

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST

The Wicked Fairy as a little old woman sitting spinning in a rather empty room. Door R.

WICKED FAIRY.—And so the old King thought
By laws and proclamations fraught
With heavy penalties, to baulk
Me of my vengeance!
Ha! ha! He little knew
What woman's jealousy would do,
That I would still my anger hold
Until fifteen long years were told,
Even to the latest hour.
For 'tis our Beauty's birthday,
And through these halls to-day
She with her merry maids will stray,
Opening here and there a door
Will this lone corridor explore,
And then I'll keep my vow.
Hark! do I not their voices hear?
Spin, my wheel, they'll soon be here
Tremble, oh King, at my fierce hate,
That wreaks on her so sad a fate,
Despite thy kingly power.

(Voices and laughter heard outside door L.)

1ST VOICE.—Here's a door, Beauty. Where does it lead to?
This is a hall we never saw before.

2ND VOICE.—Shall we try the handle and peep in?

3RD VOICE.—Yes, quickly! why wait? we'll likely find
some lumber, nothing more. (Door opens and
one or two faces peep in and are withdrawn
again.)

2ND VOICE.—There's the funniest old woman!

3RD VOICE.—What is she doing?

2ND VOICE.—Twirling about a strange looking
wheel and crooning like a—

3RD VOICE.—Oh, hush, Nellie! you forget she
might hear. (Door opens, and they
come in cautiously on tip-toe.) May
we come in and see what you are
making, good mother?

WICKED FAIRY.—(aside) Good mother! (aloud)

Ay, that you may; a spinning-wheel is nothing
strange. Nobler hands than mine, my gentle
lady, have held the threads.

(They all gather round her facing audience, Beauty C. while
she speaks.)

LADY NELLIE.—How easy it seems. Let me try, mother.

LADY MAY.—Oh, yes, do show us how to do it!

LADY BLOSSOM.—And me, too, please!

BEAUTY.—If it would not spoil your work, we would like
to turn the wheel awhile.



WICKED FAIRY.—Well, just a moment, lady. Stand you
here and hold these threads, your foot just here.
There, the thread is broken. Catch it quickly.
I will turn. (Giving it a quicker turn Beauty
strikes her finger against the reel and hurts it.)

BEAUTY.—Oh, Nellie, I have hurt my hand!

LADY NELLIE (Anxiously).—Not much?

BEAUTY.—Oh no! I think not. But how strange! the
room seems spinning like the wheel. I'll close
my eyes; so drowsy I feel. (Falling back to-
ward Nellie, who, catching her, sinks on the
lounge behind her and drops her head over
Beauty.)

LADY NELLIE.—(Looking up with drowsy voice, says) I
too would sleep! (And sinks her head again,
the others falling asleep in graceful repose near.
A soft lullaby played in the distance.)

WICKED FAIRY.—Spin round, my wheel! Upon them all
A century's dreamless sleep shall fall
On all within this castle wall,
In yard and stable, court and hall,
And my revenge is gained!

Curtain.



SCENE SECOND.

Beauty on a low lounge asleep. C. Ladies Blossom,
Nellie and May grouped near in pretty attitudes. Curtain
rises to the same distant lullaby. Door L. opens, and Prince
Halbert enters in cap and sword.



PRINCE HALBERT.—(Coming forward to front of stage
and pushing aside his cloak impatiently.)

I've ridden far o'er land and stream
To prove the truth of but a dream,
Through forest wild and mountain dale
To find if true the old man's tale:
Scaled high the silent castle's wall,
To prove if the spell can o'er me fall;
Or if charm of health and youth,
Girded with the sword of truth,
More potent is than fairy spell,
I'll wake to life the sleeping dell.
Neglect here reigns on every side,
Killed by weeds the flowers have died;
The gaping gates, where sentry sleeps,
While at her post the portress keeps
A faithless watch, with half-closed eyes,
'Neath winter clouds and summer skies;
The horse boy's head against the steed
That stoops its head to take its feed.
The coachmen in the door-way stand
Waving to housemaid gallant hand;
The cook, on mystery intent
O'er sav'ry sauce has grey head bent;
The scullery-maid with pot half-cleaned,
Has paused in tale from gossip gleaned,
The footmen, pages, maddens in the hall,
The same dread spell has fallen on them all.



Across the halls the spider spins his thread,
The only life amid the living dead,
And in security within its maze
Reigns, Crusoe-like o'er all that he surveys.
Methinks the spell I too begin to feel,
And o'er my limbs delicious languors steal.
I, too, could sleep, I'm weary from my ride;
I'll doff my hat and lay my sword aside.
(Takes off hat, and, turning, sees Beauty; throwing his hat
at his feet starts a step nearer, and)

What sleep! I were a laggart knight
If I could close my eyes on such a sight!
My faith, I'd lose them, ne'er find another pair,
If they've e'er seen a maiden half so fair!

(Advancing towards lounge.)

But hark! I would not yet awake
Such grace, such loveliness; nor take

A moment from that hour of bliss

(A pause) My heart! what beautiful form is this?

(Advancing slowly to back of lounge, still facing audience.)

Nearer I will creep, on light tip-toe steal,
Close to this goddess; If the dream be real
And I can touch those dainty finger-tips,
Then, as the bee from rose-leaf honey sips
I'll press upon her cheek my loving lips!

(Leans forward and kisses Beauty, who opens her eyes.)

Curtain.



FINAL TABLEAU.

Beauty and Prince C.; King and Queen R. C. L.; Ladies
Nellie, Blossom and May on either side; Pages in fore-
ground; Wicked Fairy high up in background, with threat-
ening broomstick in hand. Nobles, Courtiers, Maids of
Honour, Servants and Pages grouped at sides. Music—
Wedding March.

THE END.

