•

COX AND BOX

OR,

The Long-Lost Brothers

TRIUMVIRETTA IN ONE ACT

ADAPTED TO THE LYRIC STAGE FROM J. MADDISON MORTON'S FARCE OF

"Box and Cox"

BY

F. C. BURNAND.

THE MUSIC BY

ARTHUR S. SULLIVAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

JAMES JOHN COX	A Journeyman Hatter	
JOHN JAMES BOX	A Journeyman Printer	
SERGEANT BOUNCER	Late of the Dampshire Yeomanry,	
	with Military Reminiscences	

CONTENTS

NO			DACE
NO.			PAGE
1.	OVERTURE		1
2.	SONG (BOUNCER)	"Rataplan"	7
3.	DUET (COX & BOUNCER)	"Stay, Bouncer, stay"	16
4.	SONG (BOX)	"Hush-a-bye, bacon"	37
5.	SONG & DANCE (COX)	"My master is punctual"	42
6.	TRIO (COX, BOX & BOUNCER)	"Who are you, Sir?"	47
7.	DUET, SERENADE (COX & BOX)	"The Buttercup"	71
8.	ROMANCE (BOX)	"Not long ago"	82
9	GAMBLING DUET (COX & BOX)	"Sixes"	97
10.	FINALE (COX, BOX & BOUNCER)	"My hand upon it"	118
APPENDIX			
4.	SONG (BOX) (Original 6/8 version)	"Hush-a-bye, bacon"	123

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COX AND BOX

F. C. BURNAND

ARTHUR SULLIVAN

No. 1. Overture



Page 1



Page 2



Page 3



Page 4



Page 5

- SCENE. A Room, decently furnished; at C. a bed, with curtains closed; at L. C. a door at 3 E. L. a chest of drawers; at back, R. a window; at 3 E. R. a door; at 2 E. R. a fireplace, with mantelpiece; table and chairs, a few common ornaments on chimney piece.
- **COX**, dressed, with the exception of his coat is looking at himself in a small looking-glass, which he holds in his hand.
- **COX.** I've half a mind to register an oath that I'll never have my hair cut again! (his hair is very short.) And I was particularly emphatic in my instructions to the hair dresser only to cut the ends off. He must have thought I meant the other ends! Never mind, I shan't meet anybody to care about so early. Eight o'clock, I declare I haven't a moment to lose. Fate has placed me with the most punctual, particular, and peremptory of hatters, and I must fulfil my destiny. (knock at L. C. D.) Open locks, whoever knocks!

Enter SERJEANT BOUNCER

- **BOUN.** Good morning, Colonel Cox. I hope you slept comfortably, Colonel.
- **COX.** I can't say I did, B. I should feel obliged to you, if you could accommodate me with a more protuberant bolster, B. The one I've got now seems to me to have about a handful and a half of feathers at each end, and nothing whatever in the middle.
 - **BOUN.** Anything to accommodate you, Captain Cox.
- **COX.** Thank you. Then perhaps you'll be good enough to hold this glass, while I finish my toilet.
- **BOUN.** Certainly. (holding glass before **COX**, who ties on his cravat.) Why, I do declare, you've had your hair cut!
- **COX.** Cut! It strikes me I've had it mowed! It's very kind of you to mention it, but I'm sufficiently conscious of the absurdity of my personal appearance already. I look as if I'd been cropped for the Militia
 - **BOUN.** The Militia! I recollect when I was in the Militia.
 - **COX.** Ah! now he's off on his hobby.
- **BOUN.** Yes, we were mounted on chargers. I recollect upon one occasion, being seated firmly in my saddle for eight hours, and I don't recollect being able to sit down again *firmly* for a considerable period afterwards.

No. 2. Rataplan (BOUNCER'S SONG)



Page 7



Page 8



Page 9



Page 10



Page 11



Page 12



Page 13



Page 14

Enter COX.

COX. Well, this is pleasant. This comes of having one's hair cut. None of my hats will fit me. Never mind, this one appears to me to wobble about rather less than the others (*puts on hat*), and now I'm off! By the by, Bouncer, I wish to know how it is that I frequently find my apartment full of smoke?

BOUN. Why — I suppose the chimney —

COX. The chimney doesn't smoke tobacco. I'm speaking of tobacco smoke, how is that?

BOUN. (confused) Why — I suppose — yes — that must be it —

COX. At present, I am entirely of your opinion — because I haven't the most distant particle of an idea what you mean.

BOUN. Why, the gentleman who has got the attics is hardly ever without a pipe in his mouth — and there he sits for hours, and puffs away into the fire-place.

COX. Ah, then you mean to say that this gentleman's smoke, instead of emulating the example of all other sorts of smoke, and going *up* the chimney, thinks proper to affect a singularity by taking the contrary direction.

BOUN. Why —

COX. Then I suppose the gentleman you are speaking of, is the same individual that I invariably meet coming up stairs when I'm going down, and going down when I'm coming up?

BOUN. Why — yes — I

COX. From the appearance of his outward man, I should unhesitatingly set him down as a gentleman connected with the printing interest.

BOUN. Yes, sir, and a very respectable young gentleman he is. Good morning, Colonel. (*going.*)

No. 3. Stay, Bouncer, Stay! (DUET.)



Page 16



Page 17



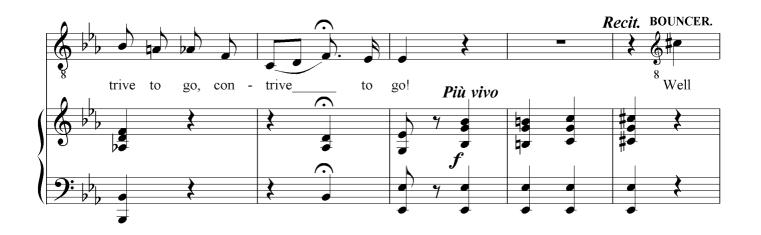
Page 18

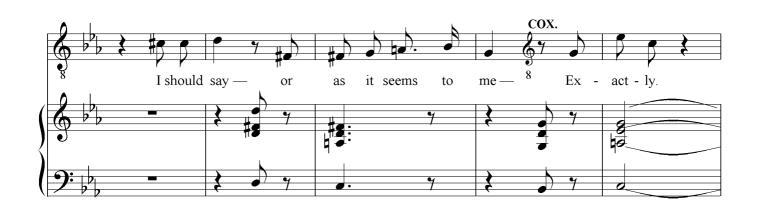


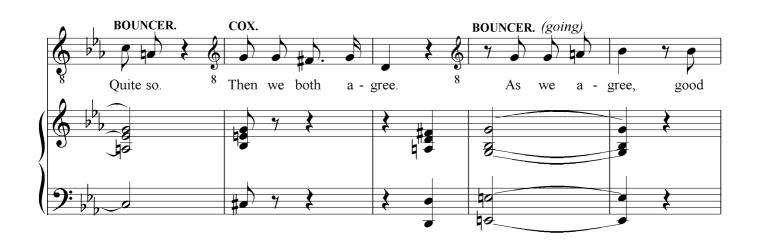
Page 19



Page 20





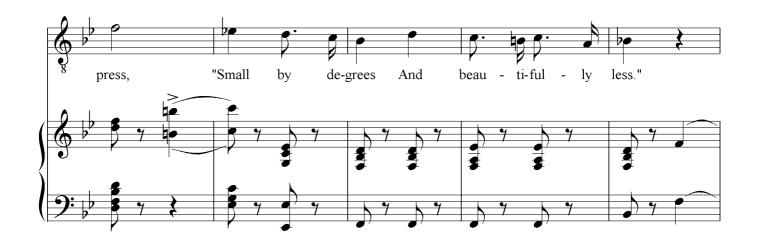


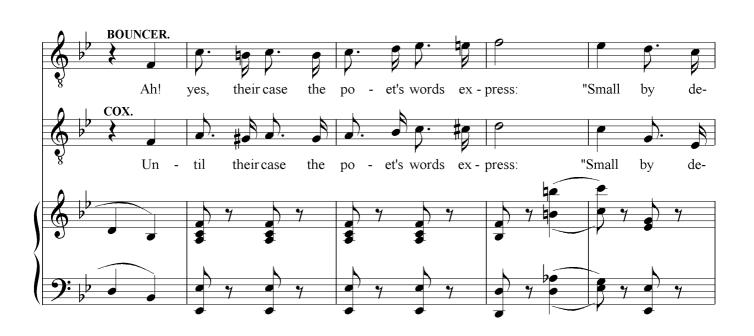


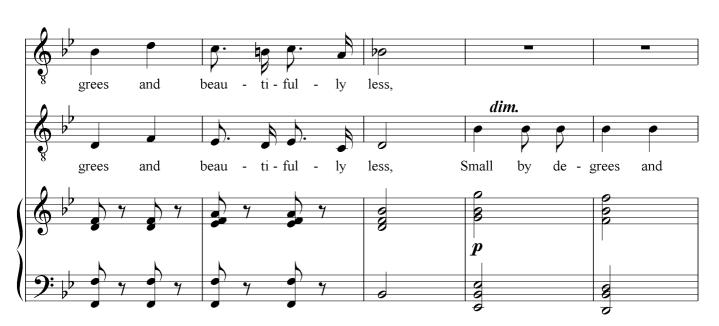
Page 21



Page 22







Page 23



Page 24



Page 25

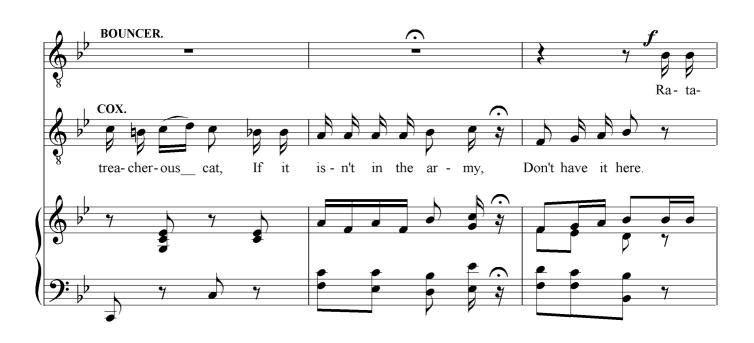


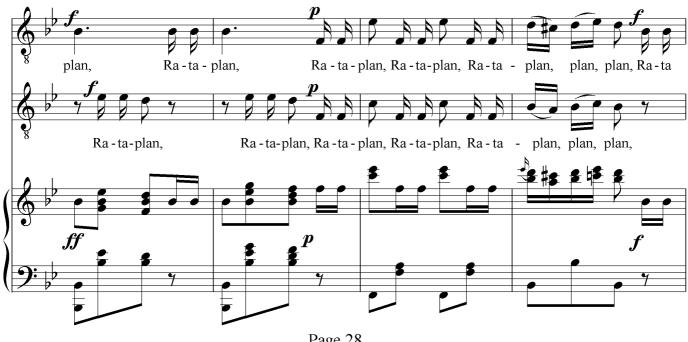
Page 26



Page 27







Page 28



Page 29



Page 30



Page 31



Page 32



Page 33



Page 34

- BOUN. He's gone at last! I declare I was all in a tremble for fear Mr. Box should come in before Mr. Cox went out. Luckily they've never met yet and what's more, they're not very likely to do so: for Mr. Box is hard at work at a newspaper office all night, and doesn't come home till the morning, and Mr. Cox is busy making hats all day long, and doesn't come home till night; so that I'm getting double rent for my room, and neither of my lodgers are any the wiser for it. It was a happy thought of mine that it was! But I haven't an instant to lose. First of all, let me put Mr. Cox's things out of Mr. Box's way. (He takes the three hats, COX'S dressing gown and slippers, opens door at L. and puts them in, then shuts door and locks it.) Now then, to put the key where Mr. Cox always finds it (Puts the key on the ledge of the door, L.) Now then, to make the bed and don't let me forget that what's the head of the bed for Colonel Cox, becomes the foot of the bed for Private Box people's tastes do differ so. (Goes behind the curtains of the bed and seems to be making it then, appears with a very thin bolster in his hand.) The idea of Colonel Cox presuming to complain of such a bolster as this! (He disappears again behind curtains.)
- **BOX.** (without) Pooh pooh! Why don't you keep your own side of the staircase, sir? (Enters at back dressed as a printer puts his head out of door again, shouting.) It was as much your fault as mine, sir? I say, sir it was as much your fault as mine, sir!
- **BOUN.** (emerging from behind the curtains of bed) Lor, Mr. Box! what is the matter?
 - **BOX.** Mind your own business, Bouncer!
- **BOUN.** Dear, dear, Mr. Box! what a temper you are in, to be sure! I declare you are quite *pale* in the face!
- **BOX.** What colour would you have a man to be, who has been setting up long leaders for a daily paper all night?
 - **BOUN.** But then you've all day to yourself.
- **BOX.** (*looking significantly at* **BOUNCER**) So it seems! Far be it from me, Bouncer, to hurry your movements, but I think it right to acquaint you with my immediate intention of divesting myself of my garments and going to bed.
 - **BOUN.** Oh, certainly, Mr. Box! (going).
- **BOX.** Stop! Can you inform me who the individual is that I invariably encounter going down stairs when I'm coining up, and coming up stairs when I'm going down?
 - **BOUN.** (confused) Oh yes the gentleman in the attic, sir.
- **BOX.** Oh! There's nothing particularly remarkable about him, except his hats. I meet him in all sorts of hats white hats and black hats hats with broad brims, and hats with narrow brims, hats with naps, and hats without naps in short, I have come to the conclusion, that he must be individually and professionally associated with the hatting interest.
- **BOUN.** Yes sir. And they tell me that's why he took the *hattics*! And, by-the-bye, Mr. Box, he begged me to request of you, as a particular favour, that you would not smoke quite so much.
- **BOX.** Did he? Then you may tell the gentle hatter with my compliments, that if he objects to the effluvia of tobacco, he had better domesticate himself in some adjoining parish.

BOUN. You surely wouldn't deprive me of a lodger? (pathetically.)

BOX. It would come to precisely the same thing, Bouncer, because if I detect the slightest attempt to put my pipe out, I at once give you warning — that I shall give you warning at once.

BOUN. Well, Mr. Box — do you want anything more of me?

BOX. On the contrary — I've had quite enough of you?

BOUN. Well, if ever!

BOX. But there's one evolution I should much like to see you perform.

BOUN. What's that?

BOX. Right about face, quick march. (Exit **BOUN**., L. C. D., slamming door after him.)

BOX. It's quite extraordinary, the trouble I always have to get rid of that venerable warrior. He knows I'm up all night, and yet he seems to set his face against my indulging in a horizontal position by day. Now, let me see — shall I take my nap before I swallow my breakfast, or shall I take my breakfast before I swallow my nap — I mean shall I swallow my nap before — no — never mind! I've. got a rasher of bacon somewhere — (feeling in his pockets) I've the most distinct and vivid recollection of having purchased a rasher of bacon — Oh, here it is — (produces it, wrapped in paper, and places it on the table) — and a penny roll. The next thing is to light the fire. Where are my lucifers? (looking on mantel-piece R. and taking box, opens it.) Now 'pon my life, this is too bad of Bouncer — this is by several degrees too bad! I had a whole box full, three days ago, and there's only one! I'm perfectly aware that he purloins my coals and my candles, and my sugar — but I did think — Oh yes, I did think that my lucifers would be sacred (lights the fire — then takes down the gridiron, which is hanging over fireplace, R.). Bouncer has been using my gridiron! The last article of consumption that I cooked upon it was a pork chop, and now it is powerfully impregnated with the odour of red herrings! (places gridiron on fire, and then, with a fork, lays rasher of bacon on the gridiron). How sleepy I am to be sure! I'd indulge myself with a nap, if there was anybody here to superintend the turning of my bacon (yawning again). Perhaps it will turn itself.

No. 4. A Lullaby (BOX'S SONG)



Page 37



Page 38



Page 39

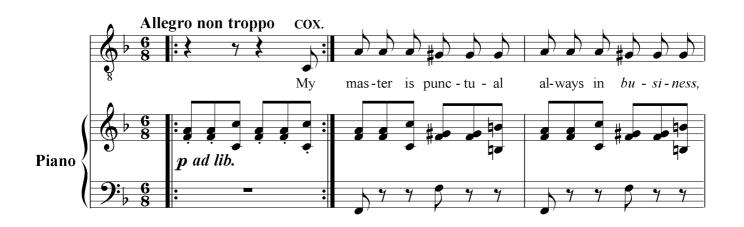


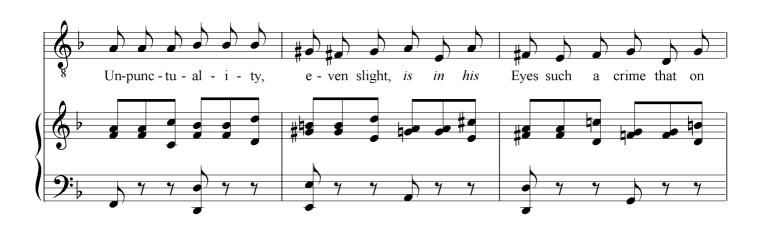
Page 40

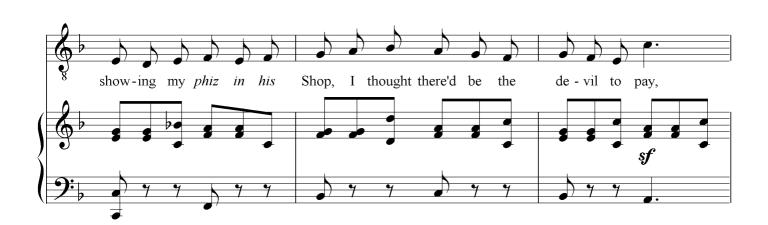


Page 41

No. 5. My Master is Punctual (SONG AND DANCE)







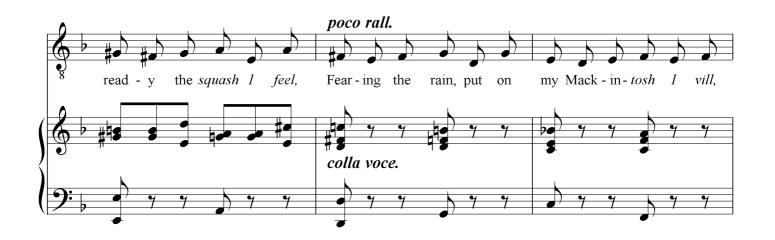


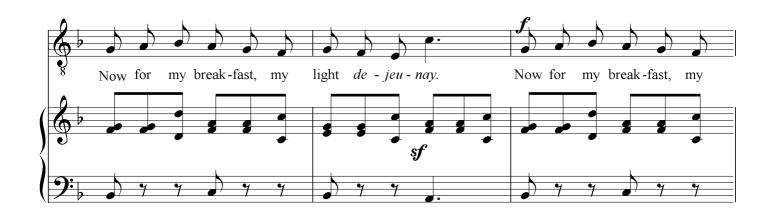
Page 43



Page 44









Page 45

COX. I bought a mutton chop, so I shan't want any dinner. (*Puts chop on table*.) Good gracious! I've forgot the bread. Hallo! what's this? a roll, I declare. Come, that's lucky! Now then to light the fire. Holloa — (*seeing the lucifer box on table*) — who presumes to touch my box of lucifers? Why it's empty! I left one in it — I'll take my oath I did. Heyday! why the fire *is* lighted! Where's the gridiron? *On* the fire, I declare. And what's that on it? Bacon? Bacon it is! Well, now, 'pon my life, there is a quiet coolness about Bouncer's proceedings that's almost amusing. He takes my last lucifer — my coals — and my gridiron, to cook his breakfast by! No, no — I can't stand this! Come out of that! (*pokes fork into bacon, and puts it on a plate on the table, then places his chop on the gridiron, which he puts on the fire*). Now then for my breakfast things. (*Taking key hung up* L., *opens door* L., *and goes out slamming the door after him, with a loud noise*.)

BOX. (suddenly showing his head from behind curtains). Come in! if it's you, Bouncer — you needn't be afraid. I wonder how long I've been asleep! (Suddenly recollecting.) Goodness gracious! — my bacon (leaps off bed and runs to the fireplace.) Halloa, what's this? A chop? Whose chop? Bouncer's, I'll be bound. He thought to cook his breakfast while I was asleep — with my coals, too — and my gridiron. Ha, ha! But where's my bacon? (Seeing it on table.) Here it is! Well, 'pon my life, Bouncer's going it! And shall I curb my indignation? Shall I falter in my vengeance? No! (digs the fork into the chop, opens window, and throws chop out — shuts window again.) So much for Bouncer's breakfast, and now for my own! (with fork he puts the bacon on the gridiron again.) I may as well lay my breakfast things (Goes to mantel-piece at R., takes key out of one of the ornaments opens door at R. and exit, slamming door after him.)

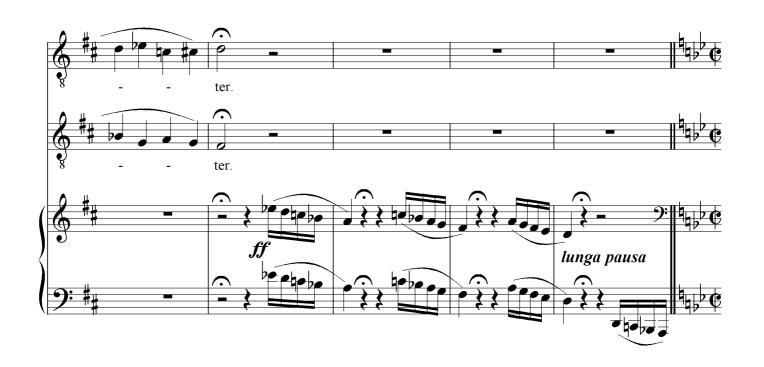
COX. (putting his head in quickly at L. D.) Come in, — come in. (Opens door and enters with a small tray, on which are tea things, &c., which he places on drawers, L., and suddenly recollects.), Oh! goodness! my chop! (running to fireplace.) Holloa — what's this! The bacon again! Oh, pooh! Zounds — confound it — dash it — damn it— I can't stand this! (pokes fork into bacon, opens window, and flings it out, shuts, window again, and returns to drawers for tea things, and encounters **BOX** coming from his cupboard with his tea things — they come down C. of stage together.)

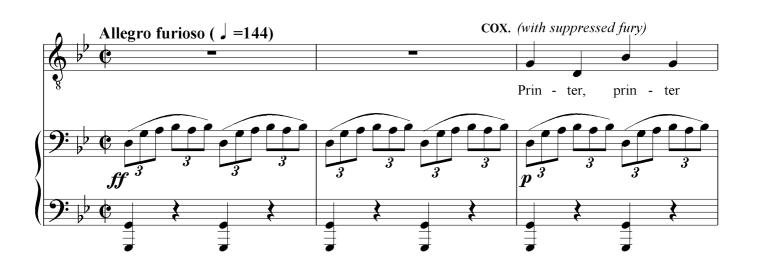
No. 6. Who Are You, Sir?

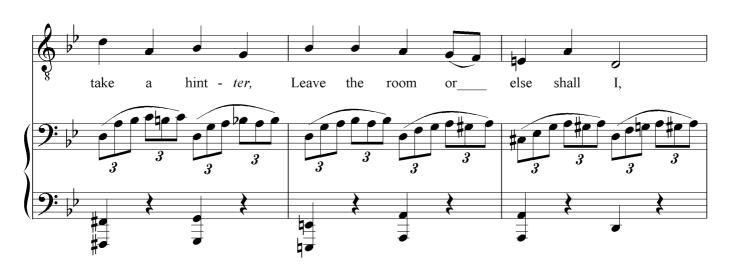




Page 48







Page 49



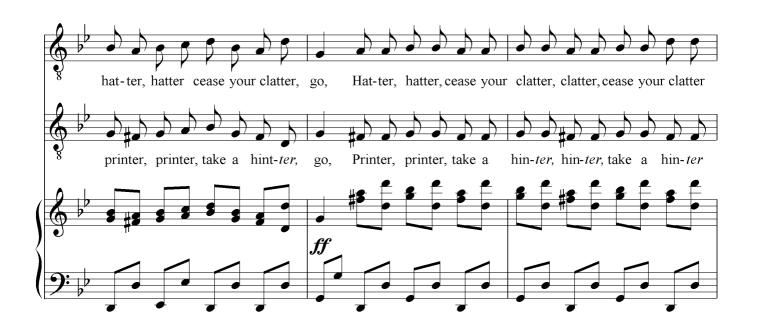
Page 50



Page 51



Page 52



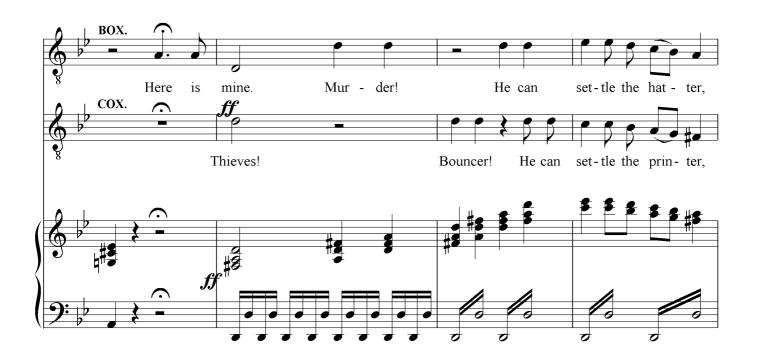


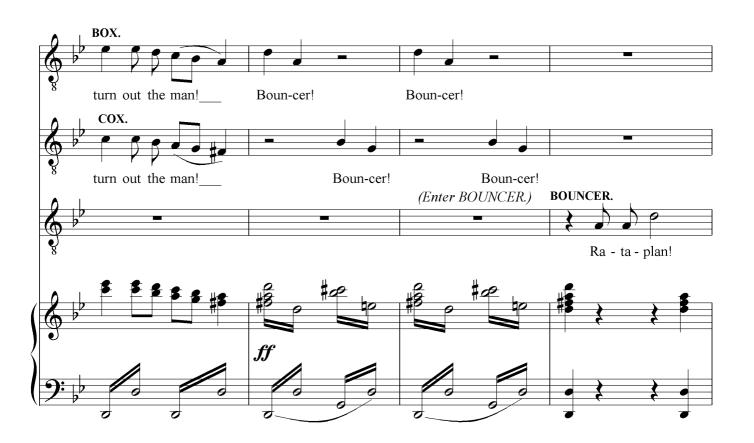


Page 53



Page 54





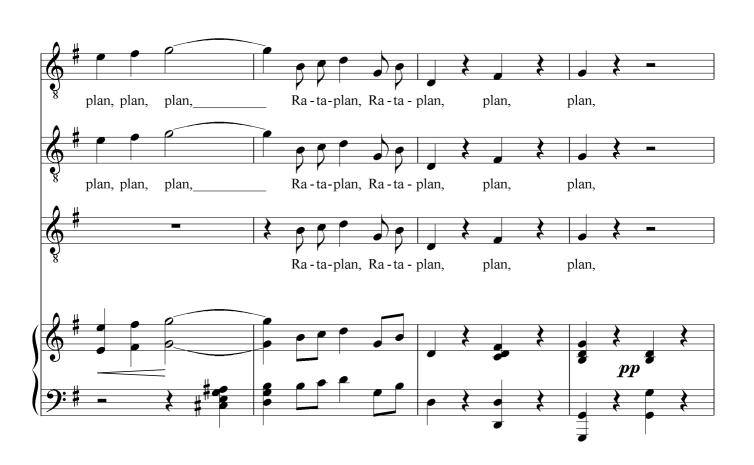




















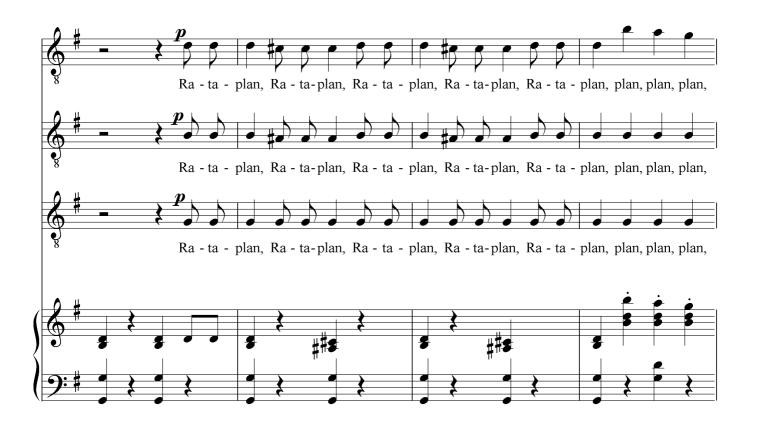




























BOX. Instantly remove that hatter!

COX. Immediately turn out that printer!

BOUN. Well — but gentlemen —

COX. Explain! (pulling him round)

BOX. Explain! (pulling him round) Whose room is this!

COX. Yes — whose room is this?

BOX. Doesn't it belong to me?

BOUN. No!

COX. There! You hear, sir — it belongs to me.

BOUN. No — it belongs to both of you!

COX & BOX. (together) Both of us?

BOUN. Oh, yes! Gents, don't be angry — but you see, this gentleman — (pointing to **BOX**) — only being at home in the daytime, and that gentleman — (pointing to **COX**) — at night, I thought I might venture — until my little back second-floor room was ready—

COX & BOX. (together, eagerly) When will your little back second-floor room be ready?

BOUN. Why, to-morrow—

COX. I'll take it!

BOX. So will I!

BOUN. Excuse me — but if you both take it, you may just as well stop where you are.

COX & BOX. (together) True.

COX. I spoke first, sir!

BOX. With all my heart, sir! The little back second-floor room is yours, sir — now go!

COX. Go? Pooh — pooh —!

BOUN. Now don't quarrel, gentlemen. You see, there used to be a partition here —

COX & BOX. (together) Then put it up!

BOUN. Nay, I'll see if I can't get the other room ready this very day. Now, gents and officers, don't fight; but keep your tempers.(*Exit* L.C.D.)

COX. What a disgusting position! (walking rapidly round the stage)

BOX. (sitting down on chair, at one side of table, and following **COX'S** movements) Will you allow me to observe, if you have not had any exercise to-day, you'd better go out and take it?

COX. I shall not do anything of the sort, sir. (seating himself at the table opposite **BOX**.)

BOX. Very well, sir.

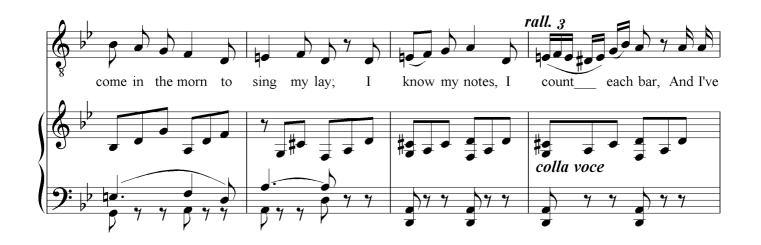
COX. Very well, sir! However, don't let me prevent you from going out.

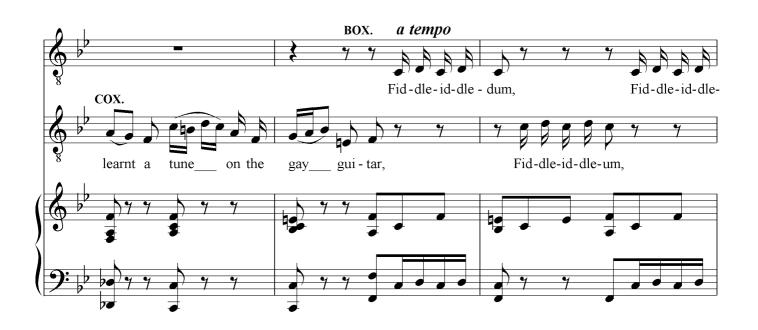
- **BOX.** Don't flatter yourself, sir. (**COX** is about to break a piece of roll off.) Halloa! that's my roll, sir. (snatches it away puts a pipe in his mouth and lights it with a piece of tinder puffs smoke across the table towards **COX**.)
 - COX. Holloa! What are you about, sir?
 - **BOX.** What am I about? I'm about to smoke.
 - **COX.** Wheugh! (goes to the window at **BOX'S** back, and flings it open)
 - **BOX.** Halloa! (turning round) Put down that window, sir!
 - **COX.** Then put your pipe out, sir!
 - **BOX.** There! (puts pipe on the table)
 - **COX.** There! (slams down window and re-seats himself)
- **BOX.** I shall retire to my pillow. (gets up, takes off his jacket, then goes towards bed and sits upon it, L.C.)
- **COX.** (Jumps up, goes to bed and sits down on R. of **BOX**.) I beg your pardon, sir I cannot allow any one to rumple my bed. (both rising)
 - **BOX.** Your bed? Hark ye, sir can you fight?
 - COX. No, Sir.
 - **BOX.** No? Then come on. (sparring at **COX**.)
 - **COX.** Sit down, sir or I'll instantly vociferate "Police!"
 - **BOX.** (seats himself, **COX** does the same) I say, sir —
 - COX. Well, sir?
- **BOX.** Although we are doomed to occupy the same room for a few hours longer, I don't see any necessity for our cutting each other's throat, sir.
 - **COX.** Not at all. It's an operation that I should decidedly object to.
 - **BOX.** And, after all, I've no violent animosity against you, sir.
 - **COX.** Nor have I any rooted antipathy to you, sir.
 - **BOX.** Besides, it was all Bouncer's fault, sir.
 - **COX.** Entirely, sir. (gradually approaching chair)
 - **BOX.** Very well, sir!
 - **COX.** Very well, sir! (pause)
 - **BOX.** Take a bit of roll, sir?
 - **COX.** Thank ye, sir. (breaking a bit off pause)
 - **BOX.** Do you sing, sir?
 - **COX.** I sometimes dabble in a serenade.
 - **BOX.** Then dabble away.

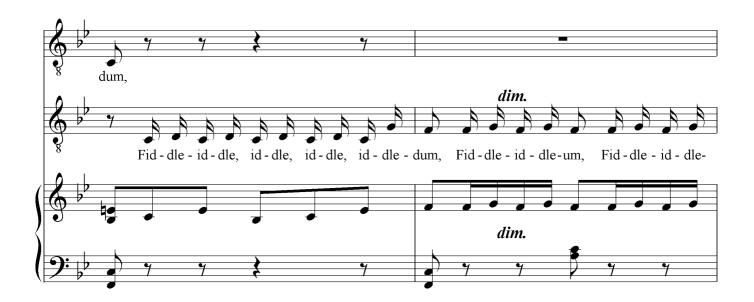
No. 7. The Buttercup (DUET SERENADE)



Page 71





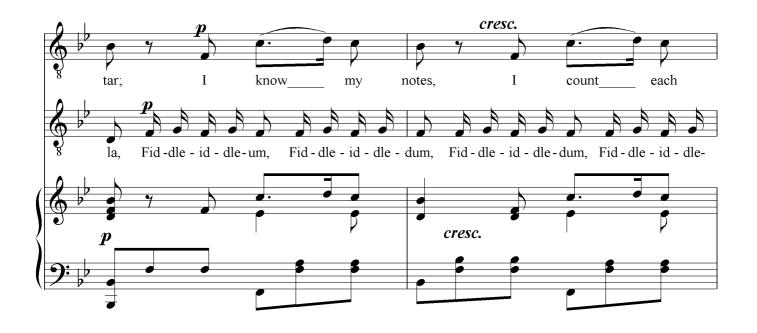


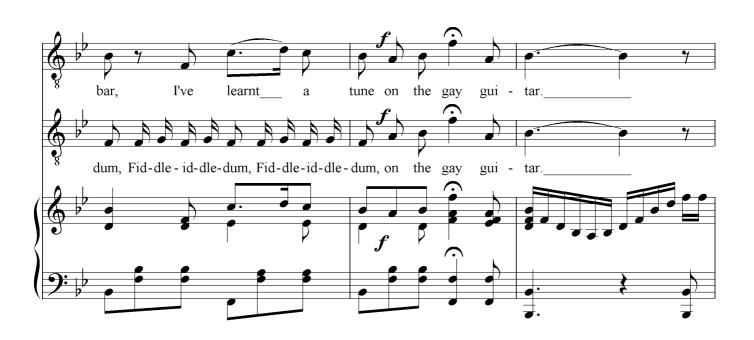


Page 73



Page 74

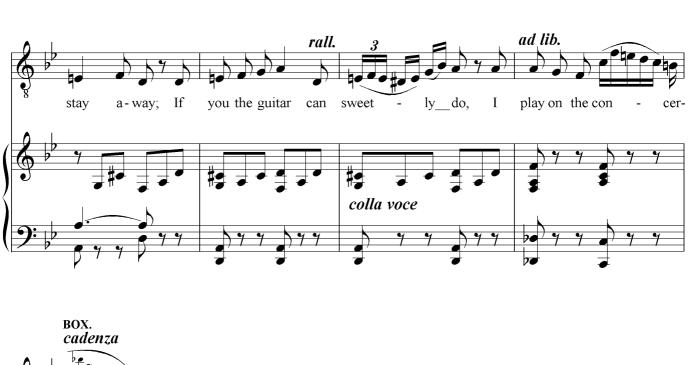


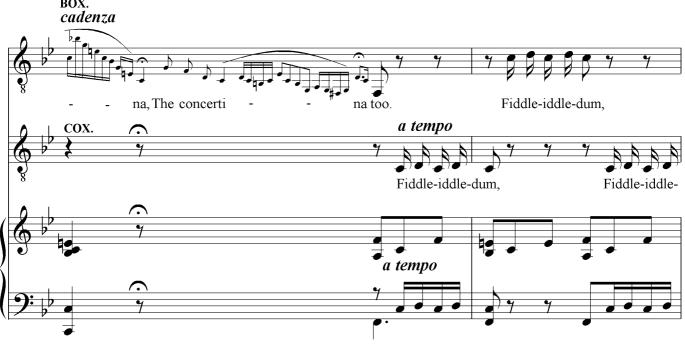


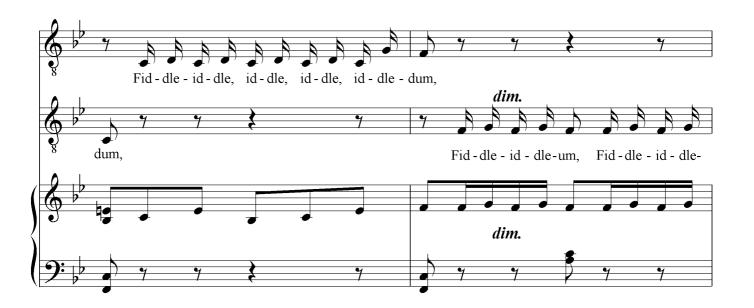




Page 76









Page 78



Page 79



(COX plays on the gridiron like a guitar. BOX takes an opera hat and imitates a concertina.)

- **BOX.** Have you read this month's Bradshaw, sir?
- COX. No, sir, my wife wouldn't let me.
- BOX. Your wife!
- **COX.** That is my *intended* wife.
- **BOX.** Well, that's the same thing! I congratulate you. (*shaking hands*)
- **COX.** (with a deep sigh) Thank ye. (seeing **BOX** about to get up) You needn't disturb yourself, sir, she won't come here.
- **BOX.** Oh! I understand. You've got a snug little establishment of your own *here* on the sly cunning dog. (*nudging* **COX**)
- **COX.** (*drawing himself up*) No such thing, sir —I repeat, sir, no such thing, sir; but my wife I mean my *intended* wife, happens to be the proprietor of a considerable number of bathing machines
 - **BOX.** (suddenly) Ha! Where! (grasping **COX'S** arm)
 - **COX.** At a favourite watering place. How curious you are!
 - **BOX.** Not at all. Well?
- **COX.** Consequently, in the bathing season which luckily is rather a long one we see but little of each other; but as that is now over, I am daily indulging in the expectation of being blessed with the sight of *my* beloved. (*very seriously*) Are *you* married?
 - **BOX.** Me? Why not exactly!
 - **COX.** Ah a happy bachelor?
 - **BOX.** Why not precisely!
 - **COX.** Oh! a widower?
 - **BOX.** No not absolutely.
- **COX.** You'll excuse me, sir but, at present, I don't understand how you can help being one of the three.
 - **BOX.** Not help it?
 - **COX.** No, sir— not you, nor any other man alive!
 - **BOX.** Ah, that may be but I'm not alive!
- **COX.** (pushing back his chair) You'll excuse me, sir but I don't like joking upon such subjects.
 - **BOX.** But I am perfectly serious, sir; I've been defunct for the last three years!
 - **COX.** (*shouting*) Will you be quiet, sir?
- **BOX.** If you won't believe me, I'll refer you to a to a very large, numerous, and respectable circle of disconsolate friends.
- **COX.** My very dear sir my *very* dear sir if there does exist any ingenious contrivance whereby a man on the eve of committing matrimony can leave this world, and yet stop in it, I shouldn't be sorry to know it.
 - **BOX.** Then there's nothing more easy. Do as I did.
 - **COX.** (eagerly) I will! What is it?
 - BOX. Drown yourself!
 - **COX.** (*shouting again*) Will you be quiet, sir?
 - **BOX.** Listen —

No. 8. Not Long Ago (ROMANCE)



Page 82



Page 83





Page 85



Page 86



Page 87





Page 89



Page 90



Page 91





- **COX**. Dear me! I think I begin to have some slight perception of your meaning. Ingenious creature! You disappeared the suit of clothes was found —
- **BOX.** Exactly and in one of the pockets of the coat, or the waistcoat, or the pantaloons I forget which there was also found a piece of paper, with these affecting farewell words:— "This is thy work, oh, Penelope Ann!"
- **COX**. Penelope Ann! (*starts up, takes* **BOX** *by the arm and leads him slowly to front of stage*) Penelope Ann?
 - BOX. Penelope Ann!
 - **COX**. Originally widow of William Wiggins?
 - **BOX.** Widow of William Wiggins!
 - **COX**. Proprietor of bathing machines?
 - **BOX.** Proprietor of bathing machines!
 - **COX**. At Margate?
 - BOX. Ramsgate!
- **COX**. It must be she! And you, sir you are Box the lamented, long lost Box?
 - BOX. I am!
 - **COX**. And I was about to marry the interesting creature you so cruelly deceived.
 - **BOX.** Ah! then you are Cox!
 - COX. I am!
- **BOX.** I heard of it. I congratulate you I give you joy! and now I think I'll go and take a stroll. (*going*)
- **COX**. No you don't! (*stopping him*) I'll not lose sight of you till I've restored you to the arms of your intended.
 - **BOX.** My intended? You mean your intended.
 - **COX**. No, sir yours!
 - **BOX.** How can she be my intended, now that I am drowned?
- **COX**. You're no such thing, sir! and I prefer presenting you to Penelope Ann. Permit me, then, to follow the generous impulse of my nature I give her up to you.
- **BOX.** Benevolent being! I wouldn't rob you for the world. (*going*) Good morning, sir!
 - **COX**. (seizing him) Stop!
 - **BOX.** Unhand me, hatter! or I shall cast off the lamb and assume the lion!
 - **COX**. Pooh! (snapping his fingers in **BOX'S** face)
- **BOX.** An insult! to my very face under my very nose! (*rubbing it*) You know the consequences, sir instant satisfaction, sir!
- **COX**. With all my heart, sir! (they go to fireplace R., and begin ringing bells violently, and pull down bell pulls)
 - **BOTH.** Bouncer! Bouncer!
 - (**BOUN.** runs in, D.L.C., all three sing "Rataplan" and stop in the middle.)

BOUN. What is it. gentlemen?

BOX. Pistols for two!

BOUN. Yes, sir. (going)

COX. Stop! You don't mean to say, thoughtless and misguided militiaman, that you keep loaded firearms in the house.

BOUN. Oh, no — they're not loaded.

COX. Then produce the murderous weapons instantly. (Exit **BOUN.** L.C.)

BOX. I say, sir!

COX. Well, sir!

BOX. What's your opinion of duelling, sir?

COX. I think it's a barbarous practice, sir.

BOX. So do I, sir. To be sure, I don't so much object to it when the pistols are not loaded.

COX. No; I dare say that does make some difference.

BOX. And yet, sir — on the other hand — doesn't it strike you as rather a waste of time, for two people to keep firing pistols at one another, with nothing in 'em.

COX. No, sir — no more than any other harmless recreation.

BOX. Hark ye! Why do you object to marry Penelope Ann?

COX. Because, as I've already observed, I can't abide her. You'll be happy with her.

BOX. Happy? me? With the consciousness that I have deprived you of such a treasure? No, no, Cox!

COX. Don't think of me, Box — I shall be sufficiently rewarded by the knowledge of my Box's happiness.

BOX. Don't be absurd, sir.

COX. Then don't you be ridiculous, sir.

BOX. I won't have her!

COX. No more will I!

BOX. I have it! Suppose we draw lots for the lady — eh, Mr. Cox?

COX. That's fair enough, Mr. Box.

BOX. Or, what say you to dice?

COX. With all my heart! Dice by all means. (eagerly)

BOX. (aside) That's lucky! Bouncer's nephew left a pair here yesterday. He sometimes persuades me to have a throw for a trifle, and as he always throws sixes, I suspect they are good ones. (goes to cupboard at R., and brings out dice-box)

COX. (aside) I've no objection at all to dice. I lost one pound seventeen and sixpence at last Barnet Races, to a very gentlemanly looking man, who had a most peculiar knack of throwing sixes. I suspected they were loaded, so I gave him another half-crown and he gave me the dice. (takes dice out of his pocket — uses lucifer box as substitute for dice-box, which is on the table)

BOX. Now then, sir!

COX. I'm ready, sir! (they seat themselves at opposite sides of the table) Will you lead off, sir?

BOX. As you please, sir. The lowest throw, of course, wins Penelope Ann?

COX. Of course, sir!

BOX. Very well, sir!

COX. Very well, sir! (**BOX** rattling dice and throwing.)

No. 9. Sixes! (GAMBLING DUET)



Page 97



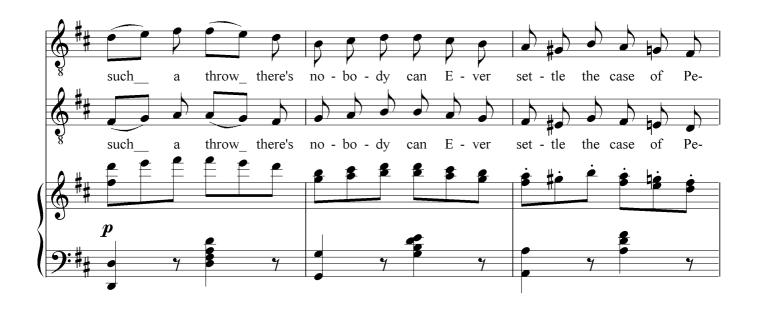


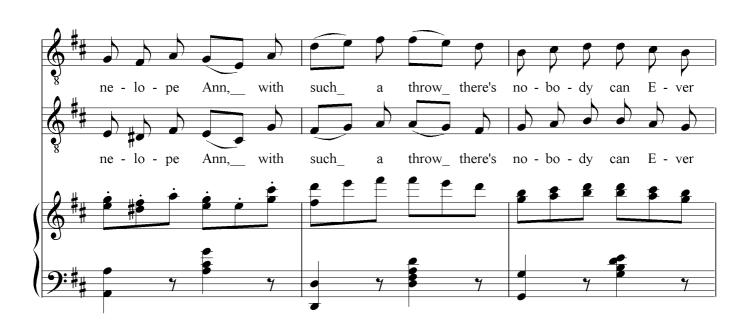
Page 99





Page 101







Page 102



BOX. It's perfectly absurd your going on throwing sixes in this sort of way.

COX. I shall go on till my luck changes.

BOX. I have it — suppose we toss for the lady.

COX. With all my heart.





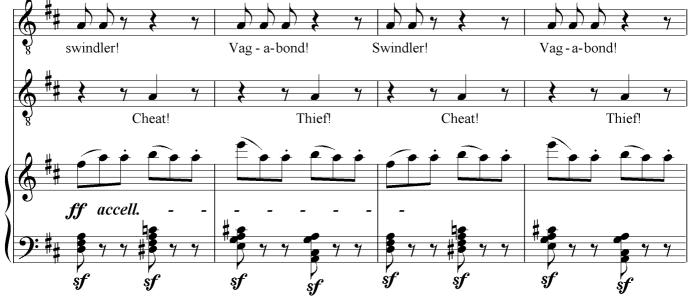
Page 104



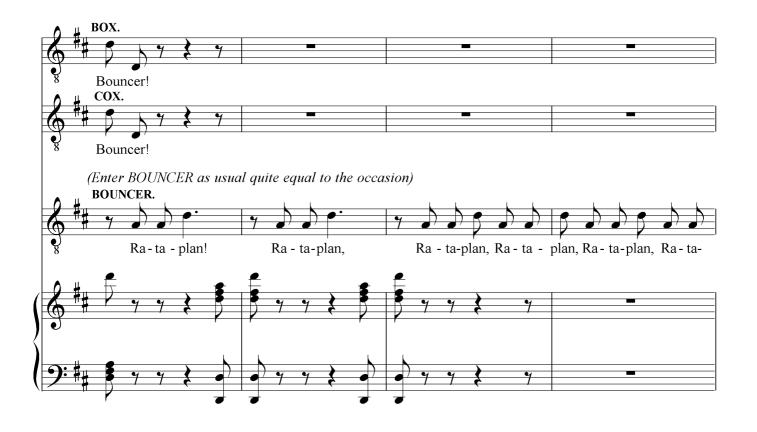


Page 106





Page 107





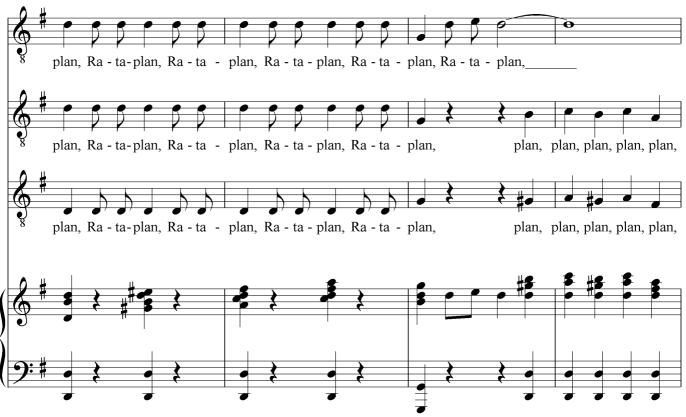














- **BOX & COX.** (together) Is the little back second-floor room ready?
- **BOUN.** Not quite, gentlemen. I can't find the pistols, but I have brought you a letter it came by the General Post, yesterday. I am sure I don't know how I came to forget it, for I put it carefully in my pocket.
 - **COX.** And you've kept it carefully in your pocket ever since?
- **BOUN.** Yes, sir. I hope you'll forgive me, sir. (*going*) By-the-bye, I paid twopence for it.
- **COX.** Did you ? Then I *do* forgive you. (*Exit* **BOUN.**, D.L.C.) (*looking at letter*) "Margate!" The postmark decidedly says "Margate."
 - **BOX.** Oh, doubtless a tender epistle from Penelope Ann.
 - **COX.** Then read it, sir. (handing letter to **BOX**)
 - BOX. Me, sir?
- **COX.** Of course. You don't suppose I'm going to read a letter from your intended.
 - **BOX.** My intended? Pooh! It's addressed to you C O X.
 - **COX.** Do you think that's a C? It looks to me like a B.
 - BOX. Nonsense! fracture the seal.
 - **COX.** (opens letter starts) Goodness gracious!
 - **BOX.** (*snatching letter starts*) Gracious goodness!
- **COX.** (taking letter again) "Margate, May the 4th. Sir, I hasten to convey to you the intelligence of a melancholy accident, which has bereft you of your intended wife." He means *your* intended.
 - BOX. No, yours! However, it's perfectly immaterial; go on!
- **COX.** (*resuming letter*) "Poor Mrs. Wiggins went for a short excursion in a sailing boat a sudden and violent squall soon after took place, which, it is supposed, upset her, as she was found, two days afterwards, keel upwards."
 - **BOX.** Poor woman!
- **COX.** The boat, sir! (reading) "As her man of business, I immediately proceeded to examine her papers, amongst which I soon discovered her will, the following extract from which will, I have no doubt, be satisfactory to you: 'I hereby bequeath my entire property to my intended husband'". Excellent, but unhappy creature. (affected)
 - **BOX.** Generous, ill-fated being. (affected)
 - COX. And to think that I tossed up for such a woman.
 - **BOX.** When I remember that I staked such a treasure on the hazard of a die.
 - **COX.** I'm sure, Mr. Box, I can't sufficiently thank you for your sympathy.
- **BOX.** And I'm sure, Mr. Cox, you couldn't feel more, if she had been your own intended.
 - **COX.** *If* she'd been *my own* intended! She *was* my own intended.
- **BOX.** *Your* intended? Come, I like that! Didn't you very properly observe just now, sir, that I proposed to her first?

- **COX.** To which you very sensibly replied that you'd come to an untimely end.
- BOX. I deny it.
- COX. I say you have!
- BOX. The fortune's mine!
- COX. Mine!
- **BOX.** I'll have it!
- COX. So will I!
- BOX. I'll go to law!
- COX. So will I!
- **BOX.** Stop a thought strikes me. Instead of going to law about the property, suppose we divide it.
 - **COX.** Equally?
 - **BOX.** Equally. I'll take two thirds.
 - **COX.** That's fair enough and I'll take three fourths.
 - BOX. That won't do. Half and half.
 - **COX.** Agreed! There's my hand upon it —
- **BOX.** And mine (about to shake hands a postman's knock heard at street door without)
 - **COX.** Holloa! Postman again?
 - **BOX.** Postman yesterday postman to-day —

(Enter **BOUN.**, D.L.C.)

- **BOUN.** Another letter, Colonel Cox twopence more!
- **COX.** I forgive you again! (taking letter) Another trifle from Margate. (opens letter, starts) Goodness gracious!
 - **BOX.** (snatching letter, starts) Gracious goodness!
 - **COX.** (snatching letter again reads) "Happy to inform you, false alarm."
- **BOX.** (overlooking) "Sudden squall boat upset Mrs. Wiggins, your intended —"
 - **COX.** "Picked up by steamboat —"
 - **BOX.** "Carried into Boulogne —"
 - **COX.** "Returned here this morning—"
 - **BOX.** "Will start by early train to-morrow—"
- **COX.** "And be with you at ten o'clock exact." (Both simultaneously pull out their watches.)
 - **BOX.** Cox, I congratulate you —
 - **COX.** Box, I give you joy!
- **BOX.** I'm sorry that most important business at the Colonial Office will prevent my witnessing the truly happy meeting between you and your intended! Good morning! (going)

COX. (*stopping him*) It's obviously for me to retire. Not for worlds would I disturb the rapturous meeting between you and your intended. Good morning! (*going*)

BOX. You'll excuse me, sir — but our last arrangement was that she was *your* intended.

COX. No, yours!

BOX. Yours!

BOTH. Yours! (Ten o'clock strikes — noise of an omnibus.)

BOX. Ha! What's that! A cab's drawn up at the door! (*running to window*) No, it's a twopenny omnibus!

COX. (leaning over Box's shoulder) A lady's got out —

BOX. There's no mistaking that majestic person — it's Penelope Ann!

COX. Your intended!

BOX. Yours!

COX. Yours! (Both run to door, L.C., and eagerly listen.)

BOX. Hark — she's coming up stairs!

COX. Shut the door! (They slam the door, and both lean against it with their backs.)

BOUN. (without, and knocking.) Colonel!

COX. (shouting) I've just stepped out!

BOX. So have I!

BOUN. (without) Mr. Cox! (pushing at the door — **COX** and **BOX** redouble their efforts to keep the door shut) Open the door! It's only me — Sergeant Bouncer!

COX. Only you? Then where's the lady?

BOUN. Gone!

COX. Upon your honour?

BOX. As a Militiaman?

BOUN. Yes: and she's left a note for Brigadier Cox.

COX. Give it to me.

BOUN. Then open the door!

COX. Put it under! (A letter is put under the door, **COX** picks up the letter and opens it.) Goodness gracious!

BOX. (snatching letter) Gracious goodness! (**COX** snatches the letter, and runs forward, followed by **BOX.**)

COX. (reading) "Dear Mr. Cox — pardon my candour —"

BOX. (*looking over, and reading*) "But being convinced that our feelings, like our ages, do not reciprocate —"

COX. I hasten to apprize you of my immediate union —"

BOX. "With Mr. Knox."

COX. Huzza!

BOX. Three cheers for Knox. Ha, ha, ha! (tosses the letter in the air, and begins dancing, **COX** does the same)

BOUN. (putting his head in at door) The little second floor back room is quite ready!

COX. I don't want it!

BOX. No more do I!

COX. What shall part us?

BOX. What shall tear us asunder?

COX. Box!

BOX. Cox! (About to embrace — **BOX** stops, seizes **COX'S** hand, and looks eagerly in his face.) You'll excuse the apparent insanity of the remark, but the more I gaze on your features, the more I'm convinced that you're my long lost brother.

COX. The very observation I was going to make to you!

BOX. Ah — tell me — in mercy tell me — have you such a thing as a strawberry mark on your left arm?

COX. No!

BOX. Then it is he! (*They rush into each other's arms.*)

COX. Of course we stop where we are?

BOX. Of course!

COX. For, between you and me, I'm rather partial to this house.

BOX. So am I — I begin to feel quite at home in it.

COX. Everything so clean and comfortable

BOX. And I'm sure the master of it, from what I have seen of him, is very anxious to please.

COX. So he is — and I vote, Box, that we stick by him!

BOX. Agreed!

No. 10. My Hand Upon It (FINALE)



Page 118



Page 119



Page 120



Page 121



Page 122

Appendix: Original Version of No. 4.





Page 124



Page 125



Page 126