(Enter Rose, L.)

Rose: A maiden, and in tears? Can I do ought to soften thy sorrow? This apple — (offering the apple)

Margaret: (R.C. Examine it and rejects it) No! (mysteriously) Tell me, are you mad?

Rose: Tell me! Not! That is, I think not.

Margaret: That's well! Then you don't love Sir Despord Murgatroyd? All mad girls love him. I love him. I'm poor Mad Margaret — Crazy Meg. Poor Peg! He! He! He! He! He! (chuckling)

Rose: Thou lovest the bad Baronet of Ruddigore? Oh, horrible — too horrible! (She turns away to L.C.)

Margaret: You pity me? Then be my mother! The squirrel had a mother, but she drank and the squirrel fled! Hush! They sing a brave song in our parts — it runs somewhat thus: (Sings)

The cat and the dog and the little puppee
Sat down in a— down in a— in a—"

I forget what they sat down in, but so the song goes! Listen — I've come to pinch her! (coming C to Rose)

Rose: Mercy, whom?

Margaret: You mean "who?"

Rose: Nay! It is the accusative after the verb.

Margaret: True! (Whispers melodramatically.) I have come to pinch Rose Maybud!

Rose: (chuckling) Rose Maybud?

Margaret: Aye! I love him — he loved me once. But that's all gone. Fisht! He gave me an Italian glance — thus (business) — and made me his. He will give her an Italian glance, and make her his. But it shall not be, for I'll stamp on her — stamp on her! Did you ever kill anybody? No? Why not? Listen — I killed a fly this morning! It buzzed, and I wouldn't have it. So it died— pop! So shall she!

Rose: But, behold, I am Rose Maybud, and I would faint not die "pop."

Margaret: You are Rose Maybud?

Rose: Yes, sweet Rose Maybud!

Margaret: Strange! They told me she was beautiful. And he loves you! No, no! If I thought that, I would treat you as the auctioneer and land-agent treated the lady-bird — I would rend you asunder!

Rose: Nay, be pacified, for behold I am pledged to another, and lo, we are to be wedded this very day!

Margaret: Swear me that! Come to a Commissioner and let me have it on affidavit! I once made an affidavit — but it died — it died — it died! But see, they come — Sir Despard and his evil crew! Hide, hide — they are all mad — quite mad!

Rose: What makes you think so?

Margaret: Hush! They sing choruses in public. That's mad enough, I think! Go — hide away, they will seize you! Hush! Quite softly — quite, quite softly! (Takes Rose's hand, and they execute together on tiptoe, L.)