

Maritana

[Romantic opera, in three acts; text by Fitzball. First produced at Drury Lane Theatre, London, November 15, 1845.]

PERSONAGES.

Charles the Second, King of Spain. Don Jose de Santarem, his minister. Don Cæsar de Bazan. Marquis de Montefiori. Lazarillo. Maritana, a gitana. Marchioness de Montefiori.

[Nobles, alguazils, soldiers, gypsies, populace, etc.]

The scene is laid in Madrid; time of Charles the Second.

The story of "Maritana" is founded upon the well-known play of "Don Cæsar de Bazan." At the opening of the first act a band of gypsies, Maritana among them, are singing to the people. The young King Charles listening to her is fascinated by her beauty. Don José, for reasons of his own, extols her charms and arouses her hopes for a brilliant future. At this point Don Cæsar de Bazan, a reckless, rollicking cavalier, once a friend of Don José, makes his appearance. He has parted with the last of his money to gamblers, and while he is relating his misfortunes to Don José, Lazarillo, a forlorn lad who has just tried to make away with himself, accosts Don Cæsar and tells him a piteous tale. The Don befriends, and thereby becomes involved in a duel. This leads to his arrest for duelling in Holy Week, which is forbidden on pain of death. While Don Cæsar sets off for the prison, Don José promises Maritana speedy marriage and presentation at court.

The second act opens in the prison. Don José enters, and professes great sympathy for Don Cæsar. When asked if he has any last request, he begs to die like a soldier. Don José agrees that he shall not die an ignominious death if he will marry. He consents, and is also treated to

a banquet, during which Lazarillo delivers a paper to Don José containing the royal pardon of Don Cæsar, but Don José conceals it. Maritana, her features disguised by a veil, is married to the Don, but at the expiration of an hour he is led out to meet his fate. The soldiers fire at him, but he escapes, as Lazarillo has managed to abstract the bullets from their guns. He feigns death, and when the opportunity presents itself hurries to a ball at the Montefiori palace, and arrives just as the Marquis, who has had his instructions from Don José, is introducing Maritana as his niece. Don Cæsar demands his bride, but Don José arranges with the Marquis to present him with the Marchioness closely veiled. The scheme does not work, as Don Cæsar hears Maritana's voice and claims her, but she is quickly spirited away.

The last act finds Maritana in a royal apartment. Don José carries out his plot by introducing the King to her as her husband. At this juncture Don Cæsar rushes in. The King in a rage demands to know his errand. He replies that he is seeking the Countess de Bazan, and with equal rage demands to know who he (the King) is. When the King in confusion answers that he is Don Cæsar, the latter promptly replies, "Then I am the King of Spain." Before further explanations can be made, the King is summoned by the Queen. Don Cæsar and Maritana consult together, and he decides to appeal to the Queen. While waiting for her in the palace garden, he overhears Don José telling her that the King is to meet his mistress that night. Don Cæsar denounces him as a traitor, and slays him. The King, when he hears of Don Cæsar's loyalty, consigns Maritana to him, and appoints him Governor of Valencia.

The opera is full of bright, melodious music. The principal numbers in the first act are Maritana's song, "It was a Knight of Princely Mien"; the romanza which she sings for Don José, "'Tis the Harp in the Air"; the duet between Don José and Maritana, "Of Fairy Wand had I the Power"; Don Cæsar's rollicking drinking-song, "All the World over"; and the delightful chorus, "Pretty Gitana, tell us what the Fates

decree." The first scene of the second act is a mine of charming songs, including Lazarillo's, "Alas! those Chimes"; the trio, "Turn on, Old Time, thine Hourglass"; Don Cæsar's stirring martial air, "Yes, let me like a Soldier fall"; the sentimental ballad, "In Happy Moments, Day by Day"; and the quartette and chorus closing the scene, "Health to the Lady, the Lovely Bride." The next scene contains a pretty chorus in waltz time, "Ah! what Pleasure," followed by an aria sung by the King, "The Mariner in his Bark," and the act closes with a very dramatic ensemble, "What Mystery must now control." The leading numbers of the last act are Maritana's song, "Scenes that are Brightest," one of the most admired of all English songs; the love duet between Don Cæsar and Maritana, "This Heart with Bliss O'erflowing"; and Don Cæsar's song, "There is a Flower that bloometh," which is in the sentimental ballad style.