

Lurline

[Romantic opera, in three acts; text by Fitzball. First produced at Covent Garden Theatre, London, February 23, 1860.]

PERSONAGES.

Count Rudolph, a young nobleman. Wilhelm, his friend. Rhineberg, the river King. Baron Truenfels. Zelleck, a gnome. Conrad. Adolph. Lurline, nymph of the Lurlei-Berg. Ghiva, the Baron's daughter. Liba, a spirit of the Rhine.

[Vassals, conspirators, pages, water spirits.]

The scene is laid on the banks and in the waters of the Rhine; time, the present.

The story of "Lurline" closely follows the old legend of the "Lorelei." Count Rudolph, having dissipated his fortune, proposes marriage with Ghiva, daughter of a neighboring baron, to recoup himself. The Baron, however, turns out to be as poor as the Count, and nothing comes of the proposition. Meanwhile Lurline, the Rhine nymph, has seen the Count sailing on the river and fallen in love with him. At the last banquet he and his companions give in the old castle, she appears, weaves spells about him, places a magic ring on his finger, and then disappears. When he comes to his reason, he finds himself enamoured of her, follows the notes of her harp on the Rhine, and is engulfed in the whirlpool to which Lurline allures her victims.

The second act opens in Lurline's cavern under the Rhine, and Rudolph is there by virtue of his magic ring. He hears his friends singing and mourning his loss as they sail on the river, and is so touched by it that he implores permission to return to them for a short time. Lurline consents to his absence for three days, and agrees to wait for him on the summit of the Lurlei-Berg at moonrise on the third

evening. She also prevails upon her father, the Rhine King, to give him treasures, with which he embarks in a fairy skiff, leaving Lurline dejected.

In the last act Rudolph discloses to the Baron and his daughter, as well as to his companions, the secret of his wealth. The Baron once more encourages his suit, and the crafty Ghiva steals the magic ring and throws it into the Rhine. In the mean time Lurline waits nightly on the Lurlei-Berg for the return of her lover, and there a gnome brings to her the ring, token of his infidelity. Distracted between grief and anger, she determines to reproach him with his perfidy at a banquet in the castle; she suddenly appears, and demands her ring from him. A scene of bitter reproaches ensues, ending with her denunciation of his companions' treachery. Growing envious of the Count's wealth, they had conspired to destroy him and then plunder the castle. Ghiva and her father, overhearing the plot, reveal it to the Count and urge him to escape by flight. Rudolph, however, preferring death near Lurline, confronts the assassins. Love returns to Lurline once more. She strikes her harp and invokes the Rhine, which rises and engulfs the conspirators. When the waves subside, the Rhine King appears and gives the hand of his daughter to the Count.

The principal numbers of the first act are Rhineberg's invocation aria, "Idle Spirit, wildly dreaming"; Lurline's beautiful romanzas with harp accompaniment, "Flow on, flow on, O Silver Rhine," and "When the Night Winds sweep the Wave"; the melodious chorus, "Sail, sail, sail on the Midnight Gale"; the drinking-song, "Drain the Cup of Pleasure"; the quaint tenor song, "Our Bark in Moonlight beaming"; and the vigorous chorus of the gnomes in the finale, "Vengeance, Vengeance." The second act opens with the gnomes' song, "Behold Wedges of Gold." The remaining conspicuous numbers are the Count's song, "Sweet Form that on my Dreamy Gaze"; Lurline's brilliant drinking-song with chorus, "Take this Cup of Sparkling Wine"; Ghiva's ballad, for contralto, "Troubadour Enchanting"; the breezy hunting-chorus, "Away to the Chase, come away"; Rhineberg's

sentimental song, "The Nectar Cup may yield Delight"; and the ensemble in the finale, which is in the genuine Italian style. The third act is specially noticeable for the ballad sung by Rudolph, "My Home, my Heart's first Home"; Lurline's song on the Lurlei-Berg, "Sweet Spirit, hear my Prayer," which has been a great favorite on the concert stage; the unaccompanied quartette, "Though the World with Transport bless me"; the grand duet, "Lurline, my Naiad Queen," and the incantation music and closing chorus, "Flow on, thou Lovely Rhine."