

ACT II

SCENE I.—*A hall in the apartments of*

AMNERIS. AMNERIS surrounded by female slaves, who attire her for the triumphal feast. Tripods emitting perfumed vapors. Young Moorish slaves waving feather-fans.

CHORUS.—Our song his glory praising,
Heavenward waft a name,
Whose deeds the sun out-blazing,
Out-shine his dazzling flame!
Come, bind thy flowing tresses round
With laurel and with flow'rs,
While loud our song of praise resound
To celebrate love's pow'rs.

AMNERIS.—(Ah, come, love, with rapture fill me,
To joy my heart restore.)

CHORUS.—Ah! where are now the foes
who dared
Egypt's brave sons attack?
As doves are by the eagle scar'd,
Our warriors drove them back.
Now wreaths of triumph glorious
The victor's brow shall crown,
And love, o'er him victorious,
Shall smooth his war-like frown.

AMNERIS.—Be silent! Aida hither now
advances,
Child of the conquer'd, to me her
grief is sacred.
(*At a sign from AMNERIS the slaves retire.*)

(Enter AIDA.)

On her appearance,
My soul again with doubt is tortur'd.
It shall now be revealed, the fatal mystery!
(*To AIDA with feigned affection.*)
'Neath the chances of battle succumb
thy people,
Hapless Aida! The sorrows that afflict thee,
Be sure I feel as keenly.
My heart tow'rds thee yearns fondly;
In vain naught shalt thou ask of me:
Thou shalt be happy!

AIDA.—Ah! how can I be happy,
Far from my native country, where I
can never know
What fate may befall my father,
brothers?

AMNERIS.—Deeply you move me! yet no
human sorrow
Is lasting here below. Time will comfort
And heal your present anguish.
Greater
Than time e'en the healing power
of love is.

AIDA.—Oh, love, sweet power! oh, joy
tormenting!
Rapturous madness bliss fraught with
woes,
Thy pangs most cruel a life contenting,
Thy smiles enchanting bright heaven
disclose!

AMNERIS.—Yon deadly pallor, her
bosom panting,
Tell of love's passion, tell of love's
woes.
Her heart to question, courage is
wanting.
My bosom feels of her torture the
throes.

(*Eying her fixedly.*)

Now say, what new emotion so doth
sway my fair Aida?

Thy secret thought reveal to me:
Come, trust securely, come,
Trust in my affection.

Among the warriors brave who
Fought fatally 'gainst thy country,
It may be that one has waken'd
In thee gentle thoughts of love?

AIDA.—What mean'st thou?

AMNERIS.—The cruel fate of war not all
alike embraces,
And then the dauntless warrior who
Leads the host may perish.
Yes! Radamés by thine is slaughter'd;
And canst thou mourn him?
The gods have wrought thee vengeance.

AIDA.—What dost thou tell me!
wretched fate!

Forever my tears shall flow!
Celestial favor to me was ne'er extended.

AMNERIS (*breaking out with violence*).
Tremble! thou art discovered!
Thou lov'st him! Ne'er deny it!