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Glossary of Obscure Terms

Part of the fun of Gilbert and Sullivan is enjoying Gilbert's, rich, playful and obscure language from time to time. Here are a few terms you probably haven't heard before.

Quarter-day – The days when rents were due, 4 times a year.

Dr. Watts – Isaac Watts who wrote some of the greatest English hymns, such as, "Oh God Our Help in Ages Past."

Trow – Hope, believe. Also E. Price's first name.

Sillery – A high-class champagne

Triolet – A verse of 8 lines with two rhymes - 1, 4, and 7, & 2 and 8

Heigholet – A little sigh (Gilbert made this one up)

Helicon – A Greek mountain range, referring the Greek authors below

Anacreon, Ovid, Juvenal, Aristophanes – Greek authors noted for erotic works. A sly dig since Psyche then recommends they get them Bowdlerized

Bowdlerized – Cleansed of any offensive passages (Thomas Bowdler did this to Shakespeare in 1818)

Spring guns – Fixed guns set to fire when a trip-wire is triggered

Set the Thames on fire – Do something exciting

Trepan – Capture in a trap

Sunbeams from cucumbers – A task from Gulliver's travels that Gulliver was said to have spent 8 years on.

Sizars – Students who received the lodging in exchange for serving duties

Tufts – Tassels worn on the caps of peer's sons at Oxford

Toilet club – A gentlemen's barber

Etui – A needle case

Are men/stuck in her throat – A burlesque of Macbeth, where Macbeth says, "I had most need of blessing and 'Amen' stuck in my throat."

Chit – A youngster, usually a girl

Asphodel – Lillies

Paynim – Pagans or heathen - originally applied to the Saracens

Pop-in-jays – An old name for a parrot

Hurdy-gurds – Barrel organs and their players

Brassets – Armor for the upper arms (brassards)

Cuirass – Chest armor

"I quite forget their name" – The leg pieces are called greaves

Virago – A man-like or heroic woman

Termagant – A quarrelsome woman

PRINCESS IDA OR CASTLE ADAMANT

Words by
W. S. Gilbert

Music by Sir
Arthur Sullivan



A Concert Presented by
The Ridgewood Gilbert and
Sullivan Opera Company

Music Director - James Biddlecome

Accompanist - Laura Ravotti

www.gilbertandsullivanridgewood.com

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Program Designed by John Ryle

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Princess Ida, or Castle Adamant, was produced at the Savoy Theatre on January 5, 1884 and ran for 246 performances. Gilbert based his libretto on his earlier play *The Princess* which, in turn, he described as “a perversion” of Tennyson’s poem of the same name. The operetta was produced between *Iolanthe* and *The Mikado* when its creators were at the height of their powers.

Note: The title of each musical number appears in parentheses.

ACT I

At King Hildebrand’s castle, everyone is on the lookout for King Gama and his daughter, Princess Ida (“Search Throughout the Panorama”). The princess was betrothed in childhood to Hildebrand’s son, Prince Hilarion. King Hildebrand orders his courtiers to be nice to Gama if he comes with the princess, and to lock Gama up if he comes alone (“Now Hearken to my Strict Command”). Hilarion has loved Ida since they were children, but he wonders how she may have changed in twenty years (“Today We Meet”).

King Gama is finally spotted, accompanied by his three burly sons (“We are Warriors Three”). However, he does not have the princess. Gama insults everyone and talks about himself (“If You Give Me Your Attention”), then finally admits that Ida has shut herself up in Castle Adamant with a group of young ladies, having formed a women’s university that no man may enter. Gama, of all people, suggests that Hilarion talk to Ida politely (“P’raps if You Address the Lady”), while Hildebrand is in favor of storming the castle.

Gentle Hilarion resolves to go to Castle Adamant with his friends Cyril and Florian to try to win the love of Ida and her maidens (“Expressive Glances Shall be Our Lances”). It is decided that Gama and his sons will remain as hostages in Hildebrand’s castle until Hilarion returns; the fitness-conscious sons are rather upset by this (“For A Month to Dwell in A Dungeon Cell”). They head off to their prison cell with Gama while Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian prepare to journey to Castle Adamant.

ACT II

In the gardens of Castle Adamant, the female students of the university are eager to learn and read on many subjects (“Towards the Empyrean Heights”). Lady Psyche, the Professor of Humanities, gives a brief lecture on how awful men are, which the maidens take to heart. Then, the students welcome their leader and inspiration, Princess Ida (“Mighty Maiden With A Mission”). The princess enters, fervently pleading with the goddess Minerva to help Ida lead her students to the light (“Oh Goddess Wise”). After giving the students an eloquent lecture and checking on the schedule for the day, she departs, followed by her acolytes.

Lady Blanche, the intimidating Professor of Abstract Science, is quite displeased. She believes that she should rule the university, not Princess Ida, and she vents her frustration and her love for past, present, and future tenses (“Come, Mighty Must”) before storming off.

Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian finally succeed in scaling the wall of Castle Adamant (“Gently, Gently”). Florian scoffs that he could teach the female students anything worth knowing, but Hilarion admonishes him and describes some of the scientific experiments the ladies are attempting (“They Intend to Send A Wire to the Moon”). The three men disguise themselves as lady undergraduates and dance around with glee (“I am A Maiden Cold and Stately”).

Then Princess Ida herself enters. The three men curtsy and present themselves as maidens who wish to join the university. The Princess is amenable as long as they obey the rules: draw no cruel distinctions based on wealth or beauty, love their fellow students, and never marry any man. The men agree to this readily enough. Ida shares with them her sorrowful philosophy (“The World is but A Broken Toy”) and departs.

Lady Psyche enters and recognizes Florian, who is her brother. The men have to let her in on the secret, and she agrees not to tell, although they have incurred death by intruding—she explains that men are basically apes at heart (“A Lady Fair of Lineage High”). Melissa, a student who happens to be Lady Blanche’s daughter, overhears the last part of this, and she has to be let in on the secret too. She has never seen young men before, and finds them interesting and delightful. She and Lady Psyche realize that perhaps men are not as awful as they had been led to believe (“The Woman of the Wisest Wit”).

Lady Psyche and the three men go, but Melissa is caught by her mother. Lady Blanche recognizes the new “students” as men, and threatens to reveal their identities. Melissa, who has fallen for Florian, convinces Blanche to wait and let Hilarion marry Princess Ida, because that would leave Blanche in charge (“Now Wouldn’t You Like to Rule the Roast”).

The luncheon bell rings and all the students enter, ready to munch (“Merrily Ring the Luncheon Bell”). Unfortunately wine is provided, and Cyril gets drunk and starts singing a bawdy song (“Would You Know the Kind of Maid”) which immediately reveals him as a man; when Hilarion whacks Cyril to make him stop, all three are found out. Ida is horrified to find men in her college, and runs to the bridge calling all her maidens after her — but then she slips, falling into a raging river. Hilarion jumps in after Ida and saves her.

The women are relieved and suggest that the men should be forgiven (“Oh Joy, Our Chief is Saved”) but Ida shows no mercy. She orders the men arrested and sentenced to die. Hilarion counters by telling her he would rather die by her hand than live without her love (“Whom Thou Hast Chained”). The men are bound and taken away.

Suddenly Melissa enters and reports that King Hildebrand and his army are at the castle gates (“Madam, Without the Castle Walls”). Hildebrand gives Ida an ultimatum: she must either yield and marry Hilarion, or Hildebrand will destroy the castle and capture them all. Ida vows defiance, though the women are horrified. Ida’s three brothers express concern that they might be killed, but the princess will not yield. Hildebrand gives her twenty-four hours to come to a decision; the act ends with Hildebrand and his men threatening, the female students wailing, and Ida remaining staunch.

ACT III

The women of Castle Adamant are preparing to do battle, but since they know nothing about warfare, they are a little nervous (“Death to the Invader”). Things come to a head when Princess Ida enters and, in giving the students their duties, finds that none of them are willing to fight. Her women are versed in books, but not in battle; Ida despairs as she realizes that all her hopes and plans have collapsed (“I Built Upon A Rock”).

King Gama and his sons enter. Gama begs Ida to yield in order to rescue him from the tortures he has undergone (“Whene’er I Spoke Sarcastic Joke”). Ida is grieved at her father’s pain, and she agrees that her three brothers shall fight with Hilarion, Cyril, and Florian to decide the outcome of the argument.

All the soldiers enter the castle, excited at the prospect of watching a fight (“When Anger Spreads His Wing”). Everyone has been won over by Hilarion’s love and bravery and are cheering for him, even the women of the university. Ida’s brothers, burdened more with muscles than with intellect, are uncomfortable in their armor and decide to take it all off (“This Helmet, I Suppose”). Still, they put up a pretty good fight, but are eventually defeated by Hilarion, Florian, and Cyril. Ida begs the victors to stay their hands, and says she will yield. She is bitter at first over the loss of her dream; but when Hildebrand points out that with only women in her ideal world, the scheme would not last long, Ida realizes that she has been closed-minded. She appoints Lady Blanche to rule the college and accepts Hilarion for a husband, at last admitting that she has fallen in love with him. Lady Psyche and Melissa are united with Cyril and Florian, and everyone is happy (“Finale”).

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

King Hilderbrand	Paul White
Hilarion (4/5)	Ken Whiteman
Hilarion (4/7)	Cesar Muñoz
Hilarion (4/21 & 6/1)	Chris Cantu
Cyril	Will Flaim
Florian (4/5 & 6/1)	Larry Bogert
Florian (4/7 & 4/21)	Joe Rothstein
King Gama	Fred Bernardi
Arac	John Holmboe
Guron	Tom Manning
Synthius	Larry Bogert
Princess Ida	Iris Karlin
Lady Blanche	Eileen Karlson
Lady Psyche	Jacqueline Leiva
Melissa	Sarah O’Sullivan
Sacharissa	Nell White