

(Frederic rises and comes forward.)

King: Yes, Frederic, from to-day you rank as a full-blown member of our band.

All: Hurrah!

Fred.: My friends, I thank you all, from my heart, for your kindly wishes. Would that I could repay them as they deserve!

King: What do you mean?

Fred.: To-day I am out of my indentures, and to-day I leave you forever.

King: But this is quite unaccountable; a keener hand at scuttling a Cunarder or cutting out a White Star never shipped a handspike.

Fred.: Yes, I have done my best for you. And why? It was my duty under my indentures, and I am the slave of duty: As a child I was regularly apprenticed to your band. It was through an error—no matter, the mistake was ours, not yours, and I was in honour bound by it.

Sam.: An error? What error? (Ruth rises and comes forward.)

Fred.: I may not tell you; it would reflect upon my well-loved Ruth.

Ruth: Nay, dear master, my mind has long been gnawed by the cankering tooth of mystery. Better have it out at once.

No. 2. "When Frederic was a little lad"

Solo

Ruth

Allegro pesante

1. When
2. I
3. I

Fred - 'ric was a lit - tle lad he proved so brave and
was a stu - pid - nurs - 'ry - maid, on break - ers al - ways
soon found out, be - yond all doubt, the scope of this dis -

dar - ing, His fa - ther thought he'd 'pren - tice him to—
 steer - ing, And I did not catch the word a - right, through
 as - ter, But I had-n't the face to re - turn to my place, and—

some ca - reer sea - far - ing. I — was, a - las! his nurs - ry - maid, and
 be - ing hard of hear - ing. Mis - tak - ing my in - struc - tions, which with -
 break it to my mas - ter. A — nurs - ry - maid is not a - fraid of —

so it fell to my lot To take and bind the—
 in my brain did gy - rate, I took and bound this—
 what you peo - ple call work, So I made up my mind to—

prom - is - ing boy ap - pren - tice to a pi - lot. A
 prom - is - ing boy ap - pren - tice to a pi - rate. A
 go as a kind of pi - rat - i - cal maid - of - all - work. And

life not bad for a har- dy lad, though sure- ly not a high lot, Though
sad mis- take it— was to make, and doom him to a vile lot, I
that is how you find me now, a— mem- ber of your shy lot, Which you

I'm a nurse, you might do worse than make your boy a pi- lot!
bound him to a pi- rate— you!— in- stead of to a pi- lot!
would-n't have found, had he been bound ap- pren- tice to a pi- lot!

After 3rd verse

Ruth: Oh, pardon! Frederic, pardon! (*Kneels.*)

Fred.: Rise, sweet one; I have long pardoned you. (*Ruth rises.*)

Ruth: The two words were so much alike!

Fred.: They were. They still are, though years have rolled over their heads. (*Ruth goes up with Samuel.*) But this afternoon my obligation ceases. Individually, I love you all with affection unspeakable; but, collectively, I look upon you with a disgust that amounts to absolute detestation. Oh! pity me, my beloved friends, for such is my sense of duty that, once out of my indentures, I shall feel myself bound to devote myself heart and soul to your extermination!

All: Poor lad! poor lad! (*All weep.*)

King: Well, Frederic, if you conscientiously feel that it is your duty to destroy us, we cannot blame you for acting on that conviction. Always act in accordance with the dictates of your conscience, my boy, and chance the consequences.

Sam.: Besides, we can offer you but little temptation to remain with us. We don't seem to make piracy pay. I'm sure I don't know why, but we don't.

Fred.: I know why, but, alas! I mustn't tell you: it wouldn't be right.

King: Why not, my boy? It's only half-past eleven, and you are one of us until the clock strikes twelve.

Sam.: True, and until then you are bound to protect our interests.