, and none for the man who claims to be a suitor for her hand. Ernst, who was the real victim of the robbery, and who is in love with Cerise, escapes from the predicament in which the two

thieves placed him, and arrives in time for the festivities, to find himself denounced by Ravannes as the highwayman who had attacked them earlier in the day. Ravannes, by assuming great magnanimity and a certain nobility of conduct, and by his proffers of help to Erminie in securing the man she loves in return for her assistance in his plans, of which she of course is ignorant, so ingratiates himself in her confidence that he nearly succeeds in robbing the house. In the end, however, the two vagabonds are unmasked. Eugene obtains the hand of Erminie, and Ernst and Cerise are equally fortunate.

The music of "Erminie" is light and graceful throughout. Its principal numbers are Erminie's song, "Ah! when Love is Young"; the duet for Eugene and Erminie, "Past and Future"; the Marquis' stirring martial song, "Dull is the Life of the Soldier in Peace"; the rollicking thieves' duet, "We're a Philanthropic Couple, be it known"; Erminie's pretty dream song, "At Midnight on my Pillow lying," and the lullaby "Dear Mother, in Dreams I see her," which is the gem of the opera; the song and whistling chorus, "What the Dicky Birds say"; the vocal gavotte, "Join in Pleasures, dance a Measure"; and the concerted piece, "Good-night," which leads up to the close of the last act.