

THESPIS
OR
THE GODS GROWN OLD

Libretto by William S. Gilbert
Music by Arthur S. Sullivan

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

JUPITER, Aged Diety
APOLLO, Aged Diety
MARS, Aged Diety
DIANA, Aged Diety
MERCURY

} GODS

THESPIS
SILLIMON
TIMIDON
TIPSEION
PREPOSTEROS
STUPIDAS
SPARKEION
NICEMIS
PRETTEIA
DAPHNE
CYMON

} THESPIANS

ACT I - Ruined Temple on the Summit of Mount Olympus

ACT II - The same Scene, with the Ruins Restored

*Produced at the Gaiety Theatre, under the management of
J. Hollingshead, Tuesday, December 23, 1871.*

ACT I

SCENE: *The ruins of The Temple of the Gods on summit of Mount Olympus. Picturesque shattered columns, overgrown with ivy, etc., R. and L., with entrances to temple (ruined) R. Fallen columns on the stage. Three broken pillars 2 R. E. At the back of stage is the approach from the summit of the mountain. This should be "practicable" to enable large numbers of people to ascend and descend. In the distance are the summits of adjacent mountains. At first all this is concealed by a thick fog, which clears presently. Enter (through fog) Chorus of Stars coming off duty, as fatigued with their night's work.*

CHORUS OF STARS

CHORUS Throughout the night
 The constellations
 Have given light
 From various stations.
 When midnight gloom
 Falls on all nations,
 We will resume
 Our occupations.

SOLO Our light, it's true,
 Is not worth mention;
 What can we do
 To gain attention,
 When, night and noon,
 With vulgar glaring,
 A great big Moon
 Is *always* flaring?

CHORUS Throughout the night, &c.

During chorus Enter DIANA, an elderly Goddess. She is carefully wrapped up in Cloaks, Shawls, etc. A Hood is over her head, a Respirator in her mouth, and Goloshes on her feet. During the chorus she takes these things off, and discovers herself dressed in the usual costume of the Lunar Diana, the Goddess of the Moon.

DIANA (*shuddering*). Ugh! How cold the nights are! I don't know how it is, but I seem to feel the night air a great deal more than I used to. But it is time for the sun to be rising. (*Calls.*) Apollo.

APOLLO (*within*) Hollo!

DIANA I've come off duty — it's time for you to be getting up.

Enter APOLLO. He is an elderly “buck” with an air of assumed juvenility, and is dressed in dressing gown and smoking cap.

APOLLO (yawning) I shan’t go out to-day. I was out yesterday and the day before and I want a little rest. I don’t know how it is, but I seem to feel my work a great deal more than I used to.

DIANA I’m sure these short days can’t hurt you. Why, you don’t rise till six and you’re in bed again by five: you should have a turn at *my* work and see how you like that — out all night!

APOLLO My dear sister, I don’t envy you — though I remember when I did — but that was when I was a younger sun. I don’t think I’m quite well. Perhaps a little change of air will do me good. I’ve a great mind to show myself in London this winter, they’ll be very glad to see me. No! I shan’t go out to-day. I shall send them this fine, thick wholesome fog and they won’t miss me. It’s the best substitute for a blazing sun — and like most substitutes, nothing at all like the real thing. (*To fog.*) Be off with you.

[Fog clears away and discovers the scene described.]

Hurried music. MERCURY shoots up from behind precipice at the back of stage. He carries several parcels afterwards described. He sits down, very much fatigued.

MERCURY Home at last. A nice time I’ve had of it.

DIANA You young scamp you’ve been down all night again. This is the third time you’ve been out this week.

MERCURY Well *you’re* a nice one to blow me up for that.

DIANA I can’t help being out all night.

MERCURY And I can’t help being down all night. The nature of Mercury requires that he should go down when the sun sets, and rise again when the sun rises.

DIANA And what have you been doing?

MERCURY Stealing on commission. There’s a set of false teeth and a box of Life Pills — that’s for Jupiter — An invisible peruke and a bottle of hair dye — that’s for Apollo — A respirator and a pair of galoshes — that’s for Cupid — A full bottomed chignon, some auricomous fluid, a box of pearl-powder, a pot of rouge, and a hare’s foot — that’s for Venus.

DIANA Stealing! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!

MERCURY Oh, as the god of thieves I must do something to justify my position.

DIANA & APOLLO (*contemptuously*). Your position!

MERCURY Oh I know it's nothing to boast of, even on earth. Up here, it's simply contemptible. Now that you gods are too old for your work, you've made me the miserable drudge of Olympus — groom, valet, postman, butler, commissionaire, maid of all work, parish beadle, and original dustman.

APOLLO Your Christmas boxes ought to be something considerable.

MERCURY They ought to be but they're not. I'm treated abominably. I make everybody and I'm nobody — I go everywhere and I'm nowhere — I do everything and I'm nothing — I've made thunder for Jupiter, odes for Apollo, battles for Mars, and love for Venus. I've married couples for Hymen and six weeks afterwards, I've divorced them for Cupid — and in return I get all the kicks while they pocket the halfpence. And in compensation for robbing me of the halfpence in question, what have they done for me?

APOLLO Why they've — ha! ha! they've made you the god of thieves!

MERCURY Very self-denying of them — There isn't one of them who hasn't a better claim to the distinction than I have.

SONG—MERCURY

Oh, I'm the celestial drudge,
 From morning to night I must stop at it,
 On errands all day I must trudge,
 And I stick to my work till I drop at it!
 In summer I get up at one
 (As a good-natured donkey I'm ranked for it),
 then I go and I light up the Sun,
 And Phœbus Apollo gets thanked for it!
 Well, well, it's the way of the world,
 And will be through all its futurity;
 Though noodles are baroned and earled,
 There's nothing for clever obscurity!

I'm the slave of the Gods, neck and heels,
 And I'm bound to obey, though I rate at 'em;
 And I not only order their meals,
 But I cook 'em and serve 'em and wait at 'em.
 Then I make all their nectar — I do —
 (Which a terrible liquor to rack us is.)
 And whenever I mix them a brew,
 Why all the thanksgivings are Bacchus's!
 Well, well, it's the way of the world, &c.

Then reading and writing I teach,
 And spelling-books many I've edited!
 And for bringing those arts within reach,
 That donkey Minerva gets credited.
 Then I scrape at the stars with a knife,
 And plate-powder the moon (on the days for it),
 And I hear all the world and his wife
 Awarding Diana the praise for it!
 Well, well, it's the way of the world, &c.

[*After song — very loud and majestic music is heard.*]

DIANA & MERCURY (*looking off*) Why, who's this? Jupiter, by Jove!

Enter JUPITER, an extremely old man, very decrepit, with very thin straggling white beard, he wears a long braided dressing-gown, handsomely trimmed, and a silk night-cap on his head. MERCURY falls back respectfully as he enters.

JUPITER Good day, Diana — ah Apollo — Well, well, well, what's the matter?
 What's the matter?

DIANA Why, that young scamp Mercury says that we do nothing, and leave all
 the duties of Olympus to him! Will you believe it, he actually says that
 our influence on earth is dropping down to *nil*.

JUPITER Well, well — don't be hard on the lad — to tell you the truth, I'm not
 sure that he's very far wrong. Don't let it go any further, but, between
 ourselves, the sacrifices and votive offerings have fallen off terribly of
 late. Why, I can remember the time when people offered us human sacri-
 fices — no mistake about it — human sacrifices! Think of that!

DIANA Ah! Those good old days!

JUPITER Then it fell off to oxen, pigs, and sheep.

APOLLO Well, there are worse things than oxen, pigs and sheep.

JUPITER So I've found to my cost. My dear sir — between ourselves, it's dropped
 off from one thing to another until it has positively dwindled down to pre-
 served Australian beef! What do you think of that?

APOLLO I don't like it at all.

JUPITER You won't mention it — It might go further —

DIANA It couldn't fare worse.

JUPITER In short, matters have come to such a crisis that there's no mistake about it — something must be done to restore our influence, the only question is, *What?*

QUARTETTE

MERCURY (*coming forward in great alarm*).

Enter MARS

Oh incident unprecedented!
I hardly can believe it's true!

MARS Why, bless the boy, he's quite demented!
Why, what's the matter, sir, with you?

APOLLO Speak quickly, or you'll get a warming!

MERCURY Why, mortals up the mount are swarming,
Our temple on Olympus storming,
In hundreds — aye in thousands, too!

ALL Goodness gracious,
How audacious;
Earth is spacious,
Why come here?
Our impeding
Their proceeding
Were good breeding,
That is clear.

DIANA Jupiter, hear my plea;
Upon the mount if *they* light,
There'll be an end of me,
I won't be seen by daylight!

APOLLO Tartarus is the place
These scoundrels you should send to —
Should they behold my face
My influence there's an end to!

JUPITER (*looking over precipice*).
What fools to give themselves so much exertion!

DIANA (*looking over precipice*).
A government survey I'll make assertion!

APOLLO *(looking over precipice).*
Perhaps the Alpine club at their diversion!

MERCURY *(looking over precipice).*
They seem to be more like a “Cook’s Excursion.”

ALL Goodness gracious, etc.

APOLLO If, mighty Jove, you value your existence,
 Send them a thunderbolt with your regards!

JUPITER My thunderbolts, though valid at a distance,
 Are not effective at a hundred yards.

MERCURY Let the moon’s rays, Diana, strike ‘em flighty,
 Make ‘em all lunatics in various styles!

DIANA My Lunar rays unhappily are mighty
 Only at many hundred thousand miles.

ALL Goodness gracious, etc.

[Exeunt JUPITER, APOLLO, DIANA, and MERCURY into ruined temple.

Enter SPARKEION and NICEMIS climbing mountain at back.

SPARKEION Here we are at last on the very summit, and we’ve left the others ever so far behind! Why, what’s this?

NICEMIS A ruined palace! A palace on the top of a mountain. I wonder who lives here? Some mighty king, I dare say, with wealth beyond all counting, who came to live up here —

SPARKEION To avoid his creditors! It’s a lovely situation for a country house though it’s very much out of repair.

NICEMIS Very inconvenient situation.

SPARKEION Inconvenient?

NICEMIS Yes — how are you to get butter, milk, and eggs up here? No pigs — no poultry — no postman. Why, I should go mad.

SPARKEION What a dear little practical mind it is! What a wife you will make!

NICEMIS Don’t be too sure — we are only partly married — the marriage ceremony lasts all day.

- SPARKEION I've no doubt at all about it. We shall be as happy as a king and queen, though we are only a strolling actor and actress.
- NICEMIS It's very kind of Thespis to celebrate our marriage day by giving the company a pic-nic on this lovely mountain.
- SPARKEION And still more kind to allow us to get so much ahead of all the others. Discreet Thespis! *[Kissing her.]*
- NICEMIS There now, get away, do! Remember the marriage ceremony is not yet completed.
- SPARKEION But it would be ungrateful to Thespis's discretion not to take advantage of it by improving the opportunity.
- NICEMIS Certainly not; get away.
- SPARKEION On second thoughts the opportunity's so good it don't admit of improvement. There! *[Kisses her.]*
- NICEMIS How dare you kiss me before we are quite married?
- SPARKEION Attribute it to the intoxicating influence of the mountain air.
- NICEMIS Then we had better go down again. It is not right to expose ourselves to influences over which we have no control.

DUET—SPARKEION AND NICEMIS

- SPARKEION Here far away from all the world,
Dissension and derision,
With Nature's wonders all unfurled
To our delighted vision,
With no one here
(At least in sight)
To interfere
With our delight,
And two fond lovers sever,
Oh do not free,
Thine hand from mine,
I swear to thee
My love is thine,
For ever and for ever!
- NICEMIS On mountain top the air is keen,
And most exhilarating,
And we say things we do not mean
In moments less elating.

So please to wait,
 For thoughts that crop,
En tête-à-tête,
 On mountain top,
 May not exactly tally
 With those that you
 May entertain,
 Returning to
 The sober plain
 Of yon relaxing valley.

- SPARKEION Very well — if you won't have anything to say to me, I know who will.
- NICEMIS Who will?
- SPARKEION Daphne will.
- NICEMIS Daphne would flirt with anybody.
- SPARKEION Anybody would flirt with Daphne. She is quite as pretty as you and has twice as much back-hair.
- NICEMIS She has twice as much money, which may account for it.
- SPARKEION At all events, *she* has appreciation. *She* likes good looks.
- NICEMIS We all like what we haven't got.
- SPARKEION *She* keeps her eyes open.
- NICEMIS Yes — one of them.
- SPARKEION Which one?
- NICEMIS The one she doesn't wink with.
- SPARKEION Well, I was engaged to her for six months and if she still makes eyes at me, you must attribute it to force of habit. Besides — remember — we are only half-married at present.
- NICEMIS I suppose you mean that you are going to treat me as shamefully as you treated her. Very well, break it off if you like. *I* shall not offer any objection. Thespis used to be very attentive to me. I'd just as soon be a manager's wife as a fifth-rate actor's!

Chorus heard, at first below, then enter DAPHNE, PRETTEIA, PREPOSTEROS, STUPIDAS, TIPSEION, CYMON, and other members of THESPIS' company climbing over rock at back. All carry small baskets.

CHORUS— (*with dance*)

Climbing over rocky mountain,
 Skipping rivulet and fountain,
 Passing where the willows quiver,
 By the ever rolling river,
 Swollen with the summer rain.
 Threading long and leafy mazes,
 Dotted with unnumbered daisies,
 Scaling rough and rugged passes,
 Climb the hardy lads and lasses,
 Till the mountain-top they gain.

FIRST VOICE Fill the cup and tread the measure
 Make the most of fleeting leisure,
 Hail it as a true ally,
 Though it perish bye and bye!

SECOND VOICE Every moment brings a treasure
 Of its own especial pleasure,
 Though the moments quickly die,
 Greet them gaily as they fly!

THIRD VOICE Far away from grief and care,
 High up in the mountain air,
 Let us live and reign alone,
 In a world that's all our own.

FOURTH VOICE Here enthroned in the sky,
 Far away from mortal eye,
 We'll be gods and make decrees,
 Those may honour them who please.

CHORUS Fill the cup and tread the measure, etc.

[*After CHORUS and COUPLETS enter THESPIS climbing over rocks*

THESPIS Bless you, my people, bless you. Let the revels commence. After all, for thorough, unconstrained unconventional enjoyment give me a pic-nic.

PREPOSTEROS (*very gloomily*). Give him a pic-nic somebody!

THESPIS Be quiet, Preposterous — don't interrupt.

PREPOSTEROS Ha! Ha! Shut up again! But no matter.

- TIPSEION You engaged me to play convivial parts on the strength of my personal appearance.
- THESPIS I did.
- TIPSEION Then you found that my habits interfered with my duties as low comedian.
- THESPIS True —
- TIPSEION You said yesterday that unless I took the pledge you would dismiss me from your company.
- THESPIS Quite so.
- TIPSEION Good. I have taken it. It is all I have taken since yesterday. My preserver!
[Embraces him.]
- THESPIS Yes, but where's the wine?
- TIPSEION I left it behind that I might not be tempted to violate my pledge.
- PREPOSTEROS Minion! [Attempts to get at him, is restrained by STUPIDAS.]
- THESPIS Now, Preposteros, what *is* the matter with you?
- PREPOSTEROS It is enough that I am down-trodden in my profession. I will not submit to imposition out of it. It is enough that as your heavy villain I get the worst of it every night in a combat of six. I will *not* submit to insult in the day time. I have come out, Ha! Ha! to enjoy myself!
- THESPIS But look here, you know — virtue only triumphs at night from seven to ten — vice gets the best of it during the other twenty-three hours. Won't that satisfy you? [STUPIDAS endeavours to pacify him.]
- PREPOSTEROS (*irritated to STUPIDAS*). Ye are odious to my sight! Get out of it!
- STUPIDAS (*in great terror*). What have I done?
- THESPIS Now *what* is it, Preposteros, *what* is it?
- PREPOSTEROS I a — hate him and would have his life!
- THESPIS (*to STUPIDAS*). That's it — he hates you and would have your life. Now go and be merry.
- STUPIDAS Yes, but why does he hate me?
- THESPIS Oh — exactly. (*to PREPOSTEROS*). Why do you hate him?

- PREPOSTEROS Because he is a minion!
- THESPIS He hates you because you are a minion. It explains itself. Now go and enjoy yourselves. Ha! Ha! It is well for those who *can* laugh — let them do so — there is no extra charge. The light-hearted cup and the convivial jest for them — but for me — what is there for me?
- SILLIMON There is some claret-cup and lobster salad *[Handing some.*
- THESPIS *(taking it)*. Thank you. *(Resuming.)* What is there for me but anxiety — ceaseless gnawing anxiety that tears at my very vitals and rends my peace of mind asunder? There is nothing whatever for me but anxiety of the nature I have just described. The charge of these thoughtless revellers is my unhappy lot. It is not a small charge, and it is rightly termed a lot, because they are many. Oh why did the gods make me a manager?
- SILLIMON *(as guessing a riddle)*. Why did the gods make him a manager?
- SPARKEION Why did the *gods* make him a manager?
- DAPHNE Why did the gods make *him* a manager?
- PRETTEIA Why did the gods make him a *manager*?
- THESPIS No — no — what are you talking about? What do you mean?
- DAPHNE I've got it — don't tell us —
- ALL No — no — because — because —
- THESPIS *(annoyed)*. It isn't a conundrum — It's misanthropical question. Why cannot I join you? *[Retires up center.*
- DAPHNE *(who is sitting with SPARKEION to the annoyance of NICEMIS who is crying alone)*. I'm sure I don't know. We do not want you. Don't distress yourself on our account — we are getting on very comfortably — aren't we Sparkeion?
- SPARKEION We are so happy that we don't miss the lobster or the claret. What are lobster and claret compared with the society of those we love? *[Embracing DAPHNE.*
- DAPHNE Why, Nicemis, love, you are eating nothing. Aren't you happy dear?
- NICEMIS *(spitefully)*. You are *quite* welcome to my share of *everything*. I intend to console *myself* with the society of my manager. *[Takes THESPIS' arm affectionately.*

THESPIS Here I say — this won't do, you know — I can't allow it — at least before my company — besides, you are half-married to Sparkeion. Sparkeion, here's your half-wife impairing my influence before my company. Don't you know the story of the gentleman who undermined his influence by associating with his inferiors?

ALL Yes, yes, — we know it.

PREPOSTEROS (*furiously*). I do not know it! It's ever thus! Doomed to disappointment from my earliest years — [STUPIDAS *endeavours to console him.*]

THESPIS There — that's enough. Preposterous — you *shall* hear it.

SONG—THESPIS

I once knew a chap who discharged a function
 On the North South East West Diddlesex junction,
 He was conspicuous exceeding,
 For his affable ways and his easy breeding.
 Although a Chairman of Directors,
 He was hand in glove with the ticket inspectors,
 He tipped the guards with bran-new fivers,
 And sang little songs to the engine drivers.
 'Twas told to me with great compunction,
 By one who had discharged with unction,
 A Chairman of Directors function,
 On the North South East West Diddlesex junction.
 Fol diddle, lol diddle, lol lol lay.

Each Christmas Day he gave each stoker
 A silver shovel and a golden poker,
 He'd button-hole flowers for the ticket sorters,
 And rich Bath-buns for the outside porters.
 He'd mount the clerks on his first-class hunters,
 And he build little villas for the road-side shunters,
 And if any were fond of pigeon shooting,
 He'd ask them down to his place at Tooting.
 'Twas told to me, etc.

In course of time there spread a rumour
 That he did all this from a sense of humour,
 So instead of signalling and stoking,
 They gave themselves up to a course of joking.
 Whenever they knew that he was riding,
 They shunted his train on a lonely siding,
 Or stopped all night in the middle of a tunnel,

On the plea that the boiler was a-coming through the funnel.
 ‘Twas told to me, etc.

If he wished to go to Perth or Stirling,
 His train through several counties whirling,
 Would set him down in a fit of larking,
 At four a.m. in the wilds of Barking.
 This pleased his whim and seemed to strike it,
 But the general Public did not like it,
 The receipts fell, after a few repeatings,
 And he got it hot at the annual meetings.
 ‘Twas told to me, etc.

He followed out his whim with vigour,
 The shares went down to a nominal figure,
 These are the sad results proceeding
 From his affable ways and his easy breeding!
 The line, with its rails and guards and peelers,
 Was sold for a song to marine store dealers,
 The shareholders are all in the work’us,
 And he sells pipe-lights in the Regent Circus.
 ‘Twas told to me with much compunction,
 By one who had discharged with unction
 A Chairman of Directors’ function,
 On the North South East West Diddlesex junction,
 Fol diddle lol diddle lol lol lay!

[*After song.*]

THESPIS It’s very hard. As a man I am naturally of an easy disposition. As a manager, I am compelled to hold myself aloof, that my influence may not be deteriorated. As a man I am inclined to fraternize with the pauper — as a manager I am compelled to walk around like this: Don’t know yah! Don’t know yah! Don’t know yah!

Strides haughtily about the stage, JUPITER, MARS, and APOLLO, in full Olympian costume appear on the three broken columns. Thespians scream.

JUPITER, MARS *and* APOLLO (*in recit.*). Presumptuous mortal!

THESPIS (*same business*). Don’t know yah! Don’t know yah!

JUPITER, MARS *and* APOLLO (*seated on three broken pillars, still in recit.*). Presumptuous mortal!

THESPIS I do not know you. I do not know you.

JUPITER, MARS *and* APOLLO (*standing on ground, recit.*). Presumptuous mortal!

- THESPIS To be sure I have.
- JUPITER And how have you dressed the part?
- THESPIS Fine commanding party in the prime of life. Thunderbolt — full beard — dignified manner — a good deal of this sort of thing “Don’t know yah! Don’t know yah! Don’t know yah!” *[Imitating, crosses L.*
- JUPITER *(much affected)*. I — I’m very much obliged to you. It’s very good of you. I—I—I used to be like that. I can’t tell you how much I feel it. And do you find I’m an impressive character to play?
- THESPIS Well no, I can’t say you are. In fact we don’t use you much out of burlesque.
- JUPITER Burlesque! *[Offended, walks up.*
- THESPIS Yes, it’s a painful subject, drop it, drop it. The fact is, you are not the gods you were — you’re behind your age.
- JUPITER Well, but what are we to do? We feel that we ought to do something, but we don’t know what.
- THESPIS Why don’t you all go down to Earth, *incog.*, mingle with the world, hear and see what people think of you, and judge for yourselves as to the best means to take to restore your influence?
- JUPITER Ah, but what’s to become of Olympus in the meantime?
- THESPIS Lor bless you, don’t distress yourself about that. I’ve a very good company, used to take long parts on the shortest notice. Invest us with your powers and we’ll fill your places till you return.
- JUPITER *(aside)*. The offer is tempting. *(aloud)*. But suppose you fail?
- THESPIS Fail! Oh, we never fail in our profession. We’ve nothing but great successes!
- JUPITER Then it’s a bargain?
- THESPIS It’s a bargain. *[They shake hands on it.*
- JUPITER And that you may not be entirely without assistance, we will leave you Mercury, and whenever you find yourself in a difficulty you can consult him.

Enter MERCURY (trap C.)

QUARTETTE

- JUPITER So that's arranged — you take my place, my boy,
 While we make trial of a new existence.
At length I will be able to enjoy
 The pleasures I have envied from a distance.
- MERCURY Compelled upon Olympus here to stop,
 While the other gods go down to play the hero,
Don't be surprised if on this mountain top
 You find your Mercury is down at zero!
- APOLLO To earth away to join in mortal acts.
 And gather fresh materials to write on,
Investigate more closely several facts,
 That I for centuries have thrown some light on!
- DIANA I, as the modest moon with crescent bow,
 Have always shown a light to nightly scandal,
I must say I'd like to go below,
 And find out if the game is worth the candle!

Enter all thespians, summoned by MERCURY

- MERCURY Here come your people!
- THESPIS People better now!

AIR—THESPIS

- While mighty Jove goes down below
 With all the other deities,
I fill his place and wear his "clo,"
 The very part for me it is.
To mother earth to make a track,
 They are all spurred and booted, too,
And you will fill, till they come back,
 The parts you best are suited to.
- CHORUS Here's a pretty tale for future *Iliads* and *Odysseys*,
Mortals are about to personate the gods and goddesses.
Now to set the world in order, we will work in unity.
Jupiter's perplexity is Thespis's opportunity.

SOLO—SPARKEION

Phoebus am I, with golden ray,
The god of day, the god of day,

When shadowy night has held her sway,
 I make the goddess fly.
 'Tis mine the task to wake the world,
 In slumber curled, in slumber curled,
 By me her charms are all unfurled
 The god of day am I!

CHORUS The god of day, the god of day,
 That part shall our Sparkeion play.
 Ha! Ha! &c.
 The rarest fun and rarest fare,
 That ever fell to mortal share!
 Ha! ha! &c.

SOLO—NICEMIS

I am the moon, the lamp of night.
 I show a light — I show a light.
 With radiant sheen I put to flight
 The shadows of the sky.
 By my fair rays, as you're aware,
 Gay lovers swear — gay lovers swear,
 While greybeards sleep away their care,
 The lamp of night am I!

CHORUS The lamp of night — the lamp of night,
 Nicemis plays, to her delight.
 Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!
 The rarest fun and rarest fare,
 That ever fell to mortal share.
 Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

SOLO—TIMIDON

Mighty old Mars, the God of War,
 I'm destined for — I'm destined for —
 A terribly famous conqueror,
 With sword upon his thigh.
 When armies meet with eager shout
 And warlike rout, and warlike rout,
 You'll find me there without a doubt.
 The God of War am I!

CHORUS The God of War, the God of War.
 Great Timidon is destined for!
 Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!
 The rest fun and rarest fare,

That ever fell to mortal share.
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! &c.

SOLO—DAPHNE

When, as the fruit of warlike deeds,
The soldier bleeds, the soldier bleeds,
Calliope crowns heroic deeds,
With immortality.
From mere oblivion I reclaim
The soldier's name, the soldier's name,
And write it on the roll of fame,
The muse of fame am I!

CHORUS The muse of fame, the muse of fame,
Calliope is Daphne's name,
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!
The rarest fun and rarest fare,
That ever fell to mortal share!
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

TUTTI Here's a pretty tale!

Enter procession of old Gods, they come down very much astonished at all they see, then passing by, ascend the platform that leads to the descent at the back.

Gods (JUPITER, DIANA, and APOLLO) in corner are together.

We will go,
Down below,
Revels rare,
We will share.
Ha! Ha! Ha!

With a gay
Holiday,
All unknown,
And alone.
Ha! Ha! Ha!

TUTTI Here's a pretty tale!

The Gods, including those who have lately entered in procession, group themselves on rising ground at back. The Thespians (kneeling) bid them farewell.

ACT II

SCENE: *The same scene as in Act I with the exception that in place of the ruins that filled the foreground of the stage, the interior of a magnificent temple is seen showing the background of the scene of Act I, through the columns of the portico at the back. High throne. L.U.E. Low seats below it.*

All the substitute gods and goddesses (that is to say, Thespians) are discovered grouped in picturesque attitudes about the stage, eating and drinking, and smoking and singing the following verses: —

CHORUS Of all symposia
 The best by half,
 Upon Olympus, here, await us,
 We eat ambrosia,
 And nectar quaff —
 It cheers but don't inebriate us.
 We know the fallacies
 Of human food,
 So please to pass Olympian rosy,
 We built up palaces,
 Where ruins stood,
 And find them much more snug and cosy.

SOLO—SILLIMON

To work and think, my dear,
 Up here would be,
 The height of conscientious folly,
 So eat and drink, my dear,
 I like to see,
 Young people gay — young people jolly.
 Olympian food, my love,
 I'll lay long odds,
 Will please your lips — those rosy portals,
 What is the good, my love
 Of being gods,
 If we must work like common mortals?

CHORUS Of all symposia, &c.

Exeunt all but NICEMIS, who is dressed as DIANA and PRETTEIA, who is dressed as VENUS. They take SILLIMON's arm and bring him down.

SILLIMON Bless their little hearts, I can refuse them nothing. As the Olympian stage-manager I ought to be strict with them and make them do their duty, but I can't. Bless their little hearts, when I see the pretty little craft come sail-

ing up to me with a wheedling smile on their pretty little figure-heads, I can't turn my back on 'em. I'm all bow, though I'm sure I try to be stern!

- PRETTEIA You certainly are a dear old thing.
- SILLIMON She says I'm a dear old thing! Deputy Venus says I'm a dear old thing!
- NICEMIS It's her affectionate habit to describe everybody in those terms. *I* am more particular, but still even *I* am bound to admit that you are certainly a very dear old thing.
- SILLIMON Deputy Venus says I'm a dear old thing, and Deputy Diana who is much more particular, endorses it! Who could be severe with such deputy divinities?
- PRETTEIA Do you know, I'm going to ask you a favour.
- SILLIMON Venus is going to ask me a favour!
- PRETTEIA You see, I am Venus.
- SILLIMON No one who saw your face would doubt it.
- NICEMIS (*aside*) No one who knew her *character* would.
- PRETTEIA Well Venus, you know, is married to Mars.
- SILLIMON To Vulcan, my dear, to Vulcan. The exact connubial relation of the different gods and goddesses is a point on which we must be extremely particular.
- PRETTEIA I beg your pardon — Venus is married to Mars.
- NICEMIS If she isn't married to Mars, she ought to be.
- SILLIMON Then that decides it — call it married to Mars.
- PRETTEIA Married to Vulcan or married to Mars, what does it signify?
- SILLIMON My dear, it's a matter on which I have no personal feeling whatever.
- PRETTEIA So that she is married to someone!
- SILLIMON Exactly! So that she is married to someone. Call it married to Mars.
- PRETTEIA Now here's my difficulty. Timidon takes the place of Mars, and Timidon is my father!
- SILLIMON Then why object to Vulcan?

- PRETTEIA Because Vulcan is my grandfather!
- SILLIMON But, my dear, what an objection! You are playing a part till the real gods return. That's all! Whether you are supposed to be married to your father — or your grandfather, what does it matter? This passion for realism is the curse of the stage!
- PRETTEIA That's all very well, but I can't throw myself into a part that has already lasted a twelvemonth, when I have to make love to my father. It interferes with my conception of the characters. It spoils the part.
- SILLIMON Well, well. I'll see what can be done. (*Exit* PRETTEIA L.U.E.) That's always the way with beginners, they've no imaginative power. A true artist ought to be superior to such considerations. (NICEMIS *comes down* R.) Well, Nicemis — I should say Diana — what's wrong with you? Don't you like your part?
- NICEMIS Oh, immensely! It's great fun.
- SILLIMON Don't you find it lonely out by yourself all night?
- NICEMIS Oh, but I'm *not* alone all night!
- SILLIMON But — I don't want to ask any injudicious questions — but who accompanies you?
- NICEMIS Who? Why Sparkeion, of course.
- SILLIMON Sparkeion? Well, but Sparkeion is Phœbus Apollo. (*Enter* SPARKEION) He's the Sun, you know.
- NICEMIS Of course he is; I should catch my death of cold, in the night air, if he didn't accompany me.
- SPARKEION My dear Sillimon, it would never do for a young lady to be out alone all night. It wouldn't be respectable.
- SILLIMON There's a good deal of truth in that. But still — the Sun — at night — I don't like the idea. The original Diana always went out alone.
- NICEMIS I hope the original Diana is no rule for *me*. After all, what *does* it matter?
- SILLIMON To be sure — what *does* it matter?
- SPARKEION The sun at night, or in the daytime!
- SILLIMON So that he shines. That's all that's necessary. (*Exit* NICEMIS R.U.E.) But poor Daphne, what will she say to this?

SPARKEION Oh, Daphne can console herself; young ladies soon get over this sort of thing. Did you never hear of the young lady who was engaged to Cousin Robin?

SILLIMON Never.

SPARKEION Then I'll sing it to you.

SONG—SPARKEION

Little maid of Arcadee
 Sat on Cousin Robin's knee,
 Thought in form and face and limb,
 Nobody could rival him.
 He was brave and she was fair.
 Truth, they made a pretty pair.
 Happy little maiden, she —
 Happy maid of Arcadee!

Moments fled as moments will
 Happily enough, until,
 After, say, a month or two,
 Robin did as Robins do.
 Weary of his lover's play,
 Jilted her and went away.
 Wretched little maiden, she —
 Wretched maid of Arcadee!

To her little home she crept,
 There she sat her down and wept,
 Maiden wept as maidens will —
 Grew so thin and pale — until
 Cousin Richard came to woo!
 Then again the roses grew!
 Happy little maiden she —
 Happy maid of Arcadee!

[*Exit* SPARKEION.]

SILLIMON Well, Mercury, my boy, you've had a year's experience of us here. How do we do it? I think we're rather an improvement on the original gods — don't you?

MERCURY Well, you see, there's a good deal to be said on both sides of the question; you are certainly younger than the original gods, and, therefore, more active. On the other hand, they are certainly older than you, and have, therefore, more experience. On the whole I prefer *you*, because your mistakes amuse me.

SONG—MERCURY

Olympus is now in a terrible muddle,
 The deputy deities all are at fault;
 They splutter and splash like a pig in a puddle,
 And dickens a one of 'em's earning his salt,
 For Thespis as Jove is a terrible blunder,
 Too nervous and timid — too easy and weak —
 Whenever he's called on to lighten or thunder,
 The thought of it keeps him awake for a week!

Then mighty Mars hasn't the pluck of a parrot,
 When left in the dark he will quiver and quail;
 And Vulcan has arms that would snap like a carrot,
 Before he could drive in a tenpenny nail!
 Then Venus's freckles are very repelling.
 And Venus should *not* have a squint in her eyes;
 The learned Minerva is weak in her spelling,
 And scatters her h's all over the skies.

Then Pluto, in kindhearted tenderness erring,
 Can't make up his mind to let anyone die —
 The *Times* has a paragraph ever recurring,
 "Remarkable incidence of longevity."
 On some it has some as a serious onus,
 To others it's quite an advantage — in short,
 While ev'ry Life Office declares a big bonus,
 The poor undertakers are all in the court!

Then Cupid, the rascal, forgetting his trade is
 To make men and women impartially smart,
 Will only shoot arrows at pretty young ladies,
 And never takes aim at a bachelor's heart.
 The results of this freak — or whatever you term it —
 Should cover the wicked young scamp with disgrace,
 While ev'ry young man is as shy as a hermit,
 Young ladies are popping all over the place!

This wouldn't much matter — for bashful and shy men,
 When skillfully handled, are certain to fall,
 But, alas! That determined young bachelor Hymen
 Refuses to wed anybody at all!
 He swears that Love's flame is the vilest of arsons,
 And looks upon marriage as quite a mistake;
 Now what in the world's to become of the parsons,
 And what of the artist who sugars the cake?

In short, you will see from the facts that I'm showing,
 The state of the case is exceedingly sad;
 If Thespis's people go on as they're going,
 Olympus will certainly go to the bad!
 From Jupiter downward there isn't a dab in it,
 All of 'em quibble and shuffle and shirk;
 A premier in Downing Street, forming a cabinet,
 Couldn't find people less fit for their work!

[Enter THESPIS, L.U.E.]

THESPIS Sillimon, you can retire.

SILLIMON Sir, I —

THESPIS Don't pretend you can't when I say you can. I've seen you do it — go!
 (*Exit SILLIMON bowing extravagantly, THESPIS imitates him.*) Well, Mercury, I've been in power one year to-day.

MERCURY One year to-day. How do you like ruling the world?

THESPIS Like it! Why it's as straightforward as possible. Why there hasn't been a hitch of any kind since we came up here. Lor! The airs you gods and goddesses give yourselves are perfectly sickening. Why it's mere child's play!

MERCURY Very simple, isn't it?

THESPIS Simple? Why I could do it on my head?

MERCURY Ah — I daresay you will do it on your head very soon.

THESPIS What do you mean by *that*, Mercury?

MERCURY I mean that when you've turned the world *quite* topsy-turvy you won't know whether you're standing on your head or your heels.

THESPIS Well, but, Mercury, it's all right at present.

MERCURY Oh yes — as far as we know.

THESPIS Well, but, you know, we know as much as anybody knows; you know, I believe, that the world's still going on.

MERCURY Yes — as far as we can judge — much as usual.

THESPIS Well, then, give the Father of the Drama his due, Mercury. Don't be envious of the Father of the Drama.

- MERCURY Well, but you see you leave so much to accident.
- THESPIS Well, Mercury, if I do, it's my principle. I am an easy man, and I like to make things as pleasant as possible. What did I do the day we took office? Why I called the company together and I said to them: "Here we are, you know, gods and goddesses, no mistake about it, the real thing. Well, we have certain duties to discharge, let's discharge them intelligently. Don't let us be hampered by routine and red tape and precedent, let's set the original gods an example, and put a liberal interpretation on our duties. If it occurs to any one to try an experiment in his own department, let him try it, if he fails there's no harm done, if he succeeds it is a distinct gain to society. Take it easy," I said, "and at the same time, make experiments. Don't hurry your work, do it slowly and do it well." And here we are after a twelvemonth, and not a single complaint or a single petition has reached me.
- MERCURY No — not yet.
- THESPIS What do you mean by "no, not yet?"
- MERCURY Well, you see, you don't understand these things. All the petitions that are addressed by men to Jupiter pass through my hands, and it's my duty to collect them and present them once a year.
- THESPIS Oh, only once a year?
- MERCURY Only once a year.
- THESPIS And the year is up — ?
- MERCURY To-day.
- THESPIS Oh, then I suppose there are *some* complaints?
- MERCURY Yes, there *are some*.
- THESPIS (*disturbed*). Oh. Perhaps there are a good many?
- MERCURY There are a good many.
- THESPIS Oh. Perhaps there are a thundering lot?
- MERCURY There are a thundering lot.
- THESPIS (*very much disturbed*). Oh!
- MERCURY You see you've been taking it so very easy — and so have most of your company.

- THESPIS Oh, who has been taking it easy?
- MERCURY Well, all except those who have been trying experiments.
- THESPIS Well but I suppose the experiment are ingenious?
- MERCURY Yes; they are ingenious, but on the whole ill-judged. But it's time to go and summon your court.
- THESPIS What for?
- MERCURY To hear the complaints. In five minutes they will be here. *[Exit.*
- THESPIS (*very uneasy*). I don't know how it is, but there is something in that young man's manner that suggests that the Father of the Gods has been taking it *too* easy. Perhaps it would have been better if I hadn't given my company so much scope. I wonder what they've been doing. I think I will curtail their discretion, though none of them appear to have much of the article. It seems a pity to deprive 'em of what little they have.
- Enter DAPHNE, weeping.*
- THESPIS Now then, Daphne, what's the matter with you?
- DAPHNE Well, you know how disgracefully Sparkeion —
- THESPIS (*correcting her*). Apollo —
- DAPHNE Apollo, then — has treated me. He promised to marry me years ago and now he's married to Nicemis.
- THESPIS Now look here. I can't go into that. You're in Olympus now and must behave accordingly. Drop your Daphne — assume your Calliope.
- DAPHNE Quite so. That's it! *[Mysteriously.*
- THESPIS Oh — that is it? *[Puzzled.*
- DAPHNE That is it, Thespis. I am Calliope, the Muse of Fame. Very good. This morning I was in the Olympian library and I took down the only book there. Here it is.
- THESPIS (*taking it*). Lemprière's Classical Dictionary. The Olympian Peerage.
- DAPHNE Open it at Apollo.
- THESPIS (*opens it*). It is done.
- DAPHNE Read.

THESPIS “Apollo was several times married, among others to Issa, Bolina, Coronis, Chymene, Cyrene, Chione, Acacallis, and Calliope.”

DAPHNE *And Calliope.*

THESPIS (*musings*). Ha! I didn’t know he was *married* to them.

DAPHNE (*severely*). Sir! This is the Family Edition.

THESPIS Quite so.

DAPHNE You couldn’t expect a lady to read any other?

THESPIS On no consideration. But in the original version —

DAPHNE I go by the Family Edition.

THESPIS Then by the Family Edition, Apollo is your husband.

Enter NICEMIS and SPARKEION.

NICEMIS Apollo your husband? He is my husband.

DAPHNE I beg your pardon. He is *my* husband.

NICEMIS Apollo is Sparkeion, and he’s married to me.

DAPHNE Sparkeion is Apollo, and he’s married to me.

NICEMIS He is my husband.

DAPHNE He’s your brother.

THESPIS Look here, Apollo, whose husband are you? Don’t let’s have any row about it; whose husband are you?

SPARKEION Upon my honour I don’t know. I’m in a very delicate position, but I’ll fall in with any arrangement Thespis may propose.

DAPHNE I’ve just found out that he’s my husband and yet he goes out every evening with that “thing”!

THESPIS Perhaps he’s trying an experiment.

DAPHNE I don’t like my husband to make such experiments. The question is, who are we all and what is our relation to each other.

(Crying.)

DAPHNE It will surely be quite fair,
 To decide by Lemprière.

SPARKEION & THESPIS How you settle it I don't care,
 Leave it all to Lemprière.

THESPIS *(Spoken.)* The Verdict.
 As Sparkeion is Apollo
 Up in this Olympian clime,
 Why, Nicemis, it will follow,
 He's *her* husband, for the time.

— (indicating DAPHNE)

When Sparkeion turns to mortal,
 Join once more the sons of men,
He may take *you* to his portal

(indicating NICEMIS)

 He will be *your* husband then.
That oh that is my decision,
 'Cording to my mental vision.
Put an end to all collision,
 That oh that is my decision.
My decision — my decision,

ALL That oh that is his decision,
 His decision — his decision! &c.

Exeunt THESPIS, NICEMIS, SPARKEION *and* DAPHNE, SPARKEION *with* DAPHNE, NICEMIS
weeping with THESPIS.

Mysterious Music. Enter JUPITER, APOLLO *and* MARS *from below, at the back of stage. All*
wear cloaks as disguise and all are masked.

RECIT

Oh rage and fury! Oh shame and sorrow!
We'll be resuming our ranks to-morrow,
Since from Olympus we have departed,
We've been distracted and brokenhearted,
Oh wicked Thespis! Oh villain scurvy;
Through him Olympus is topsy-turvy!
Compelled to silence to grin and bear it!
He's caused our sorrow, and he shall share it.
Where is the monster! Avenge his blunders,
He has awakened Olympian thunders.

Enter MERCURY.

JUPITER *(recit.)*. Oh Monster!

APOLLO *(recit.)*. Oh Monster!

MARS *(recit.)*. Oh Monster!

MERCURY *(in great terror)*. Please sir, what have I done sir?

JUPITER What did we leave you behind for?

MERCURY Please sir, that's the question I asked for when you went away.

JUPITER Was it not that Thespis might consult you whenever he was in a difficulty?

MERCURY Well, here I've been, ready to be consulted, chockful of reliable information — running over with celestial maxims — advice gratis ten to four — after twelve ring the night bell in cases of emergency.

JUPITER And hasn't he consulted you?

MERCURY Not he — he disagrees with me about everything.

JUPITER He must have misunderstood me. I told him to consult you whenever he was in a fix.

MERCURY He must have though you said *insult*. Why whenever I opened my mouth he jumps down my throat. It isn't pleasant to have a fellow constantly jumping down your throat — especially when he always disagrees with you. It's just the sort of thing I can't digest.

JUPITER *(in a rage)*. Send him here. I'll talk to him.

Enter THESPIS. He is much terrified

JUPITER *(recit.)*. Oh Monster!

APOLLO *(recit.)*. Oh Monster!

MARS *(recit.)*. Oh Monster!

THESPIS *sings in great terror, which he endeavours to conceal.*

JUPITER Well Sir, the year is up to-day.

APOLLO And a nice mess you've made of it.

MARS You've deranged the whole scheme of society.

THESPIS (*aside*). There's going to be a row! (*Aloud and very familiarly.*) My dear boy — I do assure you —

JUPITER (*recit.*). Be respectful!

APOLLO (*recit.*). Be respectful!

MARS (*recit.*). Be respectful!

THESPIS I don't know what you allude to. With the exception of getting our scene-painter to "run up" this temple, because we found the ruins draughty, we haven't touched a thing.

JUPITER (*recit.*). Oh story teller!

APOLLO (*recit.*). Oh story teller!

MARS (*recit.*). Oh story teller!

Enter THESPIANS

THESPIS My dear fellows, you're distressing yourselves unnecessarily. The court of Olympus is about to assemble to listen to the complaints of the year, if any. But there are none, or next to none. Let the Olympians assemble!

THESPIS *takes chair.* JUPITER, APOLLO, and MARS *sit below him.*

THESPIS Ladies and gentlemen. It seems that it is usual for the gods to assemble once a year to listen to mortal petitions. It doesn't seem to me to be a good plan, as work is liable to accumulate; but as I am particularly anxious not to interfere with Olympian precedent, but to allow everything to go on as it has always been accustomed to go — why, we'll say no more about it. (*Aside.*) But how shall I account for your presence?

JUPITER Say we are the gentlemen of the press.

THESPIS That all our proceedings may be perfectly open and above-board I have communicated with the most influential members of the Athenian press, and I beg to introduce to your notice three of its most distinguished members. They bear marks emblematic of the anonymous character of modern journalism. (*Business of introduction. THESPIS very uneasy.*) Now then, if you're all ready we will begin.

MERCURY (*brings tremendous bundle of petitions*). Here is the agenda.

THESPIS What's that? The petitions?

MERCURY Some of them. (*Opens one and reads.*) Ah, I thought there'd be a row about it.

- THESPIS Why, what's wrong now?
- MERCURY Why, it's been a foggy Friday in November for the last six months and the Athenians are tired of it.
- THESPIS There's no pleasing some people. This craving for perpetual change is the curse of the country. Friday's a very nice day.
- MERCURY So it is, but a Friday six months long! — it gets monotonous.
- JUPITER, APOLLO, MARS (*in recit. rising*). It's perfectly ridiculous.
- THESPIS (*calling them*). It shall be arranged. Cymon!
- CYMON (*as Time with the usual attributes*). Sir!
- THESPIS (*introducing him to the THREE GODS*). Allow me — Father Time — rather young at present but even time must have a beginning. In course of Time, Time will grow older. Now then, Father Time, what's this about a wet Friday in November for the last six months.
- CYMON Well, the fact is, I've been trying an experiment. Seven days in the week is an awkward number. It can't be halved. Two's into seven won't go.
- THESPIS (*tries it on his fingers*). Quite so — quite so.
- CYMON So I abolished Saturday.
- JUPITER, APOLLO, MARS Oh but — [*Rising.*
- THESPIS Do be quiet. He's a very intelligent young man and knows what he is about. So you abolished Saturday. And how did you find it answer?
- CYMON Admirably.
- THESPIS You hear? He found it answer admirably.
- CYMON Yes, only Sunday refused to take its place.
- THESPIS Sunday refused to take its place?
- CYMON Sunday comes after Saturday — Sunday won't go on duty after Friday, Sunday's principles are very strict. That's where my experiment sticks.
- THESPIS Well, but why November? Come, why November?
- CYMON December can't begin until November has finished. November can't finish because he's abolished Saturday. There again my experiment sticks.

THESPIS Well, but why wet? Come now, why wet?

CYMON Ah, that is your fault. You turned on the rain six months ago and you forgot to turn it off again.

JUPITER, APOLLO, MARS (*rising — recitative*). Oh this is monstrous!

ALL Order, order.

THESPIS Gentlemen, pray be seated. (*To the others.*) The liberty of the press, one can't help it. (*To the three gods.*) It is easily settled. Athens has had a wet Friday in November for the last six months. Let them have a blazing Tuesday in July for the next twelve.

JUPITER, APOLLO, MARS But —

ALL Order, order.

THESPIS Now then, the next article.

MERCURY Here's a petition from the Peace Society. They complain because there are no more battles.

MARS (*springing up*). What!

THESPIS Quiet there! Good dog — soho; Timidon!

TIMIDON (*as MARS*). Here.

THESPIS What's this about there being no battles?

TIMIDON I've abolished battles; it's an experiment.

MARS (*springing up*). Oh come, I say —

THESPIS Quiet then! (*To TIMIDON.*) Abolished battles?

TIMIDON Yes, you told us on taking office to remember two things, to try experiments and to take it easy. I found I couldn't take it easy while there are any battles to attend to, so I tried the experiment and abolished battles. And then I took it easy. The Peace Society ought to be very much obliged to me.

THESPIS Obligated to you! Why, confound it! Since battles have been abolished, war is universal.

TIMIDON War universal?

- THESPIS To be sure it is! Now that nations can't fight, no two of 'em are on speaking terms. The dread of fighting was the only thing that kept them civil to each other. Let battles be restored and peace reign supreme.
- MERCURY (*reads*). Here's a petition from the associated wine merchants of Mytilene.
- THESPIS Well, what's wrong with the associated wine merchants of Mytilene? Are there no grapes this year?
- MERCURY Plenty of grapes; more than usual.
- THESPIS (*to the gods*). You observe, there is no deception; there are more than usual.
- MERCURY There are plenty of grapes, only they are full of ginger beer.
- THREE GODS Oh, come I say [*Rising, they are put down by* THESPIS.
- THESPIS Eh? what. (*Much alarmed.*) Bacchus?
- TIPSEION (*as BACCHUS*). Here!
- THESPIS There seems to be something unusual with the grapes of Mytilene. They only grow ginger beer.
- TIPSEION And a very good thing too.
- THESPIS It's very nice in its way but it is not what one looks for from grapes.
- TIPSEION Beloved master, a week before we came up here, you insisted on my taking the pledge. By so doing you rescued me from my otherwise inevitable misery. I cannot express my thanks. Embrace me!
[*Attempts to embrace him.*
- THESPIS Get out, don't be a fool. Look here, you know you're the god of wine.
- TIPSEION I am.
- THESPIS (*very angry*). Well, do you consider it consistent with your duty as the god of wine to make the grapes yield nothing but ginger beer?
- TIPSEION Do you consider it consistent with my duty as a total abstainer to grow anything stronger than ginger beer?
- THESPIS But your duty as the god of wine —
- TIPSEION In every respect in which my duty as the god of wine can be discharged consistently with my duty as a total abstainer, I will discharge it. But

when the functions clash, everything must give way to the pledge. My preserver!
[Attempts to embrace him.]

THESPIS Don't be a confounded fool! This can be arranged. We can't give over the wine this year, but at least we can improve the ginger beer. Let all the ginger beer be extracted from it immediately.

JUPITER, MARS, APOLLO (*aside*).
 We can't stand this,
 We can't stand this,
 It's much too strong,
 We can't stand this.
 It would be wrong,
 Extremely wrong,
 If we stood this,
 If we stand this,
 If we stand this,
 We can't stand this.

DAPHNE, SPARKEION, NICEMIS
 Great Jove, this interference,
 Is more than we can stand;
 Of them make a clearance,
 With your majestic hand.

JUPITER This cool audacity, it beats us hollow
 (*removing mask*) I'm Jupiter!

MARS I'm Mars!

APOLLO I'm Apollo!

Enter DIANA and all the other gods and goddesses.

THESPIANS (*kneeling with their foreheads on the ground*).
 Jupiter, Mars, and Apollo,
 Have quitted the dwellings of men;
 The other gods quickly will follow,
 And what will become of us then.
 Oh pardon us, Jove and Apollo,
 Pardon us, Jupiter, Mars;
 Oh see us in misery wallow,
 Cursing our terrible stars.

Enter other gods.

CHORUS AND BALLET

THESPIANS Let us remain, we beg of you pleadingly!

THREE GODS Let them remain, they beg of us pleadingly!

THESPIANS Life on Olympus suits us exceedingly.

GODS Life on Olympus suits them exceedingly.

THESPIANS Let us remain, we pray in humility!

GODS Let 'em remain, they pray in humility.

THESPIANS If we have shown some little ability.

GODS If they have shown some little ability.
Let us remain, etc.

JUPITER Enough, your reign is ended;
Upon this sacred hill
Let him be apprehended,
And learn out awful will.
Away to earth, contemptible comedians,
And hear our curse, before we set you free
You shall be all be eminent tragedians,
Whom no one ever goes to see!

THESPIANS We go to earth, contemptible tragedians,
We hear his curse, before he sets us free,
We shall all be eminent tragedians,
Whom no one ever, ever goes to see!

SILLIMON Whom no one —

SPARKEION Whom no one —

THESPIS Whom *no* one —

ALL Ever goes to see.

[The Thespians are driven away by the gods, who group themselves in attitudes of triumph.]

THESPIS Now, here you see the arrant folly
Of doing your best to make things jolly.
I've ruled the world like a chap in his senses,
Observe the terrible consequences.
Great Jupiter, whom nothing pleases,

Splutters and swears, and kicks up breezes,
And sends us home in a mood avengin',
In double quick time, like a railroad engine.
And this he does without compunction,
Because I have discharged with unction
A highly complicated function,
Complying with his own injunction.
Fol, lol, lay.

CHORUS All this he does, etc.

[The gods drive the Thespians away. The Thespians prepare to descend the mountain as the curtain falls.]