

'Tell her to go to all the devils!' answered Madame Bonanni, furious. 'No — don't!' she cried. 'Where is she? Come here, you!' she called, seeing the woman at a little distance. 'Do you know what you are doing? You are trying to help Schirmer, the murderer, to escape. If you are not careful you will be in prison yourself before morning! That is the answer! Now go, and take care that you are not caught!'

The woman, who was certainly not over-intelligent, stared hard at Madame Bonanni for a moment, and then turned, with a cry of terror, and fled along the circular passage.

'You should not let in such suspicious-looking people,' said Madame Bonanni to the box-opener in a severe tone.

The poor soul began an apology, but Madame Bonanni did not stop to listen, and entered the box again, shutting the door behind her.

The curtain went up before Lushington came back, but the prima donna did not look at the stage and scarcely heard the tenor's lament, the chorus and the rest. She seemed quite lost in her thoughts. Then Lushington appeared with a big dark cloak on his arm.

'Will this do, mother?' he asked.

She stood up and made him put it over her. It had a hood, as she had wished, which quite covered her head and would cover her face, too, if she wished not to be recognised.

'It's just what I wanted,' she said. 'Hang it on the hook by the door, and sit down. Gilda will be on in a minute.'