

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN



PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

HELD AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
IN MAY 1970

Edited by James Helyar

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Foreword

In May of 1970 the first International Conference on Gilbert and Sullivan was held at the University of Kansas. Under the sponsorship of the International Theatre Studies Center, the conference was made possible through the generous financial support of the Office of the Chancellor, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Committee on Lectures and Convocations, the Department of English, and the Kansas University Endowment Association. I consider it a singular honor to have had the opportunity of being the general chairman of such an event not only in which such diverse segments of the university participated as the Museum of Art, the Library, and a student theatrical company, but also to which an international group of distinguished and knowledgeable theatrical and academic personages gave their time, talents, and expertise on the subject of Gilbert and Sullivan.

Among the continuous activities of the three-day conference were the exhibit of historic costume, scene, and poster designs in the Museum of Art and the exhibit of printed books and ephemera in Watson Library. The drawings and posters in the former exhibit were graciously lent by the Victoria and Albert Museum and the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Enthusiastic audiences gave a warm reception to four performances of *The Grand Duke*—the last and least staged of the Savoy Operas—presented by the Mount Oread Gilbert and Sullivan Company of the university.

The main business of the conference was, of course, the presentation of papers on Gilbert and Sullivan, and these began with the delightfully anecdotal opening address by Frederic Lloyd, General Manager of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. (Miss Bridget D'Oyly Carte, unable to attend in person, provided a message of welcome for the conference program.)

Another distinguished guest, Miss Dorothy Raedler—former director of the American Savoyards—brought to the subject of “tradition” in Gilbert and Sullivan her years of practical experience in staging productions of the operas. I also remember with pleasure the vigorous panel discussion on the future of Gilbert and Sullivan productions in England and America, in which Miss Raedler and Mr. Lloyd were joined by Colin Prestige of *The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal*, and by myself as moderator.

The year of the conference, 1970, marked no particular milestone in the careers of Gilbert and Sullivan, but now in 1971, the centennial of their

first and least successful collaboration *Thespis*, we are entering the "second hundred years" of Gilbert and Sullivan production and, accordingly, commentary, criticism, and scholarship. This volume, then, while not attempting to be a complete transcript of the conference, is, as a collection of papers submitted to the conference, a record of the kinds of approaches to the works and careers of both Sullivan and Gilbert that serious students and practitioners of the theatre have begun to take and presumably will continue to take in the future. The very fact that such a conference could take place and that a volume such as this could be compiled attests not only to the continuing popularity of Gilbert and Sullivan, but also, and perhaps more significantly, to the growing recognition of their true stature in the annals of British theatrical history.

JOHN BUSH JONES
Lawrence, Kansas

Gilbert and Melodrama

By LEONARD R. N. ASHLEY

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No wonder William S. Gilbert was amused by melodrama: at the age of two he was kidnapped in Naples and ransomed for £25. Gilbert was the son of an eccentric naval surgeon who retired at 25 because of an unexpected inheritance. He was a runaway schoolboy who was brought back home by Charles Kean after turning up at the theatre and begging for a part in *The Corsican Brothers*. He was a soldier who never got to war. He was a lawyer who embraced the legal profession and then sat idle "waiting for the legal profession to embrace" him. He was a man who claimed, "I know two tunes. One is *God Save the King*, the other isn't," and then collaborated on highly successful operas with the man whom Queen Victoria admired for his music, whom Rachel encouraged to write a "grand opera," whom *The World* if not the world hailed as "the Mozart of England." Gilbert was the librettist who got ideas for new operas from the lucky accident of a Samurai sword falling from his study wall (*The Mikado*) or the chance view of an advertisement for The Tower Furnishing Company in the Underground at Uxbridge (*The Yeomen of the Guard*). He was the man obsessed with that dreadful "lozenge" plot that so unnerved Sullivan, and who fought with his friends over the expense of a theatre carpet. He was a playwright to whom fame came overnight with £40,000 in her hands as a reward for his undistinguished work *Pygmalion and Galatea* and yet whose masterpiece *H.M.S. Pinafore* was derided as absurd at the London première and pronounced (how wrongly!) by the critics as "destined soon to subside into nothingness." He was a kind, sentimental man with a horrid temper and a pathological antipathy for elderly women, especially spinsters. In short, Gilbert was "that singular anomaly" which Hesketh Pearson sums up as "a typical Briton with a streak of genius . . . a respectable man who made fun of respectability, a sentimentalist who laughed at sentiment, a patriot who ridiculed patriotism"; indeed Gilbert was himself something like a character out of melodrama, which Wylie Sypher has identified as "a characteristic mode of nineteenth century thought and art."

It is the connection between his work and melodrama, however, that concerns me in the present paper. Gilbert began with the melodramatic plots and characters of his delightful *Bab Ballads* and other humorous journalism. He might have gone on writing for *Fun* and not for money had not

Tom Robertson (in the best traditions of melodrama) got him an assignment to write a Christmas piece in a fortnight. Gilbert wrote it, a parody or burlesque of the melodramatic nonsense of *L'Elisir d'Amore*, in a week, it was rehearsed for a week or so more, and it was a hit on opening night (29 December, 1866). The piece was called *Dulcamara; or, The Little Duck and the Great Quack*, and was followed by other "new and original extravaganzas" such as a take-off on *La Figlia del Reggimento* (*La Vivandière; or, True to the Corps*) and "a whimsical parody" of *The Bohemian Girl* (*The Merry Zingara; or, The Topsy Gypsy and the Pipsy Wipsy*); he never abated his interest in the spoofing of melodrama. His early extravaganzas reduced operatic posturings to absurdity. His short stories toyed with the supernatural and exhibited such stalwarts of melodrama as honest smugglers and gushing maidens. His operas, set in preposterous, never-never lands of melodrama turned upside down (*Topsyturveydom*, to use the title of a play of his of 1874), were founded on a wry view of the world of "sensational incident and violent appeals to the emotions, but with a happy ending" (to quote the *Oxford Companion to English Literature's* brief definition of melodrama).

Although Gilbert is generally regarded as a satirist, he was not primarily a social satirist. He created a social satire that was perhaps too corrosive, on occasion, for comfort but yet was basically acceptable to the public because it made fun not of the audiences or The Establishment or the Eternal Verities to which all Eminent Victorians (and Gilbert was one of them) subscribed but of the stereotypes and sensationalism of the popular theatre. It was acceptable criticism because it was not trenchant, because it did not hurt (as Shaw's criticism did) "sensitive people in sensitive places." It was only *literary* criticism down deep—and there was, as Hesketh Pearson and others have been quick to observe, music, to take the sting out of it.

Unwilling to attack the sacred cows of Things As They Are, Gilbert had to turn to making fun of the imaginary worlds of *Topsyturveydom* and the escapist entertainments of melodrama.

To take *Ruddigore* as an example: here is, a triumph of the scene painter's art and the sensational staging in the tradition of Dion Boucicault, the family picture gallery. A favorite haunt of melodrama, especially of the Gothic sort, and one used by Gilbert as far back as 1868, when he presented *Ages Ago* at The Royal Gallery of Illustration, before he met Sullivan. Here, as in *Pinafore*, are all the trappings of the nautical melodrama. Here is Sir Despard, the "bad baronet" of many an anti-squire, anti-aristocratic "meller"

with a new and characteristically ridiculous twist. Here are a lot of cardboard cutouts of characters (as suitable for a "tuppenny-coloured" theatre) which at first caused Sullivan to despair. ("It is impossible to feel sympathy with a single person," he complained to his diary, feeling a little grand after his recent success with the grandiose *Golden Legend* oratorio at the Leeds Festival of 1886. "I don't see any way of setting it in its present form.") Here is a popular topic—within the month Wilde dealt with ancestral ghosts in *The Canterville Ghost*—tried and true, with all the paraphernalia inherited from the traditions of Thomas Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery* (the first English melodrama, so called), H. J. Byron's inanities, Dion Boucicault's *coups de théâtre*—the "works." From the melodrama there are disguises and surprises; a dire curse and a happy ending; clumsy exposition of an incredible plot; inflated and stilted dialogue; the honest young farmer (Robin Oakapple, who is really as in *East Lynne* and so many other dramas one of those people who is Somebody Else); the simple village maid (as Stephen Leacock would say, "more simple than any maiden for miles around"); of course Mad Margaret (confessedly "an obvious caricature of theatrical madness" of the type that sets in so suddenly at the end of another society melodrama, *Lady Audley's Secret* in the version of C. H. Hazlewood); and the honest sailor, Richard Dauntless, who gives us his character in "The Bold Mounseer." A chorus of Professional Bridesmaids, an hysterically funny duet of two "abandoned" persons, a chop-logic *dénouement*—it all adds up to what Gilbert considered his best libretto and what I, though I cannot agree entirely with the author's estimate, consider his most characteristic. "Its values are all stage values," writes W. A. Darlington in his book *The World of Gilbert and Sullivan*. *Ruddigore* is the *locus classicus*, in fact, of the influence of melodrama on the works of Gilbert, the influence of the plays he was bold to praise in an interview with William Archer in July, 1901: "the plays which used to give one so much pleasure in the 'sixties and thereabouts."

To review *Ruddigore* in the terms in which Bernard Shaw reviewed *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Wilde—and Shaw saw the two works as closely related—in essence it is a play in which the devices of melodrama are both used and abused, both incorporated and burlesqued. Gilbert had done this as early as *Robert le Diable* (1868), as late as *Engaged* (1877). There is a lot of "plot—a gross anachronism," a lot of "mechanical fun," and a punning title and some farcical passages that "recall the epoch of H. J. Byron" (who more or less began with a burlesque of Bulwer-Lytton's *The*

Lady of Lyons—Byron's take-off was subtitled *Twopenny Pride and Penny-tence*—and concluded, nearly 30 years and more than 100 works later, with revisions of old burlesques of popular plays and a comic opera, *Frolique*). The setting of Cornwall is just as "fairylane" and fantastic as that of *The Wicked World*, *Broken Hearts*, or *Iolanthe*. It is set in, it is all about, only the world of the theatre, of melodrama.

Now what does this mean in terms of our improved understanding and deeper appreciation of the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan?

First, it can aid us in a more sensible and accurate estimate of what Gilbert and Sullivan sought to accomplish and achieved. These operas, as we have seen, are more connected with art than with life: they are less "criticisms of life" in the high, Arnoldian sense than they are adaptations and parodies of the elements that gave to the earlier Victorian theatre great vigor and immense popular appeal in the days when the theatres were large but the dramatists were not great, when "literature" had fled to the closet, when actor-managers ruled. The Savoy operas are comments on melodrama. Gilbert's biographers, Sidney Dark and Rowland Grey, rightly note that "the Gilbert of the airy lyrical and magical irresistible foolery was obsessed by the importance of being earnest. He wanted to preach." Gilbert's message may have been slight. Sometimes it seems hardly more than Miss Anna Russell alleges in her parody of a typical Gilbert and Sullivan song: "Things Would Be so Different, If They Were Not As They Are." But is it not right that it should be heard distinctly, and in context, lest it be thought *mere* "foolery"?

Gilbert's libretti deserve to be regarded as somehow connected to the new earnestness of the stage in the period of Henry Arthur Jones' call for a renaissance of the English drama, in the period of the intellectual innovations of Jones and Pinero and Shaw. At the same time, Gilbert is best seen not in invidious comparison with these serious playwrights (with whom his operas are more or less contemporary) but in reaction to the earlier popular theatre and yet in its tradition. *H.M.S. Pinafore*, for example, cannot be fully understood except in terms of the long tradition of nautical melodrama of which *Black Ey'd Susan* is the prototype, any more than Sullivan's music can be fully appreciated unless we recognize his occasional parodies of Mozart, Verdi, and other composers. *Ruddigore* is richer when viewed in the light of the clichés of melodrama, just as *Patience* demands of us a knowledge of the high aesthetical posings of the Pre-Raphaelite "fleshy school of poetry" and the extravagances of Oscar Wilde.

Secondly, in connection with performance—and Gilbert and Sullivan truly come to life only in the theatre—our understanding of the relationship to *melodrama* (which means, after all, plays with music, in one important definition) will enable us to stage the Savoy operas in the right way.

It is now fashionable to sneer at melodrama, though melodramatic effects helped to make dramatic masterpieces out of plays from *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Othello* to our more modern Ibsen and Strindberg, Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee. Today we thrill to films like *Spellbound* and the James Bond epics, to a revival of *Sorry, Wrong Number* or some modern radio imitation. Family life comes to a halt to behold *Bonanza* or a re-run of *Dracula* on the Late Show. And yet we sneer at *Ten Nights in a Barroom* and *East Lynne* and cannot imagine how our forebears sat through *The Drunkard* before it became “the thing” to play it for laughs. True, the modern satirical uses to which old plays like *The Drunkard* have been put have been big box-office. *The Drunkard* ran for 25 years in Los Angeles in this century; it has been running now for some years off-Broadway in New York. We think of it as camp, a chance to hiss the villain uproariously. But *The Drunkard* was dead (or deadly) serious in its original conception: it was written to be played “straight.” It once was a hit as such. The libretti of Gilbert spoofed such melodramas, too, but Gilbert put the humor into his works himself. The salt of his wit has preserved them. *They* do not demand to be played for camp. It is not advisable to parody parody.

In an introductory instruction to *Engaged*, Gilbert, who learned his stage technique from Robertson and (as Edward Rickett and many others have testified) applied it as perhaps the greatest martinet ever to shout at actors from the stalls at rehearsal, warned his cast:

It is absolutely essential to the success of this piece that it should be played with the most perfect earnestness and gravity throughout. There should be no exaggeration in costume, makeup or demeanour; and the characters, one and all, should appear to believe, throughout, in the perfect sincerity of their words and actions. Directly the actors show that they are conscious of the absurdity of their utterances the piece begins to drag.

Let us, then, in our reading and staging of Gilbert’s work with Sullivan first of all acquaint ourselves with the stereotypes and sentimentalities, the nature and the excesses of the melodramatic popular entertainment which gave Gilbert both his start and his subject. Then let us permit him to speak

to the readers and the audiences of today as he addressed the audiences of his own time in his carefully-governed original performances. Let us not cavort or distort. Let us treat the libretti with the same respect that we give to Sullivan's music, which we would not think of jazzing up or playing out of tune or tempo for laughs.

The melodrama that enthralled the public of a century ago has fallen into critical disfavor, if indeed it ever received the attention of *littérateurs*. Too little is known of it, partly because the scholars like to pretend that there simply was no drama between Sheridan and Shaw. The very word *melodrama* is now stocked in the critical arsenal for easy use as a term of opprobrium. But melodrama, as I have stressed, survives. We see it in the suspense dramas and the lavish spectacles of Broadway and in the earnest but artless productions of tyros in Greenwich Village cellars. We see it, as "undead" as *Dracula* or Frankenstein's monster, in the soap operas of radio and on television in both the afternoon wasteland and the adventure series in "prime time." We encounter it in the cinema and the popular novel and in many of the entertainments, dramatic and non-dramatic, that occupy the attention of the vast majority of the thrill-seeking, chill-hungry, sentimental public. Colley Cibber's sentimental *Love's Last Shift* of the 17th century, George Lillo's bourgeois *London Merchant* of the 18th century and certainly Leopold Lewis' psychological thriller *The Bells* of the 19th century, all are still with us in up-to-date dress. So long as *The Streets of London* lives in our modern "realistic" drama and *The Corsican Brothers* are resurrected in some flashy swashbuckler, so long will melodrama thrive and so long will the gentle satire of Gilbert and Sullivan be, in the current cant phrase, "highly relevant." The Savoy operas have long outlived many aspects of the theatre which they parodied and of the theatre for which they were created, but the persistence of melodrama aids their own intrinsic merit in keeping them fresh and entertaining. So long as melodrama survives, in one form or another, so will they. Since melodrama seems to be indestructible, the operas of Gilbert and Sullivan bid fair to be immortal.

Ruddigore: Gilbert's Burlesque of Melodrama

By EARL F. BARGAINNIER

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The history of nineteenth century British drama is the history of nineteenth century melodrama. No one writing for the stage could escape the effect of melodrama's dominance, and W. S. Gilbert was no exception. Gilbert both wrote melodrama and burlesqued it.

He began his literary career as a drama critic for *Fun*. One of his most effective methods of criticism was the writing of one-page parodies of plays assigned for review. Even in these early parodies, Gilbert's awareness of the absurdities and clichés of melodrama is evident. It is, therefore, not surprising that his first stage works were burlesques, specifically of that most melodramatic of all theatrical forms, grand opera. From these "operatic extravaganzas" through the farces, fairy comedies, and libretti with various composers to the end of his career, Gilbert mocked the melodrama by using it as the basis for exaggerated plots and characters and by illustrating the trite nature of its conventions through *reductio ad absurdum*.

At the same time, however, Gilbert wrote at least fifteen plays which can be classified as "serious" melodramas. Though he could see the weaknesses of melodrama and could enjoy making them evident to others, he could not see beyond the melodrama to a different form of drama for the British stage. Thus he believed that he must produce plays of the accepted type to be considered a literary dramatist. This dichotomy of purpose (the acceptance of basic theatrical conventions and the ridiculing of inadequate manifestations of them) indicates the nature of his satire, as well as the reason for its success during his lifetime.

Gilbert's satire can best be described as "hilarious satire." He did not have the reformatory purpose of a Swift or Shaw; he was not a missionary for any cult, school, or philosophy. Rather, he consciously carried the accepted conventions to ludicrous extremes to make their absurdity evident to all, not with bitterness or indignation, but with hilarity. His purpose was to create works of fun; however, when people started laughing at those things that they had previously taken seriously, dramatic reform began.

Although the plots and characters of all the Gilbert and Sullivan collaborations are comic versions of those of melodrama, three of the operas are direct burlesques of nineteenth century melodramatic types: *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878) burlesques the "Jolly Jack Tar" dramas, which glorified the

British Navy; *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879) burlesques the pirate, robber, or bandit melodrama; and *Ruddigore* (1887) burlesques both the Gothic and the domestic-village melodrama. Other aspects of Victorian life are satirized in *Pinafore* and *The Pirates*, but *Ruddigore* is solely a burlesque of melodramatic plot, convention, and characterization.

Ruddigore's plot is original; that is, Gilbert burlesques the type rather than a specific work, and the originality allows him the freedom to include as many of the conventions of melodrama as he desires, without being bound to the elements of a known play. The stereotyped domestic drama of the village maiden saved from the wicked squire by the hero, who appears from out of nowhere in the nick of time, was a staple of nineteenth century drama—John Baldwin Buckstone's *Luke the Labourer; or, The Lost Son* (1826) is a classic example—and the Gothic drama, with its remorseful hero-villain and supernatural effects, was another extremely popular form, as exemplified by Charles Robert Maturin's *Bertram; or, The Castle of St. Aldobrand* (1816). The object of these, as of all types of melodrama, is the punishment of the wicked and the gaining of the chaste heroine and some form of financial security by the manly hero. In *Ruddigore* Gilbert burlesques this "who will get whom and what" plot through an exaggerated, but really typical Scribeian situation of alternating ascendancies of power between Robin Oakapple and Richard Dauntless, ending with Robin as the winner of Rose Maybud and an "uncursed" baronetcy.

The many strictures that have been made as to the diffuseness of *Ruddigore's* plot may be answered by Gilbert's purpose: burlesque. The characters' major function is to burlesque conventional melodramatic types. In order to have as many types as possible, Gilbert includes some that are admittedly not necessary to the plot. Also, the Gothic burlesque dominates the second act, and the emphasis upon it makes extraneous such characters of the first act as Richard, Sir Despard, and Mad Margaret. It is foolish to defend the structure, for it is weak (though following the typical Savoy pattern), but Gilbert's principal purpose must be taken into account. He is simply more concerned with providing a framework for burlesquing the conventions and characters of melodrama than with the work's having a tightly constructed plot.

Among the many standard devices and stage conventions that Gilbert burlesques in *Ruddigore* are the artificial rhetoric, the abduction of the heroine, the calm acceptance of impossibilities, the secret of birth, the patriotic appeal, the sentimentality, and the irrationally derived happy ending

with virtue triumphant. Gilbert parodies both overly dramatic and overly sentimental language in such speeches as that of Dame Hannah when she is abducted:

Unappalled by the calm dignity of blameless womanhood, your minion has torn me from my spotless home, and dragged me, blindfold and shrieking, through hedges, over stiles, and across a very difficult country, and left me, helpless and trembling, at your mercy! Yet not helpless, coward sir, for, approach one step—nay, but the twentieth part of one poor inch—and this poniard (*produces a very small dagger*) shall teach ye what it is to lay unholy hands on old Stephen Trusty's daughter! ¹

Dame Hannah's abduction "by mistake" is itself a burlesque of the helpless young maiden's being stolen away by the squire to "a fate worse than death"; the joke is that Dame Hannah is not young and most assuredly not helpless: she grabs a "formidable dagger" and tells Robin to defend himself. In an agony of terror, he cries, "Don't! don't look at me like that! I can't bear it! Roderic! Uncle! Save me!" When the late Sir Roderic enters, Dame Hannah calmly accepts the presence of her dead lover and is soon singing a duet with him. This incident not only mocks the melodramatic habit of characters' accepting the impossible without question, but also the frequent "miraculous returns" from the dead, as in Gilbert's own *Brantingham Hall* (1888).

The sudden revelation of a secret of birth or identity often provides the climax of melodrama, as in *Luke the Labourer*. This convention is burlesqued in "young" Robin's having lived in Rederring for twenty years without being discovered as the rightful Lord of Ruddigore, even by his own brother. Then the revelation of the secret by Dauntless changes the positions of the major characters and their relationships to each other, just as is done in the melodrama.

In many melodramas, particularly those involving a Jolly Jack Tar, such as Douglas Jerrold's *Black-Ey'd Susan* (1829), there are appeals to British patriotism, and Gilbert burlesques this device in the second act:

Rob. Soho! pretty one—in my power at last, eh? Know ye not that I have those within my call who, at my lightest bidding, would immure ye in an uncomfortable dungeon? (*Calling.*) What hol within there!

Rich. Hold—we are prepared for this. (*Producing a Union Jack.*) Here is a flag that none dare defy (*all kneel*), and while this glorious rag floats over Rose Maybud's head, the man does not live who would dare to lay unlicensed hand upon her!

Rob. Foiled—and by a Union Jack! But a time will come, and then—

The naiveté expressed by Robin in ceasing his nefarious actions is not only the result of melodramatic patriotism, but also melodramatic sentimentality. Gilbert's usual method of mocking sentimentality is by giving sentimental speeches to inappropriate characters or, as in this case, placing sentimental characters in inappropriate situations. Certainly, in *Ruddigore* all of the characters use sentimental speech, even when presenting less than honorable ideas, and every character's personality is inappropriate to the part he or she must play.

The continual theme of the melodrama was virtue triumphant. Though the endings that produced the triumph of virtue might be brought about by illogical means, the method did not matter; that evil was defeated and right rewarded was enough. Therefore, all laws of cause and effect could be bypassed, and such improbabilities as the sudden inheritance or the miraculous rescue—as in Dion Boucicault's *After Dark* (1868)—became stock plot devices. In *Ruddigore* Robin ends the family curse by a logical quibble, solving his problems, and all of the characters pair off for marriage, for there are no villains in the melodramatic sense to be punished.

Two other more specialized devices of melodrama which are burlesqued are the family curse and madness as a result of a disappointed love. The witch's curse on the Murgatroyd family is made ridiculous in two ways. The requirement of a crime each day exaggerates the horrible to the ludicrous, particularly when the "criminal" resists the curse by doing such things as forging his own will. Then the curse is made unimportant by the logical, if improbable manner in which it is ended. Stage madness, the second device, was extremely popular among actresses of the nineteenth century. Examples may still be seen in such grand operas of the time as *Lucia di Lammermoor* or *Il Pirata*. Gilbert introduces Mad Margaret for no other reason than to burlesque this fashion. Like most of the "mad" heroines, Margaret has lost her reason as a result of disappointment in love, in this case for Sir Despard. As soon as Sir Despard marries her, she regains her senses, but has relapses which can only be controlled by someone's saying the

mysterious word *Basingstoke*. As Jane Stedman has said, in *Basingstoke* "Gilbert parodies the 'thrilling word' of melodrama, the word which, uttered by a mysterious character, could cause another to blench at the terrible significance of which only they two were aware."²

These many melodramatic elements (and more could be mentioned) which are burlesqued in *Ruddigore* provide a comic criticism of the form, but the most effective satire occurs in the inversion of melodramatic conventions of characterization. Every character is a burlesque stereotype of melodrama, and the names indicate the stereotype. Robin Oakapple, Rose Maybud, Richard Dauntless, Old Adam Goodheart, and Sir Despard are names which immediately classify their owners to those who know melodrama. In fact, some of the characters serve no other function than burlesques of character types, as already noted of Mad Margaret. This is true of Old Adam Goodheart, Sir Roderic, and Dame Hannah.

In all cases, Gilbert's technique is to establish quickly the stereotype's pattern of action and then subsequently reverse it: in other words, topsyturviness, that systematic reversal of what is normal, approved, accepted, or expected under a given set of circumstances, which Gilbert gave to the world of comedy. When topsyturviness is used as a method of characterization, the reversal may be founded upon the rank, position, or profession of the character, as well as upon his expected conformity to the dramatic stereotype which is his origin. Gilbert's principal means of accomplishing the reversal of the character's expected pattern of action is frank self-disclosure. With an apparent lack of awareness of what they are revealing about themselves and with a complete disregard for social reticence, the characters openly expose their innermost psychology and motivation. The effect is that the audience sees the stereotyped characters from a new point of view, and the artificiality of their accepted natures becomes evident. Four of the principal characters of *Ruddigore* can illustrate Gilbert's method.

In the first act Sir Despard is a burlesque of the Gothic villain who has to commit evil because of some supernatural power working upon him. After Sir Despard's first entrance song, all "*fly from him, terror-stricken*," and he then soliloquizes on his fate in the usual manner:

Poor children, how they loathe me—me whose hands are certainly steeped in infamy, but whose heart is as the heart of a little child! But what *is* a poor baronet to do, when a whole picture-gallery of ancestors step down from their frames and threaten him with an excru-

ciating death, if he hesitate to commit his daily crime? But, ha! ha! I am even with them! (*Mysteriously.*) I get my crime over the first thing in the morning, and then, ha! ha! for the rest of the day I do good—I do good—I do good! (*Melodramatically.*) Two days since, I stole a child and built an orphan asylum. Yesterday I robbed a bank and endowed a bishopric. To-day I carry off Rose Maybud, and atone with a cathedral! This is what it is to be the sport and toy of a Picture Gallery!

As soon as Robin replaces him as Lord of Ruddigore, Sir Despard reverses the course of his life. He says, “Free—free at last! Free to live a blameless life, and to die beloved and regretted by all who knew me!” He immediately pledges himself to Margaret. In the second act they appear “*dressed in sober black of formal cut, and present a strong contrast to their appearance in Act I.*” They are now running a National School and are proper to the point of being bores. Such repentance and change of character are not a very great exaggeration of similar “serious” instances in melodrama; again Gilbert’s own *Brantingham Hall* offers an illustration.

Sir Despard’s brother, Robin, who is described as possessing “the manners of a Marquis with the morals of a Methodist,” also burlesques the Gothic tormented villain when he replaces his brother in the second act. In the first act he is a caricature of both the simple village swain (e.g., Charles Maydew in *Luke the Labourer*) and the person with a secret in his past (e.g., Mathias in Leopold Lewis’ *The Bells*). At the beginning Gilbert gives Robin the outwardly shy, modest manner of the village hero, but he also gives him innate conceit and self-interest. For example, Robin begs Richard to propose to Rose for him, as Robin is too “bashful.”

Rob. . . . Yes, I know well enough that few men are better calculated to win a woman’s heart than I. I’m a fine fellow, Dick, and worthy any woman’s love—happy the girl who gets me, say I. But I’m timid, Dick; shy, nervous, modest, retiring, diffident, and I cannot tell her, Dick, I cannot tell her! Ah, you’ve no idea what a poor opinion I have of myself, and how little I deserve it.

The gap between the intent of his words and their actual meaning becomes Robin’s major comic feature in the first act. He claims to be one thing, but unconsciously reveals himself to be the opposite. Robin’s real ability to manage his own interests is shown when he discovers that Richard has pro-

posed for himself. Rose cannot make up her mind, and Robin "gallantly" presents the case for his rival. Here is part of that dialogue:

Rose. But it may be that he drinketh strong waters which do be-muse a man, and make him even as the wild beasts of the desert!

Rob. Well, suppose he does, and I don't say he don't, for rum's his bane, and ever has been. He *does* drink—I won't deny it. But what of that. Look at his arms—tattooed to the shoulder! (DICK rolls up his sleeves.) No, no—I won't hear a word against Dick!

Robin goes on to "defend" Richard so well that Rose chooses Robin. Foster-brothers are all very well, but a healthy self-interest comes first; such is the motto of both Robin and Richard.

Richard Dauntless, like the men of the Pinafore, is a burlesque version of the Jolly Jack Tar, such as Mat Merriton of John Thomas Haines' *The Ocean of Life; or, Every Inch a Sailor* (1836). His song "The Darned Mounseer" is a nautical ballad, in which Gilbert has him verbalize a reverse jingoism, for while enthusiastically praising the British Navy, the song actually describes a cowardly retreat. This entrance song is naturally followed by the obligatory hornpipe of nautical melodrama. Richard's dialogue is also meant to parody the "shiver-my-timbers" speeches of the Jolly Jack Tar, but the originals are so extravagant themselves that Richard's could easily fit into any of the nautical melodramas without appearing incongruous. The Jolly Jack Tars were not only brave but also tenderhearted, and this quality is burlesqued in *Ruddigore*, for Richard's heart is his guide in life, and it is a heart which tells him that "duty must be done,/The rule applies to every one,/And painful though that duty be,/To shirk the task were fiddle-de-dee!" The qualification is that his heart always makes sure that his duty will benefit himself. He justifies his revealing Robin's secret in terms of the greatest probity:

Within this breast there beats a heart
 Whose voice can't be gainsaid.
 It bade me thy true rank impart,
 And I at once obeyed.
 I knew 'twould blight thy budding fate—
 I knew 'twould cause thee anguish great—
 But did I therefore hesitate;
 No! I at once obeyed!

Eventually, in spite of his heart's directions, Richard loses Rose and has to settle for Zorah, but like the jolly sailors whom he satirizes, he shifts his affections with the greatest of ease: "with Zorah for my missus,/There'll be bread and cheese and kisses,/Which is just the sort of ration I enjye!"

Gilbert's greatest creation in *Ruddigore* is Rose Maybud. In developing this character, Gilbert rips apart the doll-like heroine of melodrama and puts her back together with the same outward semblance but with the soft stuffing replaced by an iron-willed determination to get what she wants. When she first appears, she is preparing to go on errands of mercy with completely useless gifts (e.g., "a set of false teeth for pretty little Ruth Row-bottom"). This hit at the often ridiculous charity and self-sacrifice of melodramatic heroines sets the pattern of burlesque which Gilbert uses in depicting Rose. She immediately tells Dame Hannah, who must already know it, her pathetic history and her philosophy of life:

Hung in a plated dish-cover to the knocker of the workhouse door, with naught that I could call mine own, save a change of babylinen and a book of etiquette, little wonder if I have always regarded that work as a voice from a parent's tomb. This hallowed volume (*producing a book of etiquette*), composed, if I may believe the title page, by no less an authority than the wife of a Lord Mayor, has been, through life, my guide and monitor. By its solemn precepts I have learnt to test the moral worth of all who approached me. The man who bites his bread, or eats peas with a knife, I look upon as a lost creature. . . . In truth, I could pursue this painful theme much further, but, behold, I have said enough.

In this one speech, Gilbert mocks the orphan status, the unbelievable propriety, the unconscious priggishness, and the simpleminded stupidity of the melodramatic heroine. This book of etiquette which Rose consults on any and all occasions is really a substitute for the Bible, and she uses it as the devil quotes scripture.³ Rose is able to justify any desire or action on her part by referring to it, as she does to please her vanity when first meeting Richard:

Rich. . . . Parbuckle me, if you ain't the loveliest gal I've ever set eyes on. There—I can't say fairer than that, can I?

Rose. No. (*Aside.*) The question is, is it meet that an utter stranger should thus express himself? (*Refers to book.*) Yes,—“Always speak the truth.”

That this equation of her book of etiquette and the Bible is not far-fetched is indicated by her speech, which is essentially a parody of the language of the King James Version:

Oh, but, sir, I knew not that thou didst seek me in wedlock, or in very truth I should not have hearkened unto this man, for behold, he is but a lowly mariner, and very poor withal, whereas thou art a tiller of the land, and thou hast fat oxen, and many sheep and swine, a considerable dairy farm, and much corn and oil!

This speech offers an illustration of her greed, for she is definitely the sister of the many Gilbertian heroines who make matches on the basis of money. When she sings about its being awkward when a heart does not know its own mind, she is simply lying. Her heart has nothing to do with the matter. At the beginning of *Ruddigore*, she professes to love Robin, but during the play she traverses the romantic course of Robin-Richard-Robin-Sir Despard-Richard-Robin. In each case, she bases her decision upon what will give her the most profit—financial or social. After meeting Rose Maybud, one cannot accept the simpering, “sweet,” all-virtuous heroine of nineteenth century melodrama without having suspicions as to her true motives, and such is Gilbert’s purpose.

Whatever other criticism it may incur, *Ruddigore* is a success as a burlesque of melodrama. Through its original and resultingly open plot, its satire of melodramatic conventions, and, most important, its burlesques of stereotyped melodramatic characters, it helped to make audiences of its time aware of dramatic absurdities. Though, as often said, many of the conventions presented were already old-fashioned in Gilbert’s time, it must be remembered that melodrama’s most notable quality is its ability to change its shape according to contemporary fashion, while still retaining its essential nature. Since melodrama is still the basis of most popular drama, *Ruddigore* still demonstrates the absurdity of melodramatic conventions, and Gilbert’s hilarious satire still produces happy laughter at recognition of that absurdity.

NOTES

1. All quotations from *Ruddigore* are taken from W. S. Gilbert, *Original Plays, Third Series*. London, 1913, pp. 217-260.

2. Jane W. Stedman, “W. S. Gilbert: His Comic Techniques and Their Development.” Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Chicago, 1956, p. 178.

3. Gilbert “urges that ‘Rose’s dealing with the book of etiquette should not be selfconscious; she is perfectly in earnest, and should display no sense of incongruity’” (Percy Fitzgerald, *The Savoy Opera and the Savoyards*. London, 1899, p. 179n).

Research Opportunities in Nineteenth-Century Drama and Theatre

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There are so many answers to the question, "What needs to be done?" in nineteenth-century drama and theatre research that one hardly knows where to begin. At least the accessibility of the drama itself is increasing through the appearance in print of anthologies and selections of plays; no longer will the interested student or scholar have to make a sometimes lengthy pilgrimage to research libraries with holdings of nineteenth-century drama. Indeed, if his own library has the money and if his eyes hold out, he can read happily through the several thousand plays already available in microfilm. In several years it seems as if one battle will have been decisively won: to persuade publishers to make available (in editions of admittedly varying quality) a wide-ranging selection of English nineteenth-century drama, so that whoever wishes to can at least base a critical judgment upon substance.

In other areas, however, we are not nearly this far ahead. For years critics and historians have been making ill-informed and mistaken judgments of nineteenth-century drama and theatre, not because they have not read the plays (although some of them have read all too few), but because they simply do not possess accurate information about the social, economic, and cultural contexts of their subject. Generalizations about declining levels of public taste and the drama passing into the hands of a rabble-like populace theatrically satisfied by the clumsy efforts of a thousand mechanical hack writers have been common for generations. But as yet there has been no significant research on the nineteenth-century theatre audience: its cultural levels, class origins, income, tastes, and development. Critics too often assume a homogeneous audience. Yet we know that a pantomime audience on Boxing Night did not in the least resemble an audience for Shakespeare at the same theatre several nights earlier. We know that the Princess's under Charles Kean in the fifties attracted different audiences from the Princess's under Maddox in the forties. We know that in 1866 60% of the theatre seats in metropolitan London were outside the West End, yet we tend to think and write of the drama as if it were entirely a West-End product catering only to audiences with West-End tastes. What

audiences went to what theatres, and why did they favour particular theatres? What effect did the character of an audience at a particular theatre have on dramatists who wrote for that theatre, and in turn on the style and content of their plays? For instance, much has been said in this Conference of Gilbert, Sullivan, D'Oyly Carte and the Savoy, of themes, influences, productions—but not a word of the Savoy audience. Who were they? What was their class structure and taste? Did the audience change at all over twenty years, and, if so, did such a change affect Gilbert's writing or Sullivan's music? Who patronized the gallery of the Savoy; what were *their* class origins, and were some things in the operas designed especially for them? What is being asked is surely important: to what extent did the Savoy audience, or its component parts, influence or determine the content and character of the Savoy operas? This is a particular question that can be asked particularly of any theatre of the period: Vestris' Olympic, Kean's Princess's, Phelps' Sadler's Wells, the Bancrofts' Prince of Wales's, Alexander's St. James's. The answers so far provided by historians are sketchy and inadequate; at stake is the vital matter of the whole relationship between an audience, its theatre, and its dramatists. Until at least some answers are given, it is extremely difficult to make intelligent critical judgments on nineteenth-century drama and theatre.

Another aspect of this theatre that has received scant attention is economics: theatre profits and losses, actors' wages, authors' income, management and organization, the pricing of seats. Questions arise out of economic considerations, the answers to which are again vital to the understanding of drama and theatre as a whole. To what extent, if any, did the expense of stars contribute to the financial decline in theatre management in the first half of the century? How did the generally low fees paid to authors from about the 1820s to the 1860s affect the quality and very nature of the drama produced, and was the much higher income possible for successful playwrights toward the end of the century in part responsible for an improvement in quality and a difference in the kind of play written? Why did so many West-End managements in these forty years go bankrupt while others, such as the Lanes at the Britannia and Webster and Buckstone at the Haymarket, make handsome profits? The answers to this last question will of course involve answers to others concerning audiences, repertory, public taste, expenses, price structure—in fact the further one goes into the period the harder it is to isolate one thing from another: the written play from the theatre that performed it, that theatre from its management and audi-

ence, that audience from the homes they lived in, the jobs they worked at, and the pleasures they enjoyed.

One of the problems facing the willing researcher in this field is the fact that he is confronted with critical and historical judgments resting on assumptions whose bases have never been carefully examined and turn out, upon inspection, to be narrow and limiting. To say that the quality of nineteenth-century drama declined from what it had been in the previous century is one such judgment, a very common one to both nineteenth-century and modern critics. We know that generally theatre was in a bad financial way from about 1820 to the 1860s; we also know that standards of ensemble acting and production deteriorated in a period (especially after 1843) when too few good performers were spread over a large number of theatres instead of being concentrated in two or three, as they were during much of the eighteenth century. To this extent, then, we can safely talk of "decline." But to go further and claim that the whole drama "declined" is to apply only literary criteria to a period of superb individualistic acting, of immense progress in theatre technology, costuming, furnishing, and staging, of a flourishing and excellent farce, melodrama, pantomime, and extravaganza (all totally theatrical and deliberately non-literary forms of dramatic expression), of social revolution and the deliberate use of the theatre as a means of mass culture, and above all of a dominating sense of extraordinary creativity, innovation, experiment, energy, life, and colour—in comparison to which the eighteenth-century theatre seems, in retrospect, quiet and moribund. To declare, then, that nineteenth-century drama is poor stuff is to hew strictly to literary standards, an insupportable position with reference to any theatre and especially to nineteenth-century theatre. The reasons for this position can in part be attributed to a lack of interest in or a failure to understand (or both) the social, cultural, and theatrical contexts of the written drama.

If one wishes to argue for decline from a non-literary viewpoint, the evidence must be sought out and interpreted much more carefully than it has been, and again certain questions must be posed and answered before general conclusions can be drawn. There is a great deal of evidence that because the boxes were poorly patronized in the patent houses before 1843, managements suffered financially. But why were they poorly patronized? Because the opera and ballet were more fashionable? Because of the later dinner hour? Because the upper class rejected the often alleged "vulgarity" of the new theatre? What *was* the general level of taste among these classes and

among those elements of the middle class who are also supposed to have withdrawn their patronage? If this level among audiences who came was as low as historians often like to think, how can one explain the success of Vestris at the Olympic, the encouragement given to Macready at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, and the respect won for Phelps at Sadler's Wells—all managers who between them stressed high standards of acting and production, careful staging and costuming, refined and serious dramatic writing? And did Charles Kean bring audiences to the Princess's because he became fashionable, because of his repertory, because of his high standards, or for other reasons? In fact who *were* his audiences and what were the results of his management in terms of profit and loss? How was the steady reduction of theatre prices from 1818 to the 1850s related to the composition and taste of audiences attracted by such prices, and consequently to the sort of drama written for theatres with these prices? Once more, questions and answers are inextricably interlinked: an investigation of economic hardship in the theatre leads inevitably to the taste of audiences, seat prices, management policies, payments to stars, the income of playwrights, changes in the drama, social change and the social use of theatre, and the life of nineteenth-century England. To judge the drama on literary grounds only is pitifully inadequate and hopelessly misleading; to argue for "decline" generally is perhaps possible, but it must be done with a full awareness of the interconnections outlined above and the social, economic, and cultural implications of the argument.

Another simplistic misconception dear to the hearts of teachers of dramatic literature and, too frequently, of its historians, is that of the New Drama, a misconception based, like others, on inadequate reading and research. The idea that modern drama arose in the 1880s or 1890s is an old one, in part fostered by the pernicious custom of beginning university courses in modern British drama with Shaw and Wilde. The more one looks into the matter the more one sees a continuous chain of theatrical innovation and progress stretching from the 1780s and 1790s to Irving, Tree, and Alexander; a continuous chain of dramatic development from *The Miller and His Men* (and earlier) to *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *Major Barbara*. The two chains are one, and inseparable. There is really no such thing as the New Drama; it is true that the concept is an old-fashioned one and may be passing away, but its demise needs hastening by painstaking research and critical revaluation that will make every link of the chain clear and weighty. Here is a fruitful field for the

researcher, one till'd profitably by Martin Meisel in *Shaw and the Nineteenth-Century Theatre* and by David Krause in the introduction to his edition of Boucicault, but till'd all too rarely.

We need not only careful critical and historical interpretation of the drama itself and its social and cultural contexts, but we also need to know more about the actual performance of that drama. A great mass of material, including printed plays and prompt copies, records technical developments in set construction, staging, lighting, traps, and special effects, but as yet no modern scholar has told us precisely *how* technicians achieved the effects of Shakespearean spectacle, the physical sensations of melodrama, and the tricks of pantomime. We all assume that the content of melodrama and pantomime at the better equipped theatres owed a great deal to superior technology, but no one has actually shown us the details of this debt, described the machinery of these theatres, or discussed its relationship with the pieces performed there. For instance, it would be most interesting to analyze the Drury Lane autumn dramas and pantomimes under Augustus Harris in the eighties and nineties—the most lavish and spectacular in the century—in terms of what the Drury Lane stage was capable of technically. What it could do largely dictated the content of the drama displayed on its boards; similar analyses should also be made—always assuming the availability of evidence, sometimes a questionable assumption—of the stages and equipment of Kean's Princess's, Irving's Lyceum, and even Carte's Savoy. What combination of human artistry and technological ingenuity produced the realistic-romantic effects famous in Irving's Shakespeare? Did the actualities of Savoy staging have anything to do with the substance of the operas? More generally, what of the development of trapdoors and trick scenery and their influence on melodrama and pantomime? What part did technical advances in explosions and stage fire play in the early melodrama? Exactly what was the relationship of limelight to acting styles, physical effects, and to the plays it illuminated?

As much can be asked about acting as technology. The nineteenth century is perhaps the greatest age of English acting, yet only Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, Edmund Kean, Macready, Grimaldi, and Irving have been accorded scholarly attention as performers; there are no books and only a handful of articles concerned with nineteenth-century acting. The information is waiting to be gathered, in promptbooks, the stage directions of printed plays, memoirs, journals, reviews, eyewitness accounts, prints, photographs, paintings, correspondence, and acting manuals. Although a dead

acting style is the hardest of all things for a scholar to bring to life, the work badly needs doing. We need to know a lot more than we do about the relation between tragic and melodramatic acting (a fundamental aspect of the relation between tragedy and melodrama), the relation between low comic and refined comic acting, the changes that came over all acting styles as the century progressed. We need to have the movement toward "realism" in acting defined and documented, and a study made of the influence of social changes in the audience upon acting styles. We need more information about the difference between the styles of individual performers and their influence upon acting as a whole, more information about wages and rehearsal methods. We need to determine the ways in which the organization of an acting company into lines of business (juvenile lead, old man, heavy man, low comedian, utility, etc.) shaped the content of the drama and perhaps preserved traditional patterns of playwriting for many years. We would greatly benefit from an enhanced knowledge of acting in the provinces and the effect upon acting standards and training of the breakdown of the stock company and the growth of the touring company. The star system, the actor-manager tradition and its methods of company organization, and their effects upon the dramatist as well as the theatre—all this, and it is most important, requires the kind of detailed attention it has not yet received.

If the plays of the period are becoming more easily available, the dramatic criticism is not, and here is another area of relative darkness. For the early years of the century we can read selections from Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and Charles Lamb, and at the end the collected criticism of Shaw and selections from Max Beerbohm. In between there is precious little: scanty pickings from Forster and G. H. Lewes, a book from Henry Morley, the occasional volume of essays. From the 1890s, undoubtedly the greatest decade of the English dramatic critic, Shaw, Beerbohm, and several volumes of William Archer are virtually all we have. Not only does criticism need to be attributed, selected, and reprinted, but there is also plenty of room for an examination of the growing importance and influence of dramatic criticism in the relations between critic and actor, critic and manager, critic and playwright, critic and audience.

I have only been able to indicate very briefly some of the research in nineteenth-century drama and theatre that could profitably be done; indeed, much of it *must* be done for us to disperse the many existing misconceptions and perpetuated half-truths that obscure our vision and prevent us from

obtaining a clearer understanding of an extremely complicated but most rewarding period in theatrical and dramatic history. Other significant matters also need attention: the close social relevance of the drama to its age and its function as mirror and image of that age; the relationship between the censorship, the manager, and the playwright; the borrowing from Germany and France; the vexed question of copyright, and many more. However, perhaps enough has been said to demonstrate that much primary research has barely been attempted. If our aim is to strive for a fuller knowledge and deeper understanding of nineteenth-century theatre, then such research must be attempted and completed—by many people, somewhere, somehow. It will entail a laborious search for prompt-books, ground-plans, renderings, company accounts, private papers, diaries, correspondence, records of bankruptcy courts; a much more careful and extensive reading of printed plays, manuscripts, memoirs, biographies, playbills, programs, newspapers, periodicals, almanacs, and technical journals; a sifting through of parliamentary proceedings, prints, photographs, and theatre plans. It will not be sufficient to confine the study to people and material of the theatre, but it will be necessary to amass a great deal of information on social and cultural habits, urban population, transportation, wages, popular amusements, booms and slumps, the cost of living, emigration into cities, industrialism, classes and their characteristics, and the life styles of Regency and Victorian England. An enormous task, but it must be begun; we have been dabbling up to now, and we have been too few. Nineteenth-century theatre is well worth the effort, and will repay the work richly.

The Policy of Contentiousness:

Some Non-Literary Factors Contributing to Gilbert's Theatrical Success

BY DAVID W. COLE

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It is not quite an adequate account of W. S. Gilbert's career to say that he intimidated the censor, the press and the public into granting him the success he ultimately enjoyed so fully. Nonetheless, it is true that his very considerable personal aggressiveness more often than not tended to inhibit protests against his violations of Victorian theatrical taboos. His self-righteous aggressiveness was at once his armor and his weapon, both in the cold war he waged against the strictures of the censor and in the often hotter wars he fought against his critics. He employed it, too, in trying to bring the theatre-going public more securely under his sway.

This self-righteous aggressiveness is perhaps nowhere better seen than in Gilbert's relationship with the Lord Chamberlain's office. Gilbert, like any other playwright, was subject to the correction of the Reader of Plays (until 1874, W. B. Donne). But fairly early in Gilbert's career, his relationship with the Lord Chamberlain's office came to a head. *The Happy Land*, a burlesque (by Gilbert and a collaborator) of Gilbert's own play *The Wicked World*, dealt quite specifically with contemporary political questions and caricatured Gladstone and two of his most unpopular ministers.¹ Nonetheless, the piece somehow escaped the censor's prohibition. Only a few nights after it opened, however, it was closed by order of the Lord Chamberlain, who claimed in a letter to the papers that the play was first sanctioned because, while "the piece as acted abounded in personalities," the political allusions in the license copy were "generalities, and not pointed to individuals." The Lord Chamberlain contended that the play was closed because "in the prompter's copy there were eighteen pages of additions, interpolations and deviations from the licensed text," creating personal allusions where there had been none.²

Miss Litton, who produced the play, admitted in a letter of her own to the papers that "eighteen pages of the manuscript were more or less affected by . . . alterations," though she noted that "this is scarcely the impression conveyed" by the Lord Chamberlain's statement. She added that alterations were made necessary because this manuscript had been submitted

unusually early, there being some doubt that it would be licensed and no desire to go to the trouble of preparing a piece which could not be played. The alterations, she maintained, were for the most part not topical at all.³

While the nature and extent of the changes are open to question, this question is perhaps not terribly significant in the outcome of the affair. Probably more important are the scarcely tenable positions the Lord Chamberlain's office and the Government found themselves in.

It may very well not have been immediately obvious to the Reader of Plays that the piece was aimed at actual persons; he could hardly have anticipated the actors' makeup, and it seems likely that the characters representing the three ministers were identified not as Mr. G., Mr. L., and Mr. A., but rather as Ethias, Phyllon, and Lutin—the corresponding characters in *The Wicked World*.⁴ On the other hand, the play is in its essence not only a political piece, as the Lord Chamberlain admitted, but a topical piece. This estimate of the play's nature is supported by the effect of Gilbert's alterations to the MS. of the second act. These alterations, made to meet the Lord Chamberlain's objections so that the play could be relicensed, include the deletion of some rather barbed allusions, to be sure, but the topical nature of the piece survives. It seems likely that the play was at least as topical when it was first submitted for licensing as it was when it was relicensed. Quite possibly Donne, who professed to be rapid reader⁵ and who seems sometimes to have been a careless one as well, failed in this case, too, to perceive the real import of what he read. This in itself might have been somewhat embarrassing to the Lord Chamberlain's office, if it had become evident in a continuing controversy.

The Lord Chamberlain's position was made more awkward by the caricatures of the anti-establishment politicians Odger and Dilke in licensed productions, a circumstance noted not only by Miss Litton but also by an editorial writer for the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The Lord Chamberlain's belated order that these representations too be stopped did not help matters, but only led to the observation in the *Pall Mall Gazette* that "Messrs. Gladstone, Lowe and Ayrton dare not call the kettle black."⁶ (Actually, Gladstone probably had no desire to "call the kettle black"; it was probably a function of his own humility rather than Gilbert's art that he enjoyed *The Happy Land* thoroughly.)⁷

Even if he had been inclined to demand the play's suppression, the delicate political situation in March of 1873 would have suggested that the inclination not be indulged. Less than two weeks after *The Happy Land*

opened—less than a week after it was banned—Gladstone's government was defeated on the second reading of the Irish University Bill. Gladstone remained in office for almost a year longer, but his government was in a seriously weakened state. It could hardly afford controversies over trivial matters. Yet Miss Litton and her associates—including Gilbert, no doubt—were not alone in their inclination to dispute the matter; during the brief period when the play was banned, Tory politicians seized the opportunity to question the Government on the matter in the House of Commons.⁸

Thus though the Lord Chamberlain was in theory answerable to no one for his actions concerning the stage,⁹ he was almost forced into some sort of a compromise in this case. His position seems to have been so weak, in fact, that he was unable to enforce the terms of the settlement. At any event, the actors representing the three ministers were soon making up almost in their original manner, while the play ran unmolested for two hundred nights.¹⁰

The Lord Chamberlain's office did not seriously interfere with the production of one of Gilbert's plays again until the celebrated prohibition of *The Mikado* some thirty-five years later. (Under the pressure that Gilbert and his public brought to bear, incidentally, this prohibition wilted almost as fast as the earlier one had.)¹¹ The years between these two prohibitions can hardly have been a period of relaxed contemplation for the officials who licensed Gilbert's plays; Gilbert pressed the advantage he had won in the case of *The Happy Land*, crowding the limits of the permissible closely and often.

But it would seem that having been stung once, the Lord Chamberlain's office was not eager to take Gilbert on again. And every time the censors chose not to act on some questionable feature of one of Gilbert's plays, they set a precedent for future inaction—a precedent that must have had some force even in an office which made no claim to strict consistency.¹² Moreover, as Harley Granville-Barker notes, when Gilbert took offense—as he showed himself quite ready to do—he had not only the sharpness of his tongue and his pen to defend himself with, he had also the weight of his growing popularity to wield. “No wonder,” Granville-Barker concludes, “that in his evidence before the Joint Committee of 1909 Sir William confessed that he at any rate had had no trouble with the Censorship for years.”¹³

Gilbert's contentiousness apparently also stood him in good stead with the critics more often than not. While he sometimes accepted criticism of his plays and even revised them accordingly, he was apparently more often disposed to argue with the critics—at least, the record of his arguments is

more ample.¹⁴ He argued some critics into a better opinion of his work and probably scared others into keeping their bad opinions to themselves. On the other hand, his contentiousness earned him enemies among the critics, too.

It clearly earned him bad reviews from Henry Labouchere, for instance; Gilbert's celebrated feud with Henrietta Hodson—who was Mrs. Henry Labouchere off the stage—was accompanied in Labouchere's magazine, *Truth*, by attacks so sharp as to cause Gilbert to consider legal action. For once, however, he thought better of going to court, and limited himself to the less dangerous and less expensive course of responding in the press himself.¹⁵ Gilbert's somewhat abrasive relationship with F. C. Burnand, who became editor of *Punch* in 1880, may have entered into some of the quite unfriendly criticisms that magazine had for certain of Gilbert's pieces in the '80's and '90's.¹⁶ In a third case, however—Gilbert's opinion to the contrary notwithstanding—a protracted feud probably did not earn him bad reviews; Clement Scott seems to have been more charitable than Gilbert was.¹⁷

On the credit side of the ledger, Gilbert's contentiousness undoubtedly earned him the favorable notice of Percy Fitzgerald, who had reviewed *Robert the Devil* unkindly, both because he was prejudiced against burlesques in general and because he objected to the irreverent treatment of that particular story. Fitzgerald later recalled "receiving from the author a very vehement expostulation and defence, filling, I suppose, a score of folio pages, in which he defended his work with much spirit, and, I think, success."¹⁸ Fitzgerald was won over to almost unquestioning admiration for Gilbert and his works, manifested in one of the first books to be written about the Savoy Operas.

Gilbert's responses to unfriendly critics were not limited to private replies or even—as in his quarrel with Henrietta Hodson—to published replies. He was also willing to go to court if he thought a criticism was actionable.

He first did so when a reviewer posing as a correspondent to the *Pall Mall Gazette* called *The Wicked World* offensive, referring to one scene as "both vulgar and coarse" and to another as "simply indecent."¹⁹ The defense justified these critical opinions by reading and interpreting two passages from the play in court. Gilbert's side relied upon the testimony of various theatrical personalities, testimony which turned out to be more entertaining than persuasive. In an exercise of legal logic rivalling anything *Trial by Jury* could offer, the jury in this case managed to decide that al-

though the play was innocent of offense, so was the article. They found for the defendant and Gilbert had to pay the costs of prosecution.²⁰ But though he did not win his case, he undoubtedly made his point. Would-be critics had due warning to write with care if they did not write with kindness. Many years later, in his libel suit against *The Era*—a case which resembled in many ways the earlier one against the *Pall Mall Gazette*—Gilbert once again served notice to the critics that he was not a man to be trifled with.²¹

Gilbert's relationship with his public was more difficult than his relationships with the censor and the critics. The public couldn't be cowed, as the censor apparently was. It couldn't be argued with, as critics could be. It couldn't be sued. It was in itself a court of last appeal. But the public was open to persuasion.

One key to the public's favor in the late Victorian theatre was the satisfaction of its Grundy-esque prejudices, a fact to which such very different students of public taste as German Reed and Henry Arthur Jones bear witness. Gilbert, too, was a careful student of the theatre-going public, and even while he was challenging some of their prejudices—in plays like *Charity* or *Gretchen* or even *Iolanthe*—he was responding to them with a characteristically aggressive self-righteousness.

He frequently and strongly expressed his sentiments favoring the maintenance of the strictest propriety in the theatre. He told William Archer, for instance, that as a dramatist he was always conscious of the respect due to "the young lady in the dress circle."²² He was concerned, he said on another occasion, to avoid offensive plots, language, and costumes.²³ There can be no doubt, I think, that despite the censures he sometimes provoked for certain of the situations in his plays and for the oaths he sometimes included in his dialogues, Gilbert was sincere in these claims of propriety—and largely justified as well.

Gilbert's sense of propriety made itself felt well beyond the bounds of the written play; he was determined that no scandal should attach itself to his company at the Savoy. Consequently he would not hire actresses of low moral character. The actresses he did hire had to meet his strict standards for conduct, both within the theatre and outside it. Within the theatre he severely limited communications between male and female members of the company, and only in extraordinary circumstances did he allow members of the public backstage at all. Once when some men in the audience sent Jessie Bond a note, he threatened to have them thrown out if they did not leave at once. Because his standards were so strictly conceived and so

strictly enforced, Gilbert felt able to go to quite extraordinary lengths in defending his actresses' reputations, in one case even tracking down a young man to force from him a written retraction of a slander on the moral character of one of the actresses at the Savoy.²⁴

Gilbert not only strove to avoid scandal, he also took positive steps to create an atmosphere of propriety at the Opera Comique and later at the Savoy, where he managed to recreate something resembling the church-like atmosphere he had found in the Gallery of Illustration²⁵—witness, for example, the complaints of the "Captious Critic" reviewing *The Gondoliers* for the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*. The audience, he said, seemed very like a congregation, listening to the performance as they would to Stopford Brooke or Dr. Parker or Mr. Spurgeon, and offering "one another half their books of words as good people do when you are put into a strange pew at church."²⁶ Gilbert was likewise aggressive in his respectability in other theatres, as his reaction to the *Pall Mall Gazette's* criticism of *The Wicked World* would indicate.

Gilbert's pugnacity concerning the merits of his plays undoubtedly tended to earn for them a more favorable hearing than they would have otherwise received. Sometimes his demands for a favorable hearing led critics and playgoers to see merits they had overlooked—as was the case, for instance, with Percy Fitzgerald. And if sometimes Gilbert so irritated people that they found fault where none existed, often—as in the case of *The Happy Land*—he intimidated them into overlooking faults that did.

NOTES

1. While the extent of Gilbert's involvement in the writing of *The Happy Land* is not clear, it does seem likely that his revised opinion of the play—which he came to regard as a mistake—led him to minimize his role in connection with its production. In 1909 he told a Parliamentary committee that he had only sketched the outline of the play before giving it to Miss Litton, who in turn asked Gilbert à Beckett to complete it. But in the Morgan Library there is a manuscript of the second act, with deletions and corrections to meet the Lord Chamberlain's objections, all in Gilbert's hand. Thus it seems that whatever Gilbert's involvement was before the Lord Chamberlain intervened, it was considerable afterwards, when the Lord Chamberlain would be most aware of it.

2. "The Happy Land," *Pall Mall Gazette*, XVII (Mar. 10, 1873), 912.

3. "The Lord Chamberlain and 'The Happy Land,'" *Pall Mall Gazette*, XVII (Mar. 11, 1873), 927.

4. The characters are so identified in the manuscript of Act II described by the Morgan Library as "Original manuscript, 20 pages in Gilbert's hand, showing alterations to conform to Lord Chamberlain's demands."

5. See Donne's testimony in the *Report of the Select Committee on Theatrical Licences and Regulations* (London, 1866), p. 79.

6. "The Happy Land," *Pall Mall Gazette*, XVII (Mar. 10, 1873), 912.

7. Leslie Baily, *The Gilbert and Sullivan Book* (London, 1966), p. 116. A similar anecdote is to be found in William Archer's testimony in the *Report of the Select Committee on Theatres and Places of Entertainment* (London, 1892), p. 265.

8. "Parliamentary Review: House of Commons," *Pall Mall Gazette*, XVII (Mar. 11, 1873), 922. The *Pall Mall Gazette* for the first part of 1873 provides a vivid running account of the failing fortunes of Gladstone's government.

9. This point is made repeatedly in the hearings dealing with the censorship in 1866, 1892, and 1909. For instance, see Gilbert's testimony in the *Report of the Joint Select Committee on Stage Plays* (London, 1909), p. 190, where he asks that there be some avenue of appeal from the Lord Chamberlain's decisions.
10. Archer, *Report of the Committee on Theatres*, p. 256. Isaac Goldberg, *The Story of Gilbert and Sullivan; or The 'Compleat' Savoyard* (New York, 1928), pp. 160-161.
11. The brief suppression of *The Mikado* is discussed extensively in the *Report of the Joint Committee on Stage Plays*. A concise account of the affair is given in Baily, pp. 416-419.
12. See for example the testimony of Donne in the *Report of the Committee on Theatrical Regulations*, p. 88.
13. Harley Granville-Barker, "Exit Planché—Enter Gilbert—II," *London Mercury*, XXV (April 1932), 558.
14. That the record is representative is suggested by Lady Gilbert's practice of keeping hostile reviews from him. Hesketh Pearson records this practice in *Gilbert: His Life and Strife* (London, 1957), p. 257.
15. Pearson gives an amusing account of this notorious affair on pp. 69-71.
16. Pearson repeats anecdotes illustrative of Burnand's rivalry in wit with Gilbert on pp. 21 and 47. The rivalry of the two men may well have extended to the theatre, since they both collaborated with Sullivan. *Punch's* reviews of *The Yeomen of the Guard* and *Utopia Limited* are examples of clearly unfriendly reviews seemingly based more on spite than verifiable reactions to the works in question.
17. The story of Gilbert's relationship with Scott is repeated in most accounts of Gilbert's life. Scott's generous estimate of Gilbert's talent really never changed over the years. See, for example, Clement Scott, *The Drama of Yesterday and Today* (London, 1899), II, pp. 246-251. The criticisms which infuriated Gilbert so—for instance those of *Broken Hearts* and *Brantingham Hall*—would seem to have been justifiable.
18. Percy Fitzgerald, *The Operas of Gilbert and Sullivan* (Philadelphia, 1894), p. 12, n. 1.
19. "The Wicked World," *Pall Mall Gazette*, XVII (Jan. 23, 1873), 291.
20. Pearson, p. 43.
21. Pearson, pp. 193-202.
22. Archer, *Real Conversations* (London, 1904), p. 117.
23. Gilbert, speech before the O. P. Club (1906), quoted in Baily, p. 414.
24. Pearson, pp. 123-124.
25. For an account of the atmosphere at the Gallery of Illustration, see Jane Stedman's "Introduction" to *Gilbert Before Sullivan; Six Comic Plays by W. S. Gilbert* (Chicago, 1967), pp. 3-5.
26. "Our Captious Critic: 'The Gondoliers,'" *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, reprinted with a cartoon ("Some of the Savoy Congregation") in Baily, p. 343.

Gilbert and the British Tar

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The first sailor who is a distinct theatrical type is probably Ben in Congreve's *Love for Love*. There were characters who happened to be sailors in Elizabethan plays, but with Ben there first appears the language heavily laden with nautical metaphors, the self-assurance and blunt speech, and the taste for dancing and the girls, which reappear so often later. There is a thin line of theatrical sailors throughout the eighteenth century, but the British Tar in his full glory begins in 1794 as a subsidiary character or hero's friend—Will Steady in *The Purse; or, The Benevolent Tar* by J. C. Cross—and flourishes for the next fifty or so years: roughly throughout the career of T. P. Cooke, who created most of the great parts in the nautical melodrama.

The true British Tar is a sort of Noble Savage in whiteface. He is fearless, honest, generous, kind to the unfortunate, and speaks his mind to everybody—especially to the villain. His passions are his country, his ship, freedom, and the hornpipe. If married or promised, he is a model of the domestic virtues; if not, he usually has a strong taste for rum, baccy and the girls. His conversation is a series of more or less elaborate nautical metaphors, slightly moderated in his romantic moments. He is on the best of terms with his officers, whom he addresses with a courteous freedom, and who never fail to express their respect for his manly virtues, even when court-martialing him. He has a splendid capacity for turning up at the crucial moment and foiling violent villains with a cutlass, and avaricious ones (lawyers and such) with a bag of gold from his prize money. Black Brandon in *My Poll and My Partner Joe* gets both—he is paid off in Act I and cut down in Act II.

The magnificent absurdity of the theatrical tar seems to have been first pointed out by Frederick Reynolds in his autobiography in 1826, followed by Dickens (the cutlass combat in *Nicholas Nickleby* in 1838) and in much more detail by Gilbert & Beckett in *George Cruikshank's Table Book* (1845). On stage, the burlesque comes later, *Black-eyed Sukey; or, All in the Dumps* by F. F. Cooper appeared in 1829, the same year as *Black-Ey'd Susan (or, All in the Downs)*; but it missed its opportunity by satirising Gnatbrain and the common folk of Deal instead of the nautical element—

not even the nautical metaphor is burlesqued. The one good joke is that William (now a decayed waterman) is arrested for striking a superior officer—the parish beadle, “a marvellous proper man, and a very superior officer.” The first real burlesque of the nautical melodrama was *The Port Admiral; or, the Mysterious Mariner, the Child of Destiny, and the Rightful Heir* by Thomas Gibson Bowles in 1863, and the first important one was Burnand’s *The Latest Edition of Black-Eyed Susan; or, The Little Bill that was Taken Up*, in 1866. These and others pick up some of the absurdities, especially the nautical names and metaphor—“Sluice my topgallant boom!” says Jack Shivertimbers of *The Tyrant! The Slavell! The Victim!!! and the Tar!!!!* (also by T. G. Bowles, 1864), and “My maxim is, keep all taut above the capstan, and never say die while there’s a lass that blows, a wind that goes, and a ship that loves a sailor.” But some of the edge is taken off by the rhymed couplets and elaborate puns that were still expected in burlesques of this period.

Gilbert avoids the excruciating rhymes and puns in his libretti (though he had used them freely in his earlier burlesques); his wordplay is relatively mild, for instance the extended *orphan/often* misunderstanding in *The Pirates of Penzance*, or “Your position as a topman is a very exalted one,” from *H.M.S. Pinafore*. However, he is clearly familiar with the conventional nautical language, and makes careful use of it. Several characters in *Pinafore* have suitably alliterative nautical names—Ralph Rackstraw, Dick Dead-eye, Bill Bobstay—compare Jack Junk in *The Floating Beacon*, Captain Crosstree of *Black-Ey’d Susan*, or Harry Helm of *The Sea!* A Dan Deadeye is mentioned, though he does not appear, in *My Poll and My Partner Joe* (which also has a heroine called Mary Maybud). Richard Dauntless of *Ruddigore* has a name in the tradition of Will Steady in *The Purse*, burlesqued in “Ben the Brave, the modern British Tar” of *The Blazing Burgee*. The suitable name is not found in *The Pirates of Penzance*: indeed with remarkable restraint in face of Black Beard, the Red Rover, and such, Gilbert gives the Pirate King no name at all; but we may note the appearance of ‘Frederic, an orphan’ in *The Floating Beacon*.

The Pirates is also free from nautical metaphor, and there is very little in *Pinafore*; Richard Dauntless is the only Gilbertian character to use it consistently, as befits his part as one of the many stock melodramatic characters burlesqued in *Ruddigore*. He talks in the standard “rough, common-sailor fashion”—“I’m a-tremblin’, miss. Lookye here (holding out his hand.)—That’s narvousness!” The *ar* pronunciation goes back at least to Long Tom

Coffin of *The Pilot*, who always said "sartinly!", and the "D'ye see" of Richard's first song was a favourite phrase of the nautical characters in Smollett's novels. Richard uses many stock metaphors—he calls Rose a "tight little craft" and sings of her as a "smart little craft," like most theatrical sailors, from Ben in *Love for Love* calling Mrs. Frail "a tight vessel! and well rigged," through Will Steady ("my little Sal, my pretty Pinnacle"), to Matt Bramber of *The Deal Boatman* (who is a Pilot's Apprentice, which is why I have dragged him in)—"Can you blame me for watching the craft that's to be under my care for life?" Richard's heart bids him "never sail under false colours," a phrase that echoes many of his predecessors, such as Ben Bowling of *Ben the Boatswain*—"I don't like this sailing under false colours"—and Harry Hawser in *The Shipwreck* (of his Fanny)—"She han't put to sea under false colours?" He also talks about "piping his eye," which started life as a nautical phrase.

Richard sometimes uses the long and somewhat incoherent nautical metaphor—"Let your heart be your compass, with a clear conscience for your binnacle light, and you'll sail ten knots on a bowline, clear of shoals, rocks, and quicksands!"—compare Will Steady: "Take a tar's advice, use the rudder of honesty instead of deceit, and then you'll steer clear of the shoals of punishment, and quicksands of disgrace." He scatters his conversation with "avast" and "belay," as did they all—but this time the other characters join in, which helps the joke along considerably:

Robin: My darling! (they embrace)

Richard: Here, I say, belay!

Rose: Oh sir, belay, if it's absolutely necessary!

Robin: Belay? Certainly not!

In formal melodramatic recitative passages, however, Richard is as well-spoken and fluent as the others:

Hold! My conscience made me!
Withhold your wrath!

Ralph Rackstraw, on the other hand, usually speaks in standard heroics, or a caricature of them—"wafted one moment into blazing day, by mocking hope—plunged the next into the Cimmerian darkness of tangible despair, I am but a living ganglion of irreconcilable antagonisms" (to which Josephine's reaction is "His simple eloquence goes to my heart"). But he is allowed one or two jargon passages, e.g. at the moment when Josephine

embraces him before Sir Joseph Porter, “She is the figurehead of my ship of life—the bright beacon that guides me into my port of happiness—the rarest, the purest gem that ever sparkled on a poor but worthy fellow’s trusting brow!” at which all comment, “Verry pretty!” (The beacon metaphor was common, e.g. Paul Perilous in *False Colours*: “your image was always my beacon light, the point from which the compass of my soul never varied.”) Ralph’s fellow sailors are as well-spoken as he—their only standard line is “Aye, aye, my boy, What cheer, what cheer?” a phrase used in almost every nautical play, going back to the opening lines of *The Tempest*, and finally finished off by Burnand in his burlesque of *Black-Ey’d Susan*:

Messmates, what cheer? (*They cheer*).

The standard nautical melodrama oath (apart from “Shiver my timbers!” and such) was no worse than “damme” (see Long Tom Coffin, *passim*); but the swearing joke in *Pinafore* is of course pointed by the general nautical reputation for bad language. Here Gilbert is also remembering the “gentle well-bred crew” in “The Bumboat Woman’s Story” from the *Bab Ballads*:

When Jack Tars growl, I believe they growl with a big big D—

But the strongest oath of the *Hot Cross Buns* was a mild ‘Dear me!’

and indeed “The Bishop of Rum-ti-foo” again, where the natives have been taught to say “Bother!” and “Blow!” by passing sailors:

No need to use a casuist’s pen
To prove that they were merchantmen;
No sailor of the Royal N.
Would use such awful terms.

Richard Dauntless, we are told by Robin, “uses language that would make your hair curl.” Robin also alleges that “rum’s his bane,” that his arms are tattooed to the shoulder, and that he is “a regular out-and-out Lothario”; and Richard is most pleased at the description.

Gilbert also uses the conventional sailor’s tendency to burst into suitable song, and to dance—especially the hornpipe. A round dance, done by several sailors, comes as early as *Love for Love*, and the irrelevant hornpipe frequently appears in the classical nautical melodrama. It is brought into *The Red Rover* on the pretext that the kidnapped ladies may be bored by the lack of entertainment on the pirate ship; and in *The Pilot*, Long Tom Coffin and six sailors enter at a pause in the plot on no pretext whatever,

he urges them to “splice the mainbrace and drink to sweethearts and wives,” and they all play and dance the hornpipe, after which the plot proceeds. The burlesques picked up this point—in the notice for *The Port Admiral* we are promised, “In the course of the action will be, not arbitrarily introduced, but strictly evolved out of the Plot,

THE SAILOR’S HORNPIPE!!!”

Richard Dauntless, naturally, is “as nimble as a pony, and his hornpipe is the talk of the Fleet.” Ralph Rackstraw, though a splendid seaman, cannot dance—after “A British Tar is a soaring soul,” all dance off excepting Ralph, and Sir Joseph, saying “All sailors should dance hornpipes,” promises to teach him that evening, and is later said to be teaching the captain to dance it on the cabin table. Where he learnt it himself is not clear.

The conviction, dating from before the Revolutionary Wars, that a British Tar is worth any two other men, especially Frenchmen, is turned upside-down in Richard’s first song about the “poor Parley-voo.” As early as Isaac Bickerstaffe’s *Thomas and Sally* (1760) we find:

From ploughing the ocean, and thrashing Mounseer,
 In old England we’ve landed once more;
 Your hands, my brave comrades, halloo boys, what cheer!
 For a sailor that’s just come ashore?

and in *The Shipwreck* Harry Hawser declares that an English frigate can deal with any two French ones of the same size. The burlesques used this sentiment too—in *The Port Admiral* Sweet William says

Know that a British sailor scorns to fight
 Unless he’s one to three

which leads to a “Grand Quadruple Combat.” Gilbert’s neat reversal is his own, however; and is also found in the case of Sir Joseph Porter:

When at anchor here I ride,
 My bosom swells with pride,
 And I snap my fingers at a foeman’s taunts. . . .

A related theme is the magical powers of the Union Jack, when waved at appropriate moments, as in *Ruddigore*—“while this glorious rag floats over Rose Maybud’s head, the man does not live who would dare to lay unlicensed hand upon her!” This reflects the frequency with which the Union Jack was

hoisted at the end of pirate plays as the black flag was pulled down and the pirates yielded (or blew up)—e.g. *Black Beard*, *The Pilot*, or the end of Act II of *My Poll and My Partner Joe* (“Harry seizes the Pirate with the tri-coloured flag, hurls him into the sea, and hoists the British Standard, amidst enthusiastic cheers—tableau.”) The end of Act I of *The Pirates of Penzance* is on similar lines, as is the effect of “Queen Victoria’s name” at the end.

The song “He is an Englishman” clearly springs from these sentiments, and all those about the general worthiness of the British Tar, but makes its point by implication rather than direct parody. “A British tar is a soaring soul,” on the other hand, exaggerates the sentiments a little and describes the style of acting with fair accuracy. “His foot should stamp” gives a picture of the sailor that is very like many contemporary illustrations, and like the cut-out sailors of the Toy Theatre, and would have been applauded by Fitzball. In *The Pilot*, Long Tom Coffin, to save his master’s life, throws himself at the feet of the Yankee captain (in English versions of *The Pilot* the villains are American), and is rewarded with the immortal line, “Tom Coffin, up, up; is this a position for a British seaman?”

The frequent comments on the worthiness of the British tar cover many different qualities—Marmaduke Durgan of *Presumptive Evidence* (who refuses to get out of trouble by denying his Trafalgar medal) says “I am a British Sailor, is that the character of a ruffian or a traitor?”; Jack Junk of *The Floating Beacon* has “Ha! A British sailor lie!” and further, “We English sailors are never so happy as when contributing to the happiness of others, and especially to that of the ladies”; Will Steady says “A British Sailor loves native freedom too well, ever willingly to let a foreigner interfere with it”; and the Pilot in *The Pilot* has a beautiful sentiment—“Shall such a man dash from the lips of a true-born Briton the cup of ecstasy?—never, never, while I stand by, with this tough but honest heart, and this sturdy, though rude arm, to sustain the cause of loyalty, and the best prerogatives of a gallant son of the English navy.” We even have, in *The Lost Ship*, the unlikely sentiment: “The money earned by a hard working British tar—and that, too, cheerfully paid by his generous country—is far better than your privateering villainy.” However, this play also has a villain who says “I must dissemble” and “Foiled again,” so perhaps nothing should surprise us. Richard Dauntless appears to have the tar’s virtuous heart, which always tells him the right thing to do—but in his case it always tells him something in his own interests: “my heart it up and says, says it—‘Dick, you’ve fallen in love with her yourself,’ it says. ‘Be honest and

sailor-like—don't skulk under false colours—speak up,' it says, 'take her, you dog, and with her my blessin'!

With the tar's worthiness goes a clear sense of his own worth—so Ben the Boatswain says "Ain't I (though I don't mean to boast, mark that—I'm only telling the truth, and that's not boasting)—ain't I always the first in a cutting-out affair?", and Richard Dauntless has plenty of "modest assurance." Ralph Rackstraw too is allowed to express this sentiment: "There's not a smarter topman in the Navy, your honour, though I say it who shouldn't." Sir Joseph: "Not at all. Proper self-respect, nothing more."

The "free as a mountain bird" aspect was also illustrated in the respectful but firm way in which the British Tar was given to addressing his superior officers, even at a court martial—e.g. Harry Hallyard, of *My Poll and my Partner Joe*, who with twelve friends and contrary to orders has captured an armed store-ship and twenty-six prisoners ("and we without a scratch, excepting Georgy Gunnel, who would be so venturesome as to fight six"):

Oakheart: Still, you were wrong.

Harry: Wrong, your honour! Begging your honour's pardon, a great deal of it was your own fault.

Oakheart: Mine?

Harry: Aye, your honour, with respect be it spoken.

Harry Helm in *The Seal* speaks very freely indeed to his superior officer: "Avast there, captain! steer clear of my tight little frigate of a wife, if you please; or damme, you'll force me to scuttle you in the turning of a handspike"; but this was permissible in cases of attempted seduction, and anyway Helm was pushed overboard for his pains. The suggestion that the tar was the equal of his officers is made, I think, only in *Mutiny at the Nore*, which is more serious than the norm; the usual attitude was duly respectful, as in *The Red Rover*—"fidelity in a seaman to his commander is his brightest and most intrinsic quality," or the old sailor Tropic in Cobb's version of *Paul and Virginia*: "Mankind are brother sailors through the voyage of life, 'tis our duty to assist each other: 'tis true, we have different stations; some on the quarter-deck, and others before the mast; or else how could the vessel sail?" Dick Deadeye is censured by Ralph for the revolutionary sentiment "Ah, it's a queer world!"; he is clear about the class distinctions—"When people have to obey other people's orders, equality's out of the question"—to the fury of his messmates, who believe Sir Joseph—"a British sailor is any man's equal, excepting mine"—until they test his sentiments.

As far as I know no theatrical sailor went so far as to aspire to his captain's daughter, or anyone out of his own class—usually he settled for “some village maiden in your own poor rank” as in E. R. Lancaster's *Ruth; or, The Lass that Loved a Sailor*; though if he were a foundling, like Harry Wilder in *The Red Rover*, he would of course be found to be of suitable birth for the heroine. Gilbert had previously invented Joe Golightly, of the Bab Ballad of that name, who aspired to the First Lord's daughter, but was rewarded only by twelve months in the black-hole for annoying his captain by his sad songs to the moon. (Songs to the moon, by the way, are frequent in nautical melodrama, but more usually sung by the heroine than the captain.) The class question is splendidly confused in *Pinafore*, what with the well-spoken Ralph, the First Sea Lord who started as an office boy, and the Captain being “patrician” to Little Buttercup and “lower middle class” to Sir Joseph.

Other elements in *Pinafore* are foreshadowed in the *Bab Ballads*: Little Buttercup is from “The Bumboat Woman's Story,” where she even has peppermint drops; but her gipsy blood, her taste for dark hints and her original error are more suggestive of Azucena. Captain Corcoran is obviously related to Captain Reece of the *Mantelpiece*, who

Did all that lay within him to
Promote the comfort of his crew

—even to marrying the boatswain's mother, who did his washing; but this is from a strong sense of duty, which also impels his daughter, sisters, cousins and aunts to give up the peers they are promised to and marry his crew.

Which clearly brings us to *The Pirates of Penzance*. Given this title, less of the nautical convention is used than might be expected. This may be because it was written immediately after *Pinafore*—but the opening (“A rocky sea-shore on the coast of Cornwall. In the distance is a calm sea, on which a schooner is lying at anchor. As the curtain rises groups of pirates are discovered—some drinking, some playing cards”) is so like the many plays about Cornish wreckers, smugglers and pirates (*The Lost Ship, The Dream at Sea, The Shipwreck*, etc.) that we might expect more of the pirate joke that we get. What there is, however, is of very good quality. The golden-hearted band with their kindness to orphans are clearly meant to be the opposite of the gangs of Black Beard, Black Brandon, and their like; but they are spoken of, and speak of themselves, as though they were the typical gang—see the Pirate King's song, Frederic's talent for scuttling

Cunarders (though not even the Red Rover ever aspired to anything *that* size), and the girls' warning to the police—

For your foes are fierce and ruthless,
False, unmerciful, and truthless.
Young and tender, old and toothless,
All in vain their mercy crave.

In fact of course they display all the gentlemanly virtues, and they capture nothing. The other part of the joke is that they are hopelessly out of place and period. The Cornish pirate of melodrama generally operated in the seventeenth century; contemporary pirate melodramas were set in the Indian Ocean or thereabouts. The Gilbertian pirates have to deal with cowardly police instead of gallant tars, and cut out P. and O.s instead of Turkish galleys.

Occasional "noblemen who have gone wrong" were to be found in the pirate melodrama—e.g. in *The Wizard of the Wave* the Unknown Pirate turns out to be the son of the Earl of Monteville, and dies repentant; and Cleveland of *The Pirate* is restored to a respectable, though not noble, family at the end of the play, repents, and is allowed to marry the heroine's sister. But pirates were much more commonly stabbed or blown up at the end. The hero of *The Red Rover*, though not quite apprenticed to a pirate, is bound to him in something of the manner of Frederic by having entered his name on the ship's books—fortunately the pirate is finally shot by one of his own men, thus extricating the hero from a nasty dilemma.

It will be seen, then, that Gilbert touches on a good many elements of the nautical melodrama, but much more delicately and obliquely than Bowles and Burnand. He leaves out completely the domestic or William-and-Susan side, and uses none of the standard plots. And yet V. C. Clinton-Baddeley (in *The Burlesque Tradition in the English Theatre after 1660*) is surely right to call *Pinafore* "the apotheosis of the British Tar," and Richard Dauntless is a first-class specimen of the breed. Gilbert clearly appreciated the absurdity of the nautical melodrama, but in *Pinafore* he got his humour not so much by caricaturing it as by putting its hero into a different sort of plot. The manly virtues look much sillier when lauded by that finicky little man Sir Joseph Porter or sung about as a glee; it is one thing to be bold and plain-spoken when cutting out a pirate sloop or defending one's wife against the well-born seducer, and quite another to use the same virtues in the pursuit of the Captain's daughter.

Cross and Fitzball created a splendid theatrical type, but today it survives on the stage only in Gilbert. If nobody now willingly reads the nautical melodramas except as background to Gilbert, its authors have no more reason to complain than have the sixteenth-century romancers satirized by Cervantes.

LIST OF PLAYS CITED

A. *Before 1794*

Love for Love	W. Congreve	1695
The Tempest	W. Shakespeare	1611
Thomas and Sally; or, The Sailor's Return	I. Bickerstaffe	1760

B. *Melodramas*

Ben the Boatswain; or, Sailors' Sweethearts	T. E. Wilks	1839
Black Beard	J. C. Cross	1798
Black-Ey'd Susan; or, All in the Downs	Douglas Jerrold	1829
The Deal Boatman	F. C. Burnand	1863
The Dream at Sea	J. B. Buckstone	1835
False Colours; or, The Free Trader	E. Fitzball	1837
The Floating Beacon; or, The Norwegian Wreckers	E. Fitzball	1824
The Lost Ship; or, The Man o' War's Man and the Privateer	W. T. Townsend	1843
The Mutiny at the Nore; or, British Sailors in 1797	Douglas Jerrold	1830
Paul and Virginia	James Cobb	1800
The Pilot; or, A Tale of the Sea	E. Fitzball	1825
The Pirate; or, The Wild Woman of Zetland	T. J. Dibdin	1822
My Poll and My Partner Joe	J. T. Haines	1835
Presumptive Evidence; or, Murder Will Out	J. B. Buckstone	1828
The Purse; or, The Benevolent Tar	J. C. Cross	1794
The Red Rover; or, The Mutiny of the Dolphin	E. Fitzball	1829
Ruth; or, The Lass that Loved a Sailor	E. R. Lancaster	1841
The Sea!	C. A. Somerset	1842
The Shipwreck	S. J. Arnold	1796
The Wizard of the Wave	J. T. Haines	1840

C. *Burlesques and Extravaganzas*

Blackeyed Sukey; or, All in the Dumps	F. F. Cooper	1829
The Blazing Burgee; or, The Scarlet Rover	T. G. Bowles	1864
The Latest Edition of Black-Eyed Susan; or, The Little Bill that was Taken Up	F. C. Burnand	1866
The Port Admiral; or, The Mysterious Mariner, the Child of Destiny, and the Rightful Heir	T. G. Bowles	1863
The Tyrant! The Slave!! The Victim!!! and the Tar!!!!	T. G. Bowles	1864

Bab Ballads Lost and Found

By JAMES D. ELLIS
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Preparing an edition of all the Bab Ballads of W. S. Gilbert has involved three tasks—collecting, collating, and annotating—each phase of the work presenting distinct problems.

Because of the zealous, at times over-zealous, efforts of Townley Searle and J. M. Bulloch in the 1930's, the job of *collecting* the Babs has proved to be more one of *selecting* them. I must confess at the outset that I have made only one discovery of a hitherto unrecorded poem by Gilbert, although some of his verse unquestionably still lies buried in obscure Victorian periodicals. One hundred thirty-six of the one hundred thirty-seven poems in the forthcoming Harvard edition had all, in effect, been located more than thirty years ago, even though no edition has contained more than eighty-six of them.¹ That is, the two major sources of information about the Babs—the marked proprietors' file of the new series of *Fun* (the comic weekly in which the great majority of Gilbert's verse was published) and the articles in *Notes and Queries* by Dr. Bulloch (listing the ballads chronologically and alphabetically by titles)—were available at that time.²

One hundred nineteen of the poems in the new edition, that is, all but eighteen, first appeared anonymously in the new series of *Fun* between 10 June 1865 and 28 January 1871, and can be identified as Gilbert's by consulting the set of this journal now in the Henry E. Huntington Library and formerly the property of the brothers Dalziel, engravers for *Fun* and, for twenty-five years, the owners.³ Forty of these had not been collected by Gilbert in the volumes of *The "Bab" Ballads* and *More "Bab" Ballads* in 1869 and 1873, and so were allowed to sink into the certain oblivion of penny journalism. I have felt justified in including all of Gilbert's verse from *Fun* (not just the comic narrative ballads illustrated with "Bab" figures), since he himself had included ten unillustrated poems and a number of somber, not to say sentimental, ones in his first collection.⁴ The only Gilbertian items I have omitted—arbitrarily perhaps, but mercifully surely—are three brief macaronics described as French translations of poems by Thomas Moore, three bits of doggerel filler, and three dramatic burlesque sketches written in verse and set to popular airs.⁵ "Trial by Jury" in its original form, even if a sort of burlesque, has not been left out.

Unfortunately no revealing proprietors' copies of the old series of *Fun*

survive, which leaves the poems of those years (from the founding of the magazine by H. J. Byron in 1861 until Tom Hood's editorship commenced in May of 1865) stubbornly anonymous, although we know Gilbert was a regular contributor almost from the beginning.⁶ Bulloch lists thirteen poems from the old series as Gilbert's, but since he relied heavily on the unreliable Townley Searle, and since he attributes to Gilbert ten poems from the new series demonstrably by others, this baker's dozen cannot be swallowed whole. A poem not listed by Bulloch that appeared in *Fun* on 1 February 1862, "The Advent of Spring," can be ascribed to Gilbert because unwittingly published years later in slightly altered form in *Punch* (as "Sing for the Garish Eye," 26 April 1873), with predictable results. Shirley Brooks describes the "mull" in his diary: "I inserted some verse sent me by Emily Leith, overlooking her distinct statement that she had copied them. So down come letters from Gilbert, who wrote them in *Fun* 10 years ago, Tom Hood, and Burnand. Made the *amende* and wrote Gilbert. *Mea culpa*, and nobody else's."⁷ Brooks' fault is our good fortune, leading us back to one of Gilbert's earliest efforts and his only piece of sustained nonsense writing.

Five other poems in the old series of *Fun* can be tentatively assigned to Gilbert (and have been included in the new edition) because accompanied by closely related "W.S.G." illustrations known to be his. The earliest of these, "The Cattle Show" (12 December 1863), was followed a week later by a poem with the same title and subject in another of Byron's journals, *The Comic News*. The latter poem employs an unusual stanza form that in turn appears in the fifth and last of the "W.S.G." illustrated poems in *Fun*, "Down to the Derby" (28 May 1864).⁸ Since Gilbert is listed (last) among the fourteen contributors to *The Comic News*, it is quite possible that this second "Cattle Show," if a poor thing, is his own. I have included it in my edition in nodding recognition of Gilbert's association with the other paper.⁹

Another of the five illustrated poems from the old series of *Fun*, "The Baron Klopffzetterheim; or, The Beautiful Bertha and the Big Bad Brothers of Bonn," ran for five weeks in the spring of 1864, accompanied by eighteen of the best drawings Gilbert ever fashioned, making it by far the longest and most abundantly illustrated of Gilbert's poems.¹⁰ A still longer poem in *Fun*, a diatribe aimed at Napoleon III titled "The Lie of a Lifetime," which appeared in sixteen installments, the first six of which contain "W.S.G." illustrations, has been credited to Gilbert by Sidney Dark and Rowland Grey in their biography, but he assured a correspondent that the "absurd verses" were not by him.¹¹

Of the poems published in sources other than *Fun*, Gilbert chose to collect only one, "Etiquette," which had appeared in the Christmas number of *The Graphic* in 1869, including it in his selection of *Fifty "Bab" Ballads* (1877) and in the 1898 edition of ballads and Savoy Opera lyrics. Ten other poems, in seven periodicals, are also his. The earliest, "To My Absent Husband" (*Punch*, 14 October 1865), is attributed to Gilbert only because accompanied by an appropriate "Bab" drawing, making it, strictly speaking, the first genuine *Bab Ballad*—the first poem with an illustration so signed.¹² The other nine poems, all signed with the author's name, are "A Boulogne Table d'Hôte," "The Railway Guard's Song," and "The Undecided Man" (the three published as "A Batch of Ballads" in *Tom Hood's Comic Annual for 1868* [actually for 1869], pp. 78-79); "What is a Burlesque?" (*Belgravia Annual*, 1868, pp. 106-107); "A Drop of Pantomime Water" (*The Graphic*, II [25 December 1870], Christmas number, p. 20);¹³ "Eheu! Fugaces" (*The Dark Blue*, III [April 1872], 142-143); "Jester James" and "The Policeman's Story" (published as numbers I and II of "The Bab Ballads. New Series" in Edmund Yates's new journal *Time*, I [April and May 1879], 54-57, 166-168); and "The Thief's Apology" (*Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, XXII [6 December 1884], "Holly Leaves" [Christmas number], 267). Only the last of these is unrecorded by Searle or Bulloch.¹⁴

These, then, are the one hundred thirty-seven poems being published in the Harvard edition. A number of Searle's and Bulloch's unsubstantiated attributions have been rejected. So, too, have been a poem recollected by a correspondent to the *Strand Magazine* and another listed as Gilbert's in the *British Museum Catalogue*. The former, mentioned by Dark and Grey, proves to be by Tom Hood and appeared in *Fun* more than three years after the last Bab Ballad was published there. The latter, "The Amateur Pantomime at the Gaiety," published in *Mirth: A Miscellany of Wit and Humour* (London, 1878), p. 169, describes a pantomime on which Gilbert collaborated and in which he played Harlequin with studied perfection. Initialed "B," the poem is probably by *Mirth's* editor, the ubiquitous H. J. Byron.

The second phase of my work—collation—involved only the eighty poems collected by Gilbert. The other fifty-six required only the most perfunctory attention: standardizing spellings and punctuation, correcting a few obvious typographical and other errors. In the case of the collected poems, I had thought initially of using the texts from *Fun* or possibly from the first collected editions as the standard for the new edition, but I came in time to choose the second 1898 edition (the first, actually published in

December 1897, had enough errors to necessitate a second, “with alterations,” in March 1898) instead. Almost all of Gilbert’s final revisions here are minor changes to eliminate a repetition, clarify an ambiguity, or improve a rhyme or rhythm. Occasionally, when a change in 1898 seems to have been prompted by the older Gilbert’s desire to curb exuberance—reducing Joe Golightly’s sentence from “Twelve years’ black-hole” to twelve months, and his “Five hundred thousand lashes” to a paltry six dozen, for example—an earlier reading has been substituted.

All the variants—words, lines, and stanzas—have been printed in the end matter, enabling the reader to see what sorts of changes Gilbert made from *Fun* to the 1869 and 1873 editions, to the 1877 edition, and finally to the 1898 edition. In a few instances slang expressions that had gone out of fashion are replaced by less dated words: “tin” changed to “coin” in “Tempora Mutantur”; “by chalks” to “by far” in “The Ghost, the Gallant, the Gael, and the Goblin.” When this stanza from “Ben Allah Achmet” was changed in 1869:

I also knew a maiden miss
Whose father boasted many a coffer;
She likewise lived at Hooe—and this
Is but a clumsy likeness of her.

the clumsy likeness was, of course, eliminated, but is now restored to her stanza in the notes. In the case of two stanzas in “The Reverend Micah Sowls,” directed at a “great Tragedian” (almost certainly Henry Irving) in the 1898 edition and at bad acting at Drury Lane in all previous printings, I have chosen the earlier reading for the text.

Two stanzas eliminated from “The Periwinkle Girl” after their initial appearance in *Fun* and eight stanzas removed from seven other ballads in the 1898 edition have been restored. One or two of these, it could be argued, ought to be on Koko’s little list, but most deserve their full status in the text. “Thomas Winterbottom Hance,” for example, lost a superb illustration of the two warriors and their “Mas” along with this parenthetical explanation:

(The mothers were of decent size,
Though not particularly tall;
But in the sketch that meets your eyes
I’ve been obliged to draw them small.)

This stanza describing trodden worms in "A Worm Will Turn" may have seemed too unpleasantly graphic to the dignified Gilbert of 1898:

And if when all the mischief's done
 You watch their dying squirms,
 And listen, ere their breath has run,
 You'll hear them sigh, "Oh, clumsy one!"
 —And devil blame the worms.

In only one instance was a stanza added to a poem subsequent to its printing in *Fun*. "Pasha Bailey Ben," a potentially endless ballad, is concluded in *Fun* with this exchange: "(To be Continued—Author.)—(No!—Editor.)" Obviously this would not serve in a book of ballads, so Gilbert added:

Come, come, I say, that's quite enough
 Of this absurd disjointed stuff;
 Now let's get on to that affair
 About Lieutenant-Colonel Flare.

"That affair" immediately follows "Pasha Bailey Ben" in the 1873 edition, and, although ten poems intervene in my strictly chronological one, the stanza remains.

Whereas the textual changes in the 1898 edition have been generally adopted, the pictorial changes have been emphatically rejected. Gilbert, apparently self-taught as an artist, seems to have been dissatisfied almost from the start with what he termed "the rather clumsy sketches" accompanying his poems. As early as 1875 he wrote Tinsley Brothers with a scheme for republishing a selection of the Babs, "illustrating them with new and carefully executed drawings by myself."¹⁵ Tinsleys declined, nor would Routledge agree to new illustrations for the combined edition of Babs and More Babs in 1882, even though assured by Gilbert, "I could improve considerably on the original sketches."¹⁶ He had his way in the 1898 edition, however, and completely redrew more than 150 of the 258 figures accompanying the ballads. These new drawings are, without exception, inferior to the originals in my opinion—not because they are less well executed or less pleasing, but because they are wholly inappropriate to the poems. Gilbert argued that the originals "erred gravely in the direction of unnecessary extravagance," which is of course exactly what the Babs required. The new drawings are sweet, amiable, and a trifle simpering; the ballads, fortunately, are not.

The Harvard edition will include every illustration originally accompanying the poems in *Fun*, *Punch*, *The Graphic*, and *Time*, as well as fourteen of those 1898 drawings I have just condemned. A dozen of these accompany the ten poems that had been collected but never illustrated until 1898. The other two are whims of my own, instances of later “Bab” figures that harmonize with the earlier ones: the figure of an actor added as a second illustration to “Disillusioned” in 1898, and the drawing of a cigar-smoking passenger ministering to a seasick sailor in the topsy-turvy “My Dream.”

Third, last, longest, and most fascinating of my tasks has been the annotation. Besides listing textual variants and pointing out prototypes of Savoy Opera plots, characters, and phrases, I have also tried to explain topical references and allusions that might not be understood by the average modern American reader of the Babs.

Victorian contrivances and commodities (zoetropes, pantehnicons, Talbotypes, seltzogenes), Victorian fashions (bottines, M.P. waistcoats, stocks, and spencers), Victorian phenomena (garrotings, iron-clads, cellar-flaps, excursion-train wrecks) have been described. Places in and around London (Pentonville; Canonbury Square; Richmond Buildings; the Polygon, Somers Town; Drum Lane, Ealing) have been located. Mister Mudie’s libraree, Mr. Tweedie’s pretty prints, Dr. Abernethy’s biscuits, and Godfrey’s Grenadiers are all accounted for. The fame and professions of Thomas King (boxer), Martin Tupper (moral philosopher), Alexander Knox (police magistrate), John Henry Pepper (chemist and popular lecturer), and William Calcraft (public executioner) have been revealed. I have even pointed out that a collared-head is like our head-cheese, not a mess of greens; and that a life-preserver is a blackjack, not a round cork float (which I once saw solemnly doled out by Samuel in an amateur American production of *The Pirates of Penzance*).

As you either know or might expect, many of the allusions are theatrical—to plays, playhouses, characters, actors, and so forth. A search through the files of *The Era* at the Enthoven Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum produced a description of what “John and Freddy” were up to when dancing like “Clodoche and Co., at the Princess’s”: “Their odd, fantastic movements, in which limbs are thrown into every possible position with unprecedented flexibility, and their bizarre action, which is pervaded by a graphic power giving a significant meaning to every turn, kept the house roaring with laughter, and elicited one universal demand for repeti-

tion." An inspection of the manuscript of Boucicault's unpublished play *Janet Pride* at the British Museum (among that treasure trove of manuscripts submitted to the Lord Chamberlain), reveals that Janet's drunken and villainous father is most certainly the "Richard Pride all beery" referred to by Gilbert.

Among the most frequent and troublesome topicalities are references to songs and airs, ranging from "Il Balen" in Verdi's *Il Trovatore* and "The Fair Land of Poland" in Balfe's *Bohemian Girl* to such popular confections as "She Lodges at a Sugar Shop" and "I Vowed that I Never Would Leave Her." What, for example, is one to make of such lines as these:

The waits, wet and chilly, so long have missed Willie,
 the tie is quite broken asunder;
 Now, utterly crazy, they envy the daisy, and long to be
 one, and no wonder!

Since waits are musicians and singers, we can assume the missing Willie and envied daisy occur in songs. With much leafing through bound volumes of nineteenth-century sheet music, and with even more luck, one discovers that Stephen Foster wrote "O, Willie, We Have Missed You," and that Frederick Buckley wrote "I'd Choose to be a Daisy," both popular minstrel numbers in the London of a century ago. All told, there are twenty references in the ballads to songs, airs, and arias, two of which—"The Whistling Oyster" and "The Crescendo Galop"—I have been unable to trace.

Some of my most arduous searching was well rewarded. The order from the Chief Commissioner of Metropolitan Police in 1869 that "The metropolitan police will in future be permitted to wear beards and moustaches" (an order Gilbert changed to "All Constables must Cease to Shave!") was finally located at the Colindale branch of the British Museum, in the *Police Service Advertiser*, which reported that "The 'order' was received with general satisfaction by the men, many of whom said it would save them a few minutes every morning in the use of the razor" (3 April 1869, p. 4). The identity of "Big Ben Denison" can be found inside the bell itself, for a leader in the *Times* (7 November 1856, p. 6) explains that the bell "records that it is designed by Mr. Edmund Beckett Denison, Q.C., a gentleman who, fortunately for the rest of us, occupies his leisure hours with the improvement of clocks and bells." A stupefying reading of endless columns of finely-printed advertisements in various daily and weekly news-

papers at length resolved the mystery of Sir Guy the Crusader's being "nabbed for his Sydenham armour/At Mr. Ben Samuel's suit." Samuel Brothers, of 29 Ludgate Hill, offered what were called "Sydenham Trousers" at 17s. 6d. the pair.

Other questions, however, remain unanswered. A Turk named Ben Oussef, the maker of the famed "One shilling Damask blade," is still at large, possibly residing in Sheffield. A pantomime character named Gaffer Gin seems to have drunk himself quite out of existence, whereas a tea importing firm named Baker, Croop, and Co. seems never to have existed at all (and may, in fact, be Gilbert's invention). And though I have wandered through each chartered street, in the Map Room at the British Museum, I still cannot find the Hackney Road Reformatory School.

I have no doubt that there are errors as well as omissions in my notes, and I would welcome hearing from any of you who can set me and the record straight. I seek this information for my own satisfaction, of course, and not with any expectations for that mythical beast, the second, revised, edition.

NOTES

1. The eighty-six are included in the omnibus volume *Plays & Poems of W. S. Gilbert*, with a preface by Deems Taylor (New York: Random House, 1932). Eighty of these are poems collected by Gilbert himself, and published in their final form in *The Bab Ballads with which are included Songs of a Savoyard* (London and New York: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1898). The other six are the "Lost Babs" first reprinted by Sidney Dark and Rowland Grey in an appendix to their *W. S. Gilbert: His Life and Letters* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1923), pp. 241-260.

2. The articles by Dr. Bulloch, founder and first chairman of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, are "The Anatomy of the 'Bab Ballads,'" *Notes and Queries*, CLXXI (14 November 1936), 344-348; "The Bab Ballads by Titles," CLXXII (22 May 1937), 362-367; and a short note on 27 November 1937.

3. This proprietors' file, identifying all contributors and the amount they were paid for every article and illustration, was for many years in the possession of the engravers' nephews, Gilbert and Charles Dalziel, the former of whom utilized the material in articles in the first volume of *The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal*.

4. The poems were first titled *The "Bab" Ballads* when published as a collection by John Camden Hotten in 1869. Almost immediately the poems appearing in *Fun* were also so titled, beginning with "The Two Ogres" (23 January 1869). The following "Bab," "Mister William," was designated as "No. 60," and from then on every one of Gilbert's poems in *Fun* except for "The Ghost to His Ladye Love" received a number, up to eighty-five, which was applied by mistake to the last two ballads. If we count backward from "Mister William" and include only ballads (not the two descriptive pieces about the holiday towns of Margate and Boulogne) and only those with illustrations, we find ourselves right back with "The Story of Gentle Archibald," the first poem with "Bab" illustrations in *Fun*, as number one. The purist might choose to limit the "Babs" to these eighty-six poems.

5. These are "Ne t'en va pas" (27 May 1865), "Garryowen" (17 June 1865), "Good-bye, Sweet-heart, Good-bye" (29 July 1865), "In Re Dawkins" (10 June 1865), "To Mademoiselle Lucca" (21 October 1865), "I Do Adore Thee!" (16 December 1865); "The Derby Day Operatized" (3 June 1865), "Piccadilly" (1 July 1865), and "Electra; or, The Lost Pleiad" (27 July 1867).

6. See "William Schwenck Gilbert: An Autobiography," *Theatre*, n.s., I (2 April 1883), 218.

7. George Somes Layard, *A Great "Punch" Editor: Being the Life, Letters, and Diaries of Shirley Brooks* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., 1907), p. 542.

8. The stanza is not original with Gilbert or any other *Comic News* poet; it is derived from the song "When a Man Marries," by J. W. Safe.

9. Bulloch lists ten poems from *The Comic News* as Gilbert's, all of which I have excluded from the new edition for lack of any internal or external proof.

10. Verification that the poem is indeed Gilbert's would seem to be found in the reappearance of almost identical characters and circumstances in his story "The Triumph of Vice," published in *The Savage Club Papers*, edited by Andrew Halliday (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1867), pp. 174-195.

11. Letter to E. Bruce Hindle, dated 29 January 1885, in the Reginald Allen Collection, Pierpont Morgan Library.

12. Isaac Goldberg includes this among the eleven "lost Bab Ballads" appended to his unsurpassed *The Story of Gilbert and Sullivan or The 'Compleat' Savoyard* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1928), pp. 529-558, where he remarks that "no complete edition of the Ballads is as yet in print; I am at work upon one."

13. This poem is mentioned by Townley Searle in his *Sir William Schwenck Gilbert: A Topsy-turvy Adventure* (London: Alexander-Ouseley, Ltd., 1931), p. 87, but it is not listed in the slightly different privately printed edition of the same year, titled *A Bibliography of Sir William Schwenck Gilbert: with Bibliographical Adventures in the Gilbert & Sullivan Operas*, nor is it included in Bulloch's lists.

14. For eight years (1880-1887) Gilbert contributed to the Christmas number of the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*. Six of his contributions were prose items; two were poems, one of which, "Only Roses," XVI (10 December 1881), 323, reappeared five years later as Mad Margaret's ballad in *Ruddigore*. I have excluded it from the complete edition of the Babs for having declared itself one of the songs of a Savoyard.

15. Hesketh Pearson, *Gilbert: His Life and Strife* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1957), p. 23.

16. Philip James, "A Note on Gilbert as Illustrator," *Selected Bab Ballads* (Oxford: privately printed, 1955), p. 120.

W. S. Gilbert and "That Topic of the Age"

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In the epilogue to the last of his operatic burlesques, presented in 1869, W. S. Gilbert assigned the following lines to the pretty Druidess, Norma:

"I'm cowed and conscience-stricken—for tonight
We have, no doubt, contributed our mite
To justify that topic of the age
The degradation of the English stage."¹

The lamentation over the degraded state of the English stage during the nineteenth century has been long and often heard. I do not intend to add to the lament but to tell the story of a spirited episode in the battle to end the degradation. Few individuals did as much in as many ways to restore the integrity of the English theater as William Schwenck Gilbert. Most of us remember him only as the collaborator of Sir Arthur Sullivan in the creation of the Savoy comic operas. These have been called by Bernard De Voto ". . . one of the highest reaches of nineteenth century English literature."² Students of stage history name Gilbert as the militant director-stage manager who, under the impetus of Robertson and the Bancrofts, friends of his youth, revolutionized century-old ideas of directing, ensemble, costuming, and scenic design.³ He wrote the century's most successfully staged verse plays. He is, indeed, credited by William Archer as being "one of the prime movers" in the dramatic revival of the late nineteenth century. "You," Archer told Gilbert in 1904, "restored the literary self-respect of the English stage."⁴ Before any of these accomplishments was realized and before Gilbert had provided any basis for such extravagant praise as I have cited, he entered the lists to combat the degradation of the English stage.

In the following paper I shall discuss Gilbert's analysis of the evils which prevented or inhibited a new theatrical revival in the period immediately preceding his first popular success in the 'seventies. The framework for discussion is Gilbert's short, undated, satiric sketch entitled "Actors, Authors, and Audiences, a trial by jury." His approach was typically indirect, that of the satirist. But the points of attack were specific. Although the number and nature of the deficiencies in the institution of the nineteenth century British theater and the drama written for it are amply documented by Archer, Shaw, Moses, Nicoll, Bailey, and many others writing from the

convenient hindsight of the present century, it may prove helpful before discussing Gilbert's approach to such deficiencies to emphasize that the original title of the sketch indicates the three broad topics under which he grouped the theatrical abuses: *actors*, along with whom he included all production personnel; *authors*, typically poorly qualified or unwilling to oppose their own exploitation; and *audiences*, ill-informed, heterogeneous, and ill-behaved.

The scene is the interior of a playhouse where "an original (but tedious) play has just been damned. The audience is furious. The manager comes forward and implores them to listen to him. . . . He suggests that the author be tried then and there, by a jury of the audience, for having his play damned. They agree." The court is organized completely, and the trial gets underway.⁵ Witnesses for the prosecution are the unhappy manager, four representatives from the audience, including a journeyman-plumber, an officer of noble rank from the Grenadier Guards, a medical student and a clerk from the Home Office; and three actors from the play, including the leading lady, the low comedian—who played a butler, and a song and dance girl—cast as a governess. Following testimony from these witnesses in the order named, the author addresses the jury in his own defense.

By his selection of witnesses against the unhappy author, Gilbert provided spokesmen for every group directly contributing to the deplorable conditions of the stage except three: the Lord Chamberlain's office, the press, and the "new" puritans, for whom the theater was, to quote one of Gilbert's own ballads, "the presence chamber of the evil one."⁶

Before continuing with the testimony in the sketch let us digress a moment to consider Gilbert's attitude toward these three groups or institutions. Gilbert frequently experienced the censorship of the Lord Chamberlain's office, the censor, or the reader of plays, as the screening agency is variously called. This censorship he loudly called to public attention and quietly circumvented with surprising impunity. An amusing example of his dealings with the censor occurred when in his expression "chambers fit for a lord" the reader struck out "lord" and substituted "heaven."

A policy toward the theater completely opposite from the censor's was observed by the press, which, at least in the large newspapers, determined to avoid any theatrical controversy for fear of alienating readers or advertisers. For example, the dramatic critic for the *Times*, John Oxenford, for thirty-five years praised everything almost indiscriminately. In contrast, as

a young critic, Gilbert, representing several minor periodicals, soon became an unwelcome visitor at most theaters and once wrote about the lot of the honest critic in a "Thumbnail Study" thus: ". . . the consequences of recording an unbiased opinion on any theatrical question are of a peculiarly unpleasant description, if that unbiased opinion happens to be of an unfavourable nature, for they subject the audacious critic to the undisguised sneers of ponderous tragedians, dismal comic men, and self-satisfied managers—in addition to the necessity of paying for his stall whenever he has occasion to visit a theatre for critical purposes."⁷ Gilbert supplemented his outspoken reviews by one-page burlesques of unworthy dramatic productions. In these he spared neither friend nor foe. Years later when Gilbert himself became successful as a playwright and librettist, he developed a strong aversion to the blunt and insensitive critics who failed to see only unqualified genius in all *his* works.

Regarding the third cause of the decline of the stage not accounted for in "Actors, Authors, and Audiences," the "new" puritan, we may say that Gilbert was generally hostile. Yet his own attitudes toward Victorian tastes and morality were ambivalent. On one occasion he resentfully wrote: "It has recently been discovered by many dramatic critics that satire and cynicism are misplaced in comedy and that the propriety of repartee is to be estimated by the standard of conversation in a refined drawing-room. It is fortunate for Sheridan that this ukase had not been pronounced when he wrote *The School for Scandal*; and it is particularly fortunate for M. Victorien Sardou and other French dramatic authors of to-day that this particular fetter is intended only for the discomfiture of dramatic malefactors of British origin."⁸ Yet he strove to secure for his comic operas the universality of what we would call a "G-Rating" for current films, and he has his author in the sketch here discussed label "the Dramatic Literature of Modern France . . . a foul and pestilential cento of moral corruption. . . ."⁹

Returning to our focus on the satiric sketch "Actors, Authors, and Audiences, a trial by jury," we observe that the first witness, the luckless manager, personifies the backstage causes of theatrical degradation. As Gilbert observed elsewhere, some dozen figures, from scenic artist to property man, all ostensibly under the supervision of the manager, contribute directly to the success or failure of a play.¹⁰ Under cross-examination by the defendant, the manager testifies: "I did not read your play before accepting it, because I do not profess to be a judge of a play in manuscript. I accepted it because a French play on which I had counted proved a failure. I had

nothing ready to put up in its place. . . . I have had no special training for the position of manager. I am not aware that any special training is requisite. It is a very easy profession to master. If you make a success you pocket the profits; if you fail you close your theatre abruptly, and a benefit performance is organized in your behalf. Then you begin again. I am aware that some alterations were made in your play without your sanction. I did not make them myself, as I do not understand these things. I always leave the alterations in an author's dialogue to the stage-manager and company. . . . I am not of opinion that I ought to be held responsible for the character of the entertainment I provide for the audience. What have I to do with it? I am only the manager."¹¹

Gilbert would never subscribe to this point of view, nor was he cowed by managers—not even actor managers like J. B. Buckstone, who were already famous. "How many of our English authors," rhetorically asked William Archer in 1886, "possess enough force of character and mastery of the stage to impose their conceptions upon an autocratic actor-manager? One, perhaps—Mr. W. S. Gilbert."¹²

Following the manager's testimony, the prosecution witnesses from the audience, representing as they do four different strata of Victorian society, provide unanimous ironic comment on the heterogeneity of the audience which made the Victorian theater an unlikely nursery for the comic spirit. Each of the four witnesses from the audience has written a play, none of which has been acted—not yet. And all consider themselves judges of plays. These witnesses provide telling implications about the rising realist dogma of "truth to nature." The journeyman plumber testifies: "I was pleased with the scene between the rival tradesmen in the grocer's back-parlour because I thought it true to nature: but I consider the scene between the Duke and the Dutchess highly improbable. I hissed it on that account. . . . The scene between the wicked Member of Parliament and the Home Secretary is open to the same objection."¹³ Lord Fitz-Urse testifies, on the other hand: "I saw nothing to complain of in the scenes dealing with High Life, but I consider the scene in the grocer's back parlour, ridiculously impossible."¹⁴

"I did not hiss," says the clerk from the Home Office, "simply because I do not see the necessary connection between a bad play and a hiss. We do not hiss bad speeches in the House of Commons."¹⁵ His judgments on the condemned play coincide with those of the preceding witnesses except that he believes: ". . . the scene between the Home Secretary and the wicked

Member is very characteristic, and contains many capital hits at the maladministration of our home affairs. . . ." ¹⁶ The other scenes he finds ridiculously untrue to nature. "I am not aware," he says, "that, owing to nervousness caused by sounds of disapprobation, much of the dialogue was accidentally omitted, and still more of it paraphrased. I am not aware that owing to imperfect rehearsals many of the 'situations' missed fire. I am not aware that certain characters and scenes were omitted, and others re-written in opposition to your earnest entreaty. The piece is advertised as having been written by you, and I, of course, hold you responsible for every word that is spoken on the stage." ¹⁷

Before leaving the testimony of the audience let me summarize the reasons for the fallen conditions of the theater observed thus far: The audience was extremely heterogeneous, coarse and undisciplined, with the least possible esteem for playwriting as a difficult art, insistent on capricious standards of what its members considered truth to nature, ignorant of the values and possibilities of internal consistency, and deserted, for the most part, by any possessed of intellectual eminence. Furthermore, as we shall see even more clearly from its reception of the actors' testimony, the audience was voracious in its appetite for the coarsest slapstick, pantomime, burlesque, melodrama, and farce.

Following the depositions by the four representatives of the audience, three members of the cast testify. First comes the star, representing at once the arrogance and the incompetence of many notorious figures on the nineteenth century stage. I don't mean to imply that all celebrated nineteenth century stars were unjustifiably famous, but Gilbert, considering the dramatist the center of the theatrical universe, disliked the star system because of the insufferable privileges granted to the actor in making any role a starring role. The actor-manager he particularly despised as a vicious and unwholesome combination. In the sketch, Emily Fitzgibbon, the leading lady of the condemned play, appropriately entitled *Lead*, disliked the play from the first, found the dialogue carefully written and full of literary beauties but lacking in dramatic appeal and in a "well-balanced story and effective action." She regretted that it was written in blank verse and sensibly pointed out: "Very few people on the stage can speak blank verse effectively. I speak it effectively, but I don't know anyone else who does." ¹⁸ "It is a fact," she continues, "that the stage-manager suppressed several small characters. It is true that two minor parts were fused with mine to make it worthy of my reputation. I did not charge extra for rolling the three parts

into one. I did it entirely in the author's interest. I do not remember your objecting to the mutilation of your play. It is not a circumstance that would be likely to dwell in my mind. I have never been hissed in my life. The parts I have played have frequently been hissed. No one has ever hissed me." ¹⁹

Next testifies the "low comedian." From the outset of his career Gilbert had despised the traditional stock characters, especially the "low comedian." Some of Gilbert's critics assert that he created a new set of stock characters of his own. Be that as it may, he hated ad libbing, winking clowns such as the witness who now testifies. The audience roars as he admits that he was obliged to dress up the humor in the play which he thought "too subtle and refined for a theatrical audience." "In point of fact," he complains, "the part labours under the fatal disadvantage of not being low comedy at all." ²⁰ He admits to having done all he could with the practical tricks of his trade, but the audience was already out of humor. Of the low comedian, for whom "humour and buffoonery are convertible terms," ²¹ Gilbert, in the guise of a "young man from the country," asks in one of his early verses:

When a man sticks his hat at the back of his head,
 Tell me, oh, Editor, why do they roar?
 And then, when he pushes it forward instead,
 Why do they scream twice as loud as before?
 When an elderly gentleman rumples his hair,
 Why do they all go delirious as well?
 When he uses a handkerchief out of repair,
 Why do they, why do they, why do they yell? ²²

There were no traditional "low comedians" in a Gilbert production.

The last witness for the prosecution is Jessie Jessamine, who played the governess. Because of the nature of her "talents," she had insisted on wearing short petticoats, had inserted a song, and had endeavoured to raise her spirits as a governess "by dancing an occasional 'breakdown.'" Her other admissions and opinions coincide with those of the preceding witnesses.

From the testimony already summarized we discern some characteristics Gilbert resented in the quality and status of contemporary playwriting. We can detect the rift between serious literature and the customary theatrical fare. We learn of the helplessness of the writer to protect his property from

mutilation and his family from bankruptcy. Let us examine each of these points in turn.

First, the average nineteenth century theater-writer cared little for literary merits, and as Allardyce Nicoll²³ and others have observed, the separation between the poet and the theater-writer became most pronounced and most pernicious in the nineteenth century. It is true that Byron, Browning, and Tennyson succeeded in getting their plays on the stage, but with neither outstanding nor lasting success. Knowing little about the craft of the playwright and unwilling to learn or unprovided with the opportunity, all the major poets of the century wrote dramatic poems rather than poetic drama.

Secondly, an author was completely at the mercy of the manager and the company. It had been Gilbert's youthful experience to have his first production, a Christmas pantomime, chopped up by the stage manager to provide time for the mounting of a marvelous fountain in the major scene. In this same production interpolated business was surreptitiously rehearsed in obscure corners to be introduced unannounced in the actual performance.²⁴

Thirdly, since many companies hired hack writers to adapt and translate popular novels and pirated plays from across the channel, which was done for as little as £20 apiece, the author of an original play was deprived of a market, for he could scarcely afford to spend the time required to write a respectable play for even fifty or one hundred pounds. Few authors, therefore, attempted to be original, to say nothing of maintaining any literary quality in a stage play, as the defendant in the sketch had so disastrously tried to do. Gilbert, however, was one of the few. In 1882 William Archer wrote of him: "He is almost alone in the attempt to give literary grace and finish to his work."²⁵ Such attempts as there were had by no means met with universal success, although occasional success proved, according to J. R. Planché: ". . . that there is a public who can enjoy good writing and good acting, unassisted by magnificent scenery and undegraded by 'break-downs.'"²⁶

When in "Actors, Authors, and Audiences" the playwright presents his defense, he begins by claiming for his play at least the negative merit of not being an adaptation from the French, despite the fact that adaptation and translation provide the only safe and easy income in the theatre. He then vigorously denounces English dependency on imported plays. The significance of this denunciation is enhanced by Nicoll's sweeping state-

ment about the nineteenth century drama: "While adaptation has ruled for generations on the London stage, facts force us to admit that never before were so many foreign dramas reworked for English audiences."²⁷ "The better work of France and Germany was neglected; only the lighter and the more spectacular pieces were seized upon."²⁸ There were no effective copyright laws, and for many years, as a result of unwise court decisions, the Dramatic Author's Act of 1833 provided no real protection to the author.²⁹

An amusing aspect of this particular plea of the defendant is his censure of the adapter of the farce entitled *The Wedding March* which the clerk from the Home Office had had the effrontery to admire. "*The Wedding March*," said the defendant, "had been referred to by one of the witnesses in the highest terms, and it was a fact that the author thereof had received considerably more than two thousand pounds in return for the two days' labour he had spent upon it. But the *Wedding March* was little more than a bald translation. Every element that went to constitute it a success was deliberately copied from its French original. The dialogue was, in itself, contemptible. It derived its humour entirely from the 'situations' in connection with which it was spoken. The dullest copying-clerk in Chancery Lane could have done the work as well as its so-called 'author'."³⁰

Though *The Wedding March* had appeared under the pseudonym of F. Latour Tomline, the "so-called 'author'" who had impudently pocketed considerably more than £2000 for two days' work was the amazingly lucky novice W. S. Gilbert. Whether here as in the epilogue to his last burlesque Gilbert is atoning for his own crime against the theater, I am uncertain, but in a revision of "Actors, Authors, and Audiences," published years later as "Trying a Dramatist," Gilbert deleted all mention of *The Wedding March*.

The results of the trial under discussion, which one of Gilbert's biographers found "terribly dreary,"³¹ are as follows: The foreman for the jury declares the defendant guilty but accompanies the verdict with a strong recommendation to mercy on the grounds that "many persons contribute to a stage performance, and the author's contribution is only a part of the whole. . . . In this case the manager, actors, actresses, and author were all more or less to blame."³² He forgets to mention the blame resting with the audience, explicitly underlined for our attention in the title.

The causes of the degradation of the English stage during the nineteenth century were, indeed, many and complex. No two writers list and weigh

them in exactly the same order. Gilbert attacked them all. And in time he carried the offensive beyond the borders of criticism with such credit that Allardyce Nicoll, the tireless historian of the English stage, called him ". . . by far the greatest writer whom the English stage had attracted throughout the entire course of the nineteenth century."³³

NOTES

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Sir William Schwenck Gilbert and the Lure of the Fallen Fairies

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Literary history is liberally sprinkled with writers whose lives, generally ordered and rational, contained some aberrant feature which appeared from time to time through their careers—a preoccupation with some object, concept, or person. To the torment of biographers, the preoccupation often appears inexplicable, totally out of keeping with other tidy, straightforward facts. Sir William Schwenck Gilbert, however, presents some biographers with a reversal of half this picture, having led a life which to them appears inexplicable. It would seem perversely appropriate, therefore, in a logical Gilbertian manner, to complete the reversal by imparting order and rationality to his life through the examination of a favorite preoccupation.

Many of Gilbert's contemporaries dismissed him as a quarrelsome, opportunistic hack, finding in his work flaws which were, occasionally, deserving of censure. Later critics recognized his substantial achievements and credited him as a genuine artist. More recently, however, some have found in his work evidence of a reforming zeal and, failing to reconcile it with either the opportunist or the artist, pictured him as a man both tortured and confused. Allardyce Nicoll might serve as an example here, for he states:

Sometimes we get the impression in Gilbert that he is genuinely afraid of life. He has the seeing eye of the artist, and what he sees makes him terrified. To conceal that terror and to find escape he turns to his topsy-turvy fantasy. In *The Wicked World*, lightly as the theme is dealt with, this is amply apparent. . . .

. . . Nature, as Gilbert sees her, is a monster of fair proportions and awesomely cruel spirit. Gilbert himself is the jester who mocks and grimaces lest his own being break under the strain of life and lest his hatred of worldly vices issue forth in terms antisocial and lunatic.¹

Yet Gilbert was patently not terrified and confused, but complex, impelled in a zestful, but very human, manner by one or more of these three facets of his personality at various times—the opportunist, the artist, and the reformer. A full biography is unnecessary for proof: one need merely turn to that favorite preoccupation to turn things right-side-up. Only study Gilbert's

fascination with a product of his own fertile imagination, the fallen fairies, whom he created fairly early, and to whom he returned at four times which spanned forty years of his career.

Gilbert's first experience with these enchanting creatures came when he wrote a moral satire, "The Wicked World," applying delightful paradox to several truisms. It was published in 1871, in *Tom Hood's Comic Annual*.² "The Wicked World" was a whimsical story, good-natured in tone, but a pointed commentary upon human failings. Here Gilbert stressed the ideas that virtue without temptation provides a poor basis for judging others' actions, and that love is both the cause of man's vices and the means by which he can live with them. To afford a suitable atmosphere for untried virtue Gilbert created a cloud inhabited by female fairies. Told of the wicked world by Fairy Kate, an ex-mortal, the fairies were properly horrified, but wanted to know more about it.

Gilbert was clearly writing in a critical mood, despite a light tone, and he sprinkled personal comments through the story. He brought his fairies into contact with a mortal, Prince Paragon, and sent their queen to earth with him, where she fell in love with a Prince Snob and acquired several vices. The fairy sisterhood were quick to condemn her, but shortly revealed that their own brief contact with a mortal had tainted them too, and that fairyland was rent by petty jealousies. After this revelation, Gilbert's fairies learned their lesson, and fairyland was happy again.

That Gilbert was preoccupied with his fairies became clearer when he produced a play by the same name, *The Wicked World*, in 1873.³ Even more clearly, his return to them was prompted by both the artist and the reformer. In the twenty-page tale there were several thematic possibilities left unexplored and, moreover, the change of medium was a fine challenge to the artist as well, for he had to find a way of inserting his personal comments through dialogue. He found a partial solution to both problems by transforming his two princes into barbaric knights, incorporating his comments into their speeches and revising the plot to accommodate them. This also allowed him to expand his theme. Now, while their king and two male fairies visited earth, the fairy sisters learned that each fairy had a double on earth who could be called to fairyland in his absence. Thus the two knights were brought up and havoc ensued. One can easily see artistic motive in this, but the expansion of plot also reveals the moralist at work. Whereas the tale had shown a small, select group of failings, the play brought upon the fairies many of the vices of man, considerably amplified. Mortal love

was again the cause of these vices, but while in men it was also compensator, in those who thought themselves beyond temptation it was devastating. Using the pun and riposte of the stage, Gilbert carried his attack on society to an extreme, however, and his fairies became somewhat gross caricatures.

It is true that with the departure of the mortals the fairies, humbled by their experience, regained much of their normal, sweet characters. Moreover, the moral of the piece was clearly expressed by Selene, Queen of the fairies.

Oh, let us lay this lesson to our hearts;
 Let us achieve our work with humbled souls,
 Free from the folly of self-righteousness.
 Behold, is there so wide a gulf between
 The humble wretch who, being tempted, falls,
 And that good man who rears an honoured head
 Because temptation hath not come to him?
 Shall we, from our enforced security,
 Deal mercilessly with poor mortal man,
 Who struggles, single-handed, to defend
 The demon-leaguered fortress of his soul?
 Shall we not rather (seeing how we fell)
 Give double honour to the champion, who
 Throughout his mortal peril, holds his own,
 E'en though
 His walls be somewhat battered in the fight?⁴

Unfortunately, many viewers were too shocked by the foregoing action to catch the moral, and Gilbert was severely criticized. Paradoxically, the legend of his indecency and quarrelsome nature began to grow, for he became embroiled in a lawsuit against *The Pall Mall Gazette*. The suit, in turn, brought a damning review of most of his previous writing. Peyton Wrey, far from recognizing a moral in the plays, agreed with the critic of the *Gazette* that Gilbert had implied an immorality when one of his fairies said of Selene:

For six long hours has she retained the knight
 Within the dark recesses of her bower,
 Under pretence that his unhappy wound
 Demands her unremitting watchfulness.⁵

Of the jury's opinion that "Mr. Gilbert meant no harm by his equivocal sentences," Wrey commented:

. . . Very likely he did not; but if he has any more mythological comedies forthcoming it will be advisable for him to submit them to the revision of some person who has a perception of what, without straining the text, may be very easily taken for impurity of thought and expression. The 'Pall Mall Gazette,' by its outspoken candour, did a distinct service to the cause of the drama.⁶

Even Wrey's scanty praise for Gilbert's artistry was damning.

. . . The play was ingenious; on the whole it was well received, and it was impossible not to admire the fancies and humors of the production; but it was, in parts, very strongly tainted with that unpleasant flavour which is seldom absent from the author's work.

Both the artist and the reformer would seem to have suffered a setback. But then Gilbert did something which has puzzled many of his devout disciples: within two months he turned out a parody of his own play which capitalized on its obvious weaknesses, with the addition of a magnificent satire on "Popular Government." *The Happy Land*⁷ ran in London for two hundred nights and in the provinces long after. Gilbert the opportunist had turned defeat into a rousing victory.

Since Gilbert, writing under the pseudonym of F. Latour Tomline, collaborated with Gilbert à Beckett, his share in the play has been questioned, particularly by idolators. Goldberg, possibly to retain his concept of the man, assigns only this much to Gilbert.

He sketched out a travesty on his own *The Wicked World*, penning the verses for music but leaving the dialogue to Gilbert à Beckett.⁸

The stage manager for the production, Edward Righton, supplies a far different account of authorship, however, giving credit for virtually all of the piece to Gilbert.

I had the honour of stage managing the original production of *The Happy Land* at the Court Theatre, if, indeed, he can be called stage manager who is entirely guided by the wishes of the author. . . . The question of how to dress the three male characters was one which exercised me greatly, and Mr. Latour Tomline, the *nom de plume* chosen by Mr. Gilbert, the author of both *The Wicked World* and its burlesque, *The Happy Land*, seemed to have formed no idea on the

subject. . . . I communicated my new idea to Mr. Tomline, who caught at it instantly. . . . My joy at having so gratified an author—not always too easy to please—was considerably discounted by a suspicion, almost amounting to a certainty, that from the first it had been his intention to dress his characters in a guise I thought I had sprung on him.⁹

Righton also went on to describe Gilbert's usual fanatic attention to details of acting, costume, and scenery, reinforcing the assignment of authorship.

Opportunist Gilbert surely was, for he lampooned the current vogue in political economy, the glaring defects of Popular Government, and the most annoying traits of Gladstone, Lowe, and Ayrton. He cut so close to the quick that the play was banned briefly by the Lord Chamberlain, an event which added to the play's popularity. But the artist was present as well, poking fun at weaknesses in his previous work. Gilbert began to play with a witty parody of *The Wicked World*, as his fairies revealed themselves to be paragons of virtue—untested.

Our little feet we never show,
We've never heard of Rotten Row.
D'you think we care,
To live in Eaton Square?
Oh, we're such sweet and simple girls,
We never set our caps at Earls,
We never wear
Our own—our own—back hair!

Here too Gilbert jibed at the previous paradox in which his fairies knew what they didn't know, exaggerating their ridiculous innocence. Princess Zayda, watching her brothers below, says:

They appear to be dancing on an Oriental platform, illuminated by ten thousand additional lamps. They are expressing their detestation of the wickedness of the world in a Parisian quadrille.

With the return of the brothers, he struck at yet another feature of the earlier play. To Lutin's lyric complaint on fairyland's boredom, Phyllon retorts: "Oh, drop it!"

Lutin: Drop what?

Phyllon: Blank verse. During my spell on earth I learnt to speak prose, and I prefer it.

With true artistic judgment, Gilbert reserved his new material until the play was well begun, and then thrust at contemporary politics.

Zayda: But what is our monarch doing in England?

Phyllon: He's studying political economy; they're famous for it in England. He's a guest of royalty.

Dar: As a guest of royalty! And which—oh which, of the royal palaces is placed at his disposal?

Phyllon: It's called Claridge's Hotel.

Selene: Do they put up their royal guests at an hotel?

Lutin: Invariably; it's found to be the most politically economical course they can adopt.

Dar: But it must be rather an expensive process in the end. Isn't political economy the same thing as social economy?

Lutin: Quite the reverse. Social economy means spending a penny to save a pound. Political economy is spending a pound to save a penny.

The satiric attack continued, as Gilbert brought the three unpopular government figures into fairyland and revealed their worst traits. Gladstone's "There are three courses open to us," Ayrton's abominable taste as Minister of Public Works, and Lowe's poor budgeting, together with their policy of appeasement in foreign affairs, were paraded in a rousing trio, with a "little break-down step at the end of each verse." The opportunist was occasionally shouldered aside by the reformer here, as Gilbert led his characters through the development of a Popular Government in which each post was given to the least suitable fairy. Yet the artist was not totally submerged, for in the midst of the rollicking satire he took a final fling at his earlier work, showing up its over-dramatic qualities as Zayda flamboyantly parodied its closing speech. The original had read:

No! no! Thou shalt not go, thou shalt not go!
 My hope—my shattered hope; but still my hope!
 My love—my blighted love; but still my love!
 My life—my ruined life; but still my life!
 Forgive me, Ethias: thou hast withdrawn
 The very core and substance of thy love.

Now it became:

No, no! thou shalt not go! thou shalt not go.
 My chief, my trimming chief—but still my chief;

My guide, short-sighted guide—but still my guide.
Forgive me, Mr. G., thou hast withdrawn
The very core and substance of my sense.

Thus all three facets of Gilbert's character could be seen in this, the most successful of his five dalliances with the fallen fairies. But the fascination was now to remain submerged for twenty years, while he collaborated with Sullivan in the Savoy Operas. It was only when he seemed to be grasping at straws, attempting to patch up their disastrous quarrel of the 1890's, that Gilbert returned to these symbols of earlier success. *Utopia, Limited*, produced in 1893, was intended to win back the flagging popularity of the Savoy Operas. It was in form, purposes, and tone, if not in spirit, the image of its predecessors. The opportunist most surely was in charge, yet it is striking that Gilbert seized upon the insistent theme and discarded his delightful creatures.

The fairy cloud now became an island in the South Seas, peopled by a Utopian but disappointingly mortal race. There were now twin princesses, trained to absolute virtue by an English governess, and the older Princess Zara, fresh from England with a Girton degree and all the improvements fostered by that exalted country. The three English ministers became six Flowers of Progress who formed a corporation, Utopia, Limited, with the King as president. The reformer might have entered here, but the trappings of the Savoyard muffled him. A king in love with a governess, a handsome Captain of the Life Guards, a timorous Chief Protector, a chorus of flighty maidens and stout guards, these fit the proper mold and effectively muted the old, biting, satiric wit. Even then, it should be noted, his placement of characters in a row of chairs like *Christy Minstrels* was interpreted as a fling at Royalty.

The crisis passed, but in the final analysis Gilbert could not stifle the reformer in his nature. Near the close of his career, against the judgment of Sullivan and many of his friends, he returned to moral satire. As Goldberg notes:

Nothing daunted by the refusal of Sullivan to set the libretto he had made from *The Wicked World* . . . Gilbert had peddled his manuscript to about a half dozen composers.¹⁰

In 1909, long after Sullivan's death, he finally revived the fallen fairies in an opera by that name, scored by Edward German. It met with bare success.

Superficially, the old Gilbert had returned. Plot and characters were

virtually the same as those of the early *Wicked World*. But where the artist had joyfully attacked his own weaknesses in *The Happy Land*, the ageing reformer could only reproduce his original, even using the very speeches which he had parodied as over-dramatic. True, he overcame some errors, removing misleading and offending passages, and the lyrics were smooth and craftsmanlike. Now, however, they lacked life, as if the emphasis upon moral statement had pressed the juice of healthy laughter from his work. At this low point in his career he could begin *The Fallen Fairies* with the following incredible lines.

Oh, world below!
 Oh, wicked world,
 Where sin and woe
 Lie all unfurled!
 Oh, world of shame,
 Of guilt and greed,
 Where joy in name
 Is woe indeed!
 May angel's tears be shed on thee,
 Thou wicked world of misery.

So, in the end, the reformer had his pyrrhic triumph over the artist and opportunist. Nevertheless, as Gilbert spent his final sojourn with the fallen fairies, his fascination with them revealed most starkly the truth of his life. He was a man not confused but complex, impelled strongly by one or another of these facets of his personality throughout his career, as he jostled vigorously with the wicked world.

NOTES

1. Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama: 1850-1900*. (Cambridge, 1949), vol. 1, p. 137.

2. In Sidney Dark and Rowland Grey, *W. S. Gilbert: His Life and Letters*. (London, 1923), p. 36, is the statement that "The Wicked World" appeared in *Foggerty's Fairy* in 1869. This must surely be a typographical error, as the collection of stories under that title appeared first in 1889.

3. From the title page of the Acting Edition—"Produced at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, under the Management of J. B. Buckstone, Esq., on Saturday, 4th January, 1873." See Townley Searle, *A Bibliography of Sir William Schwenck Gilbert*. (New York, 1968), p. 33, (Reprint of the London, 1931 edition), for further annotation.

4. From the text as found in *Original Plays: First Series*. (London, 1925), p. 43.

5. *Original Plays*, p. 19.

6. Peyton Wrey, "Notes on Popular Dramatists: III," *London Society* 27 (1875), 18.

7. First performed at the Royal Court Theatre, March 3rd, 1873. See also Searle, p. 31.

8. Isaac Goldberg, *The Story of Gilbert & Sullivan*. (New York, 1935), p. 159. See also Harley Granville-Barker, "Exit Planché—Enter Gilbert," *London Mercury* XXV (Nov.—April, 1931-32), 558.

9. Edward Righton, "A Suppressed Burlesque—The Happy Land," *The Theatre* XXXVII (1896), 63-64.

10. Goldberg, p. 466.

The Artistry and Authenticity of the Savoy Overtures

By ROGER HARRIS
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“Perfunctory pot-pourris,” snorted Sir Donald Tovey, majestically dismissing the overtures to the Savoy operas in his article on music for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Similar criticism of the overtures has frequently been levelled by Sullivan’s detractors. But such judgments display a remarkable lack of musical perception and are, in fact, wholly misleading.

Sullivan raised the artistic merit of the overtures far above the level of mere “pot-pourris” by two significant means—the organization of his themes into regular sonata form and a frequent use of thematic transformation, whereby many of the tunes are not simply wrenched bodily from the operas and dumped into the overtures but are reshaped melodically or harmonically for better orchestral effect.

It is true that the development sections of the overtures are very perfunctory or even non-existent. But Sullivan apparently took the view that in an avowedly comic work such a serious, learned affair as a full-scale development was out of place. And in this he could claim the support of such distinguished composers as Mozart (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Beethoven (*The Creatures of Prometheus*), Schubert (*Rosamunde*) and Rossini (in practically every overture he wrote).

The standard type of Savoy overture is found in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Patience*, *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado* and *The Grand Duke*—for all of which Sullivan was wholly or partly responsible. The typical form of these overtures is:

Long introduction in two parts (fast-slow). The one exception to this pattern is *Patience*, where the introduction is in the same tempo throughout (moderato) and is rather shorter than usual. Sullivan characteristically favoured the oboe to carry the melody of the slow sections. These extended two-part introductions, followed by a sonata-form section in a fast tempo, give the overtures an overall similarity to the tripartite 18th-century Italian overtures (fast-slow-fast).

Exposition. The two subject groups are regularly presented in tonic-dominant relationship. In *Pinafore*, for instance, the first subject (E flat) is “Never mind the why and wherefore” and the second subject (B flat) is

“Let the air with joy be laden.” (This is the only instance in all the overtures of both the main subjects being drawn from the same number in the opera.) A phrase from the first-act finale (“His eyes should flash”) forms the closing section. *The Grand Duke* is unusual in that the second subject (“But when compared with other crimes”) appears in the mediant key (E major) instead of in the customary dominant.

Development. Perhaps *pseudo-development* would be a better term for this section, which is generally only a few bars long. Sometimes it is no more than a bridge-passage into the recapitulation—a four-bar scale in *Pinafore*, 18 bars over a pedal-point drawn from the first-act finale in *Pirates* (perhaps meant to emulate a Rossini crescendo but failing because of the extreme poverty of the material). But sometimes it refers briefly to an earlier theme—for example, *Iolanthe*, which recalls the second subject (letter T—“Oh, am’rous dove!”). *Patience* develops the rhythm of the first subject (“Sing ‘Hey to you’”) for six bars.

However, it must be pointed out that several of the overtures contain interesting thematic development in either the exposition or the recapitulation. *Patience* is again an example, cleverly developing the rhythm of the first subject for eight bars in the exposition (starting eight bars after letter B). The recapitulation of *Pirates* most effectively presents the “paradox” theme in contrapuntal combination with an entirely new tune—“How beautifully blue the sky.”

The *recapitulation* is always entirely regular, with both subjects reappearing in the tonic, although it is usually considerably shorter than the exposition. In *Pirates*, for instance, the exposition fills 82 bars but the recapitulation is only 54 bars long. In *Patience* the relative proportions are even more striking—74 to 28.

The *coda* is frequently in a faster tempo than the main section of the overture. It sometimes draws on themes heard earlier (*Pirates*, *Patience*) but just as often introduces quite new material (*Pinafore*, *Iolanthe*).

Sullivan’s deft handling of thematic transformation in the overtures throws a fascinating light on his technique of composition and shows a scrupulous attention to detail. His changes are usually quite slight, but they have considerable significance in reshaping the themes to suit their transition from vocal to purely instrumental colours.

Two early examples can be found in *Pinafore*. The second part of the introduction (andante, A flat) presents “I’d laugh my rank to scorn” in a form much altered from that which appears later in the opera. It begins with

an expressive upward leap of a sixth instead of with a simple repeated note and the second phrase provides an interesting variant in place of a mere repetition. The first subject of the sonata section ("Never mind the why and wherefore") is also transformed—it avoids the rather forced turn to the dominant that occurs in the vocal trio, ending instead in the mediant minor. (It appears in its trio form in the recapitulation, however.)

Other small touches worth noting are the pert syncopated transformation of a single bar in *Patience* (bar 53, repeated in bar 55) and the poignant harmonic transformation of the tiny "Iolanthe" motif which lends such haunting charm to the opening bars of that overture.

Two of the overtures employ yet another means which moves them further from the realm of "pot-pourris"—the introduction of original material found nowhere else in the operas. The opening of *Patience* is original, and obviously intended to characterize the contrasting natures of the male and female choruses—four martial bars (the Dragoons) followed by eight droopily modulating bars (the Rapturous Maidens). Further new material forms the eight-bar tutti before letter C which leads into the second subject.

In *Iolanthe* the mysterious modal string scale which sets the magical mood of the whole is original, as are the tutti at letter N (whose rhythm pervades the short development) and the sprightly passage for woodwind and strings at letter Q which later forms a counterpoint to the second subject proper ("Oh, am'rous dove!").

Of the overtures which were not classified as "typical" in the list given above, three—*The Sorcerer*, *Ruddigore* and *Utopia Limited*—were not written by Sullivan, who can scarcely be blamed for their obvious shortcomings. Two others attributable to him—*Princess Ida* and *The Gondoliers*—are labelled not as "overtures" but as "introductions"—a significant indication that Sullivan himself recognized only full-scale sonata-form movements as genuine overtures. *The Gondoliers* is a sheer pot-pourri. But *Princess Ida* is a different case. It is a mere torso—a typical two-part introduction which would undoubtedly have been completed with a sonata-form section if Sullivan had not been stricken with his serious illness just before the first performance of the opera.

The Yeomen of the Guard is quite unique and undoubtedly Sullivan's finest overture in the Savoy series. It is a compact sonata movement combining unusual thematic wealth and development with striking originality and dramatic power.

Dispensing with an introduction, an arresting woodwind trill leads

straight into a first subject group which has no less than three main themes: (a) the "Tower" motif—brass; (b) "The screw may twist"—also brass with triplet string figuration; (c) "When a wooer goes a-wooing"—clarinet. Two of these are transformed—(b) rhythmically and (c) into a poignant chromatic line. A characteristic modulation (it also occurs in *Patience*) leads into a second subject group with two themes: (d) "Were I thy bride"—oboe—and the closing section (e) "All frenzied with despair." This latter theme makes an unexpected first appearance (pianissimo brass) in the mediant (G major), followed by (c) in diminution on the strings, before blazing out with full orchestra in the more regular dominant key.

A genuine development section follows, with plaintive phrases for clarinet and oboe soaring above the pianissimo strings, which busily develop (e) through various keys. Suddenly, startlingly, the recapitulation breaks in—*not* with (a) however but, most unusually, with (b). Theme (c) follows to a more tranquil accompaniment then—again unexpectedly—an entirely new theme is introduced by the clarinet: (f) "Oh! a private buffoon is a light-hearted loon." Perhaps no theme in any of the overtures has been so dramatically transformed as this one. In the opera it is a rollicking 6/8 patter-song; here is a strangely melancholy little tune in 2/2.

More surprises: the development breaks in again, with (e) in the strings and a tiny rising motif which has an expectant, heraldic note sounding successively on the oboe and clarinet, cornet, and flute and oboe. The woodwinds announce the first phrase of (d) against a counterpoint of (e), then (d) is recapitulated properly in the tonic by the horn amid a bustling string figure which gradually and excitingly builds up into the triumphant and long-awaited recapitulation of (a). A joyful coda, referring briefly to a new theme from the second-act finale ("With happiness their souls are cloyed") but based mainly on (f)—now more *buffo*-like—brings the overture to a grand close.

But what is the meaning of this most unusual treatment of regular sonata form? Gervase Hughes (*The Music of Arthur Sullivan*, London, 1960, p. 139) says: "Such an unconventional procedure might have been successful in a movement of larger proportions but here it merely emphasises the lack of formal organization." But this judgment is surely mistaken. Sullivan knew exactly what he was up to. All the surprising things that happen in this overture are deliberately planned to heighten the tension, whet the expectation and increase the excitement which reaches its climax in the glorious moment when the mighty "Tower" motif at last re-appears,

thundered out by the full orchestra. Everything is geared to intensify the ultimate effect of the long-delayed recapitulation of this theme—and in this aim Sullivan judged his effects perfectly and succeeded splendidly. The overture to *The Yeomen of the Guard* is the work of a master craftsman.

There is still a great deal of confusion over the authorship of the overtures. All the available evidence is summarized below, although in a few cases I have been unable to inspect the original manuscripts and my conclusions must remain provisional.

Thespis: The score is, of course, lost but the overture was certainly Sullivan's own. In 1871 he could not afford the luxury of a musical assistant. The review in *The Standard* of 30 December, 1871, described the overture as "the least satisfactory portion of the work" with a main subject reminiscent of "Mr. Molloy's popular song 'Thaddy O'Flynn.'"

Trial by Jury: No overture.

The Sorcerer: According to the review in *Figaro*, the overture played at the premiere on 17 November, 1877, was borrowed from Sullivan's incidental music to *Henry VIII*. Hughes (*op. cit.*, p. 131) offers a convincing theory that the overture now associated with the opera was written by Alfred Cellier. The manuscript score is certainly not in Sullivan's hand—although a number of alterations to it are by Sullivan. He was clearly dissatisfied with Cellier's conclusion, rewriting bars 233 to 236 and the whole of the last 37 bars.

H.M.S. Pinafore: I have been unable to study the manuscript but have been advised it is partly in the hand of Sullivan and partly in that of Hamilton Clarke.

The Pirates of Penzance: Sullivan and Alfred Cellier. Sullivan's diary for 30 December, 1879: "... Came home with Cellier, Clay & Gilbert; all set to work at the Overture. Gilbert and Clay knocked off at 3 a.m. Cellier & I wrote till 5 [on the morning of 31 December, the day of the premiere] and finished it."

Patience: Sullivan. The manuscript is in his hand and his diary for April 20, 1881, records: "... Came home late. Scored Tenor song and sketched out Overture. To bed 5:30 a.m." [on 21 April]. He finished the overture the next morning.

Iolanthe: Sullivan. His diary records that he began to "recompose" the overture on 21 November, 1882, after earlier attempts had dissatisfied him. He finished it between midnight and 7 a.m. on 23 November—two days before the premiere.

Princess Ida: Sullivan. The manuscript is in his hand.

The Mikado: Hamilton Clarke, following Sullivan's detailed instructions. The manuscript is in Clarke's hand and has at the end: "Overture designed and scored within 30 hours. H.C." In an interview recorded by *Home News* in 1889 Sullivan said: "Do you remember the Mikado overture? He [Hamilton Clarke] did that for me. I just arranged the order of the piece—the 'Mikado's March,' then 'The sun whose rays,' first for the oboe and then for violins and 'cellos, two octaves apart, and finally the allegro. He wrote the whole thing in a few hours: in fact he made it almost too elaborate, for I had to cut it down a little." The manuscript shows that Sullivan cut eight bars from the development, 46 bars from the recapitulation and eight bars leading into the coda.

Ruddigore: Hamilton Clarke. Sullivan's diary states that the overture was left to him. (The overture currently used by the D'Oyly Carte Company was written by Geoffrey Toye for the 1921 revival.)

The Yeomen of the Guard: Sullivan. The manuscript is in his hand. His diary for 1888—23 September: "Began sketching Overture." 24 September: "Began scoring Overture." 25 September: ". . . Went on with score of Overture—finished it at 3:30 a.m." [on 26 September].

The Gondoliers: Sullivan. The manuscript is in his hand and his diary for 2 December, 1889, records: ". . . After dinner wrote, arranged and scored the Overture, finishing at 3 a.m." [on 3 December—four days before the premiere].

Utopia Limited: There is no overture in the vocal score, although one was performed during the original run of the opera (Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 140). I have been unable to trace the original manuscript. A manuscript copy in Boston has an overture consisting of the Drawing Room Music, introduced by a few bars of brass fanfares. This undistinguished effort can scarcely have been Sullivan's.

The Grand Duke: Sullivan. The manuscript is in his hand.

Rank and Value in the Plays of W. S. Gilbert

By THOMAS G. HEAD
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In *The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers*, J. Hillis Miller asserts that "most of the great works of nineteenth-century literature have at their centers a character who is in doubt about his own identity and asks, 'How can I find something outside myself which will tell me who I am, and give me a place in society and in the universe?'"¹ Concern about personal identity is not, of course, peculiar to the literature of the nineteenth century. In the Middle Ages, the symbol of perfect orientation was the annihilation of the self by means of mystical union with God. In the Renaissance, Spenser's Redcrosse Knight finds his identity both as a spiritual and as a social being in the service of Gloriana, the Fairy Queen. In such a novel as *Tom Jones*, says Miller, "the hero is initially in doubt about his identity, but it usually turns out in the end that there is a place waiting for him in a stable society. In eighteenth-century England the stability of the social order, sustained by divine Providence, is a guarantee of the stability of self-hood. . . . God is still immanent in society."² In the nineteenth-century, the old certainties begin to collapse. New discoveries in geology and biology make it harder to place oneself in the cosmos. Industrialism and the political reforms which followed it make social definition more difficult. W. S. Gilbert was aware that his age offered little of substance to identify with, and, further, that changes in interests and needs were likely to make any identification only temporarily satisfying. His characters reach out after any system—political, social, military, aesthetic—which promises stability, then find the demands of the system oppressive.

Gilbert, who began his theatrical career with burlesques of the popular operas of his time, was intrigued by one of the principal elements of such operas, the foundling who miraculously finds out his true identity and is restored to his birthright. Gilbert was aware of this situation as a dramatic cliché, but a cliché which appeals to the universal need to fantasize one's origins, to think of oneself as a changeling. In *La Vivandière* (1867), Gilbert's parody of Donizetti's *La Figlia del Reggimento*, Maria, the Daughter of the Regiment, is found to be the daughter of the Marchioness of Berkenfeld. In *The Merry Zingara* (1867), a burlesque of Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl*, Arline, the daughter of Count Arnheim, is stolen away by gypsies. Many years later the Count tries a young woman for theft and recognizes

the wound which a wild boar had inflicted on his daughter shortly before she was kidnapped.

In 1870, two years later, Gilbert used a lost baby in *Our Island Home*, one of the five pieces he wrote for Mr. and Mrs. German Reed's Gallery of Illustration between 1869 and 1872.³ Captain Bang is the earliest example of a familiar Gilbertian character—the young man who attempts to compensate for his unknown origins by committing himself totally to a single moral principle. In the name of duty Captain Bang feels compelled as a pirate to kill his parents and with them any chance he might have of finding out who he is. But in Gilbert's plays the solutions to such conflicts are usually easy. Captain Bang is quite capable of shifting his allegiance from one set of absolutes to another. When he discovers that his birth on the other side of the International Date Line means he has been released from his indentures some minutes before, the inexorability of duty gives way to the inescapability of time. The conflict resolved, Captain Bang can avow that "the pirate's conscience is satisfied." He is released from his articles and he "proposes from this moment to atone for his involuntary misdeeds by an immaculate life" (pp. 128-29).⁴

Given Gilbert's fondness for Dickens and his fascination for melodramas and contemporary fairy tales, it is not surprising that he should have dramatized *Great Expectations*. Gilbert sees in Dickens' Pip, who epitomizes the aspirations and uncertainties of his age, a revelation of what a *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer has called "the mind of his fellow men as revealed in . . . their dreams."⁵ It is only in part because of the nature of the Victorian theater that Gilbert reduced the plot of *Great Expectations* to its melodramatic essentials: a crazy spinster driven insane by a faithless lover raises her beautiful niece to revenge her upon the world; an orphan boy who has been raised by his sister and her blacksmith husband finds himself with a mysterious benefactor and learns his way about in the great world; the beautiful niece and the orphan boy fall in love and it proves to be their mutual salvation. Such a fable does not necessarily question society's moral assumptions. Miss Havisham's decay, for example, never comes to symbolize, as in Dickens, the rottenness of society.

In the play Miss Havisham's function is that of a traditional comic figure, the guardian whom it is necessary for the hero and heroine to trick before they can get married. She is more an obstacle than symbol. Estella's indifference to her fate and her willingness to carry out her aunt's intentions, even though she knows they are mad, has some of the ludicrousness of Cap-

tain Bang's determination to stick to the letter of his articles of indenture, even though it means killing his parents. Miss Havisham has made her a mere snob. Gilbert's social criticism never goes beyond Dicken's attitude to, say, Mrs. Pocket, a social climber who is conscious of nothing so much as position. When Gilbert's Estella finds out about her parentage and realizes that she had loved Pip all along, even while trying to carry out Miss Havisham's intentions, she exclaims "Pip, our grief is terrible—but we will bear it together. Pip, we will lighten each other's load of sorrow, to the end of life."⁶ And that sorrow seems to be more closely connected to the shame of being related to Magwitch than to anything else.

As the final scene approaches, then, we may have some doubts about why Pip and Estella are so eager to get Magwitch out of the country, but the excitement and sentiment soon make us forget them. On the evening that Magwitch is to be put aboard a ship, Pip receives a mysterious note telling him to come to the lime kiln for information about Provis. As he enters, he is captured and bound by Orlick, who is eventually killed by Magwitch. Later, Pip tells the dying Magwitch that Estella is his daughter:

She lived, and found powerful friends—she is living now. She is a lady, and very beautiful. She is to be my wife. (Magwitch makes a violent effort to embrace Estella. He kisses her, places her hand in Pip's, and dies.)

The fable is complete. The proud Estella is humbled by the knowledge of her origins and Pip finds his salvation and identity through the love of a good woman.

It is certainly true that the exigencies of writing for the theater in 1871 had much to do with both the form and method of Gilbert's *Great Expectations*. Even with his attention to contemporary tastes one critic complained that "Too much of the sensational is admitted to suit exactly the local atmosphere."⁷ But certainly there is another important reason why Gilbert approached the dramatization of the novel as he did. He always sought solutions to social problems in terms of individual human beings. Society does not change much. Men will always be selfish and avaricious. The danger Pip faces is not of losing his identity but of identifying with a corrupt social system.

The explicit social themes of the novel make it easier to speak with certainty about Gilbert's social attitudes in *Great Expectations*. But when a satirical play has as its antecedent an entire dramatic tradition with its own

social implications, it is difficult to tell how much of the air of social commentary reflects Gilbert's own view and how much is merely inherent in the genre. This consideration is important to *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), which asks whether love can overcome social inequalities. It is hard to tell whether Gilbert agrees with Dick Deadeye that "captains' daughters don't marry foremast hands" (p. 104),⁸ or with Sir Joseph, the Captain, and Josephine that "Love can level ranks" (p. 126). The Captain's daughter does marry a foremast hand, but the marriage is made possible only by rather complex changes in rank. It is necessary to look at the play's ancestry to determine the significance of the changes.

Maurice Willson Disher has called the Jolly Jack Tar figure "the English equivalent of Figaro, born of the free will of a people."⁹ Sir Joseph in *Pinafore* insists that "a British sailor is any man's equal, excepting mine" (p. 113), and Gilbert turns the conflict between this popular egalitarianism and the Navy's rigid caste system to satiric use. T. W. Robertson's *Caste*, showing that the Hon. George d'Alroy, a military man from a long line of military men, could live happily with so debased a creature as an actress, had been produced eleven years earlier, in 1867. George speaks what is obviously the play's "moral":

Caste is a good thing if it's not carried too far. It shuts the door on the pretentious and the vulgar; but it should open the door very wide for exceptional merit. Let brains break through its barriers, and what brains cannot break through love may leap over.¹⁰

When Captain Corcoran tries to explain to his daughter why she should not marry a common sailor, he says:

I attach but little value to rank or wealth, but the line must be drawn somewhere. A man in that station may be brave and worthy, but at every step he would commit solecisms that society would never pardon. (p. 108)

After it is discovered that Ralph is really the Captain and the Captain is really Ralph, Sir Joseph is faced with the prospect of marrying even further beneath him than he had anticipated and announces to Corcoran:

Well, I need not tell you that after this change in your condition, a marriage with your daughter will be out of the question.

Capt. Don't say that, your honour—love levels all ranks.

Sir Joseph. It does to a considerable extent, but it does not level them as much as that. (p. 136)

We have seen earlier that Sir Joseph's egalitarian talk to the sailors does not go so far as to affect his own position: "a British sailor is any man's equal, excepting mine" (p. 113). We see now that neither does it apply in affairs of the heart, especially when his own self-interest is involved.¹¹

The satire of *H.M.S. Pinafore* is not directed against the egalitarian ideals held by Sir Joseph and the sailors. In the end, Ralph, who was the loudest exponent of the equality of a British sailor to anyone, anywhere, wins Josephine, just as he had wanted to. Sir Joseph, whose egalitarianism has been shown to be motivated by self-interest, is stuck with his cousin Hebe. But the Captain, who has maintained a common-sense, middle-of-the-road point of view, is demoted to the rank of a common seaman, which makes it possible for him to marry Buttercup, as he wanted to. The ending seems an unalloyed blessing only for Ralph and Josephine.

Gilbert recognized the conventions he was working with for what they were—popular forms of wish-fulfillment. The Jolly Jack Tar assured the theatre-going public that even the lowest social class which could be identified as British within the strict maritime caste system was brave and plucky and ingenious and could become the equal of even the peerage by a simple twist of fate. The egalitarianism of the "realistic drama" served the double purpose of vicarious wish-fulfillment for those held down by the system and smug assurance for those on top of it that anyone possessed of intelligence and honesty could also make his way to the top. Gilbert pokes only occasional fun at those who are socially ambitious, for by and large, like Sir Joseph, they realize they are. Gilbert sees that mistaken ideas of worth and social position are ever-present dangers and that the need to seek identity and self-importance in something larger than oneself is universal. Gilbert's satire is directed at the forms which pander to those very human needs and often disguise their dangers. His audience was familiar with these popular myths as they had come to the stage in other plays, and Gilbert's satire would not be lost on them as on most modern audiences. *H.M.S. Pinafore*, when viewed in the light of its antecedents, becomes not just a play with a stereotyped plot, but a play about the dangers of attempting to live by the popular myths of one's age.

In *The Gondoliers*, too, Gilbert uses the device of exchanged babies to investigate the effects of egalitarian sentiments on a rigidly structured social

system. Giuseppe, upon meeting Don Alhambra, affirms the republican sympathies of the brothers:

We are jolly gondoliers, the sons of Baptisto Palmieri, who led the last revolution. Republicans, heart and soul, we hold all men to be equal. As we abhor oppression, we abhor kings: as we detest vain-glory, we detest rank: as we despise effeminacy, we despise wealth. We are Venetian gondoliers—your equals in everything except our calling, in that at once your masters and your servants. (pp. 543-44)

When told that one of them is King of Barataria, however, they concede that it may be possible to conceive of an unobjectionable king and agree to reign jointly until it is determined which of them is the true monarch. The satire here is reminiscent of that to which Sir Joseph is subjected in *Pinafore*—equality is fine until it begins to impinge on one's personal privileges. Marco and Giuseppe devise a plan to reconcile their republican sympathies with their new position as king—everyone shall be given a title and everyone shall be equal—Lord High Bishop, Lord High Coachman, Lord High Vagabond. The new style of the monarchy is an interesting idea, a variation on one Gilbert had used several times before, but it is never mentioned again. The monarchs perform unkingly acts—polishing the plate, running errands, standing sentry—but the audience is never shown that this lack of decorum has serious consequences, or, indeed, any consequences at all. The only function of the episode seems to be either the humor of betraying the audience's expectations of how a king should act or providing an opportunity for a moral tag.

But even while affirming that the social order should be preserved, Gilbert acknowledges that social position can be abused. The Duke of Plaza-Toro is so poor that he has organized himself into a corporation called the "Duke of Plaza-Toro, Limited" (p. 531). Gilbert elsewhere uses the corporate liability laws to stand for an abdication of personal responsibility, and he here uses them to signify a loss of humanity as well. Casilda is horrified at the prospect of being obliged "at any time to witness her honoured sire in process of liquidation" (p. 531). The Duke abandons his position within the social system as he discards his individual identity for that of a corporate body. The Duke and Duchess are in the business of selling their position, their name, their prestige, for money. Their customers are those who would use the prestige which knowing a Duke confers in order to climb in society. The Duke and Duchess sing:

In short, if you'd kindle
 The spark of a swindle,
 Lure simpletons into your clutches—
 Yes; into your clutches.
 Or hoodwink a debtor,
 You cannot do better
Duch. Than trot out a Duke or a Duchess—
Duke. A Duke or a Duchess! (p. 575)

Though Gilbert duly affirms the need for some system of social organization, even that which the Duke and Duchess represent, he is aware of its dangers. Nineteenth-century England tried to uphold an hereditary aristocracy and at the same time allow for upward social mobility. In a work like *The Gondoliers* Gilbert both confirms and denies the standards of mere class. On the one hand, Gilbert's Pip feels the need to find a place for himself in society; on the other, he feels continually threatened by his knowledge of standards that transcend social rank, that are, in a word, moral. Complete commitment to the social structure inevitably implies, as it does in the case of Estella or Captain Bang, moral blindness. Disregard of class, however, leads to the political anarchy which Don Alhambra warns against in *The Gondoliers*, or to the social anarchy which would result from the marriage of a captain's daughter to a foremast hand. Gilbert finds a point of equilibrium by acknowledging the need for both social stability and individual moral standards. When Captain Bang's allegiance to duty requires that he kill his parents, he is shown that there is a larger allegiance. His new commitment to time is as arbitrary, however, as his former commitment to duty, but it now enables him to act in accordance with his feelings as a son. When class restrictions stand in the way of marriage, Buttercup suddenly admits that the babies had been exchanged in infancy, and the class lines are promptly redrawn to suit the lovers. Gilbert's plays assert that man never achieves valid identity within the social system: he merely makes whatever identifications are convenient. Gilbert's comedy shows we continually dissolve the social structure in favor of our more permanent desires.

NOTES

1. J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1963), pp. 8-9.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

3. *Eyes and No Eyes* (1875) was written for the Reeds after the Gallery had moved to St. George's Hall.

4. References to *Our Island Home* in the text are to Jane W. Stedman, ed. *Gilbert Before Sullivan: Six Comic Plays by W. S. Gilbert*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 32.
5. "Two Victorian Humorists: Burnand and the Mask of Gilbert," *Times Literary Supplement*, (Nov. 21, 1936), p. 936.
6. Quotations from Gilbert's *Great Expectations* are from the typescript in the British Museum. The pages are not numbered.
7. Unidentified clipping in the Enthoven Theatre Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.
8. Quotations from the Gilbert and Sullivan operas are from the most easily accessible American text, *The Complete Plays of Gilbert and Sullivan*. (New York: The Modern Library, n.d.). Page numbers are given in the text in parentheses.
9. *Blood and Thunder: Mid-Victorian Melodrama and its Origins*. (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1949), p. 54.
10. J. O. Bailey, ed. *British Plays of the Nineteenth Century*. (New York: The Odyssey Press), pp. 382-83.
11. W. A. Darlington has pointed out, in *The World of Gilbert and Sullivan*. (London and New York: Peter Nevill Ltd., 1951), p. 61, that marriage to the daughter of a naval captain in Victorian England was likely to be quite a social step up, considering Sir Joseph's working class origins.

“Bab” and *Punch*: Gilbert’s Contributions Identified

By JOHN BUSH JONES
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That William Schwenck Gilbert contributed to *Punch* has long been a well-established fact. But exactly what and how much he contributed has remained until now a matter for considerable speculation and conjecture. The only observable evidence of Gilbert’s association with *Punch*, based on examination of the magazine itself, is that between June and December, 1865, a scattering of drawings appeared bearing his “Bab” signature. The only certainty properly to be deduced from the appearance of these signatures is that Gilbert was for a time an illustrator for *Punch*. And yet, with customary reliance on insufficient evidence, the over-enthusiastic Gilbert biographers and bibliographers of the 1920’s and ’30’s assigned to him not just the illustrations themselves, but any verse or prose pieces printed in conjunction with the drawings. It is true that Gilbert generally illustrated his own work, but the Proprietor’s Copy of *Fun* contains ample proof that he also provided sketches to accompany the writings of other contributors to that magazine.¹ Indeed, basing conclusions of authorship on “Bab”-signed illustrations alone led Townley Searle wrongly to include as Gilbert’s the verse “Croquet: An Anticipation” (*Fun*, 4 May, 1867) in his *Lost Bab Ballads* of 1932. It may then be justly argued that if Gilbert sometimes illustrated others’ work in *Fun*, why could he not have done the same in *Punch* as well? He could have, and indeed he did, as will shortly be seen.

In addition to raising questions of authorship of work found in conjunction with acknowledged Gilbert drawings, the “Bab” signatures in *Punch* led to some conjectures as to whether there was any unillustrated, and, hence, entirely anonymous verse or prose by Gilbert hidden in the pages of that journal. Mercifully, no one undertook to make attributions of supposed Gilbert work in *Punch* on the basis of internal stylistic evidence, as J. M. Bulloch attempted for *Fun*, with decidedly erroneous results.² It is ironic that Bulloch did what he did, knowing full well of the existence of the Proprietor’s Copy of *Fun*, a search through which would have yielded complete and accurate attributions. It is equally ironic that for so many years people have speculated over Gilbert’s work for *Punch*, assuming that there was no extant record of contributions to *Punch* as there is for *Fun*. The fact

of the matter is that ledgers of contributions to *Punch* do exist, and, while they are not as full as the Proprietor's Copy of *Fun*—listing only “articles” to the exclusion of artwork, they nevertheless provide a fairly thorough and accurate means of identifying the majority of anonymous verse and prose contributions for most of the nineteenth century.³

The ledger volume recording all of Gilbert's written contributions to *Punch* is inscribed on the front cover “*List of Articles in Punch, Punch Copy 1862-1869.*” Each page gives the number and date of an issue of the magazine, followed by a list of contributors and the titles—sometimes in shortened form—of their writings *accepted for*, though not necessarily printed in, that given issue. Three columns at the right-hand side of each page are titled “Inserted,” “Over,” and “Total”; here is recorded for each title the length of the piece in terms of columns of type and fractions thereof, and the placement of the figure in the appropriate category indicates whether the item was to be printed in the issue corresponding to the date on the page or to be held over for a future issue. Alongside the final entry for each contributor, the “Total” column records the combined length of all his contributions accepted that week. This system of recording written contributions clearly indicates that *Punch* paid its writers according to the length of their verse or prose in terms of the double-column type format of the magazine. Since the shortest length recorded is one-fourth of a column, it would appear that the minimum payment a writer could receive would be the amount for a piece of that length even though his actual contribution was briefer yet. There is, however, one instance in which two short pieces by Gilbert are grouped together in the ledger to total one-fourth column of work.

An examination of the ledgers reveals them to be quite thorough in recording the written contributions to *Punch*, although there are numerous discrepancies between the wording of titles here and as they actually appear in print. Also, the ledgers are often inaccurate in recording a work as “Inserted” or “Over”; usually it is a work held over that has been wrongly entered as inserted, rarely the other way round. Also, when a work is listed as “Over” there is no notation as to when it was actually printed, and one must rely on the indexes to *Punch*, or, for very short anecdotes, on the tedious process of thumbing through issue after issue, to locate it.

Before presenting a listing of Gilbert's total contributions to *Punch*, I would call attention to the form of his first appearance in the ledger. On the page for 22 April, 1865, the first five items in the list below follow the author entry “Anonymous”; the “Anonymous,” however, is circled, a caret is in-

serted, and "Mr. Gilbert" written in above. Precisely what the form of this entry implies is open to conjecture, but one envisions the editor casually writing off some material not coming from one of the regular contributors, Gilbert demanding payment for his work, and the *Punch* bookkeeper making the proper amends and correction of the ledger.

The following list of Gilbert's contributions to *Punch* derives from two sources, the magazine itself for "Bab"-signed illustrations, cartoons, and engravings, and the *List of Articles in Punch* for unillustrated prose and verse. Footnotes to the entries in the list record discrepancies between the ledger and the actual printing of the pieces.

<i>Volume</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Title</i>
48	22 Apr '65	158	Extraordinary Instance of Rapid Recovery from Disease ⁴
		160	Is the University Boat Race a Myth?
		161	Ballad Minstrelsy
		165	Soundings
48	29 Apr '65	172	New Poem by a Young Lady ⁵
48	17 Jun '65	247	The Royal Academy Exhibition ⁶
49	29 Jul '65	35	The Recent Hideous Case of Hydrophobia ⁷
49	14 Oct '65	151	To My Absent Husband ⁸
49	21 Oct '65	153	The Return ⁹
49	16 Dec '65	236	<i>Illustration for</i> A Wonderful Shillingsworth ¹⁰

Chief among the contributions to our knowledge of the Gilbert canon provided by the *Punch* ledgers are the confirmation of Gilbert's authorship of "To My Absent Husband," the rejection of "A Wonderful Shillingsworth" as his, and the discovery of a hitherto "lost" poem, reprinted here for the first time since its initial appearance in *Punch*.

THE RETURN
From My Berth

The big Channel steamer is rolling exceedingly,
 Frenchmen around me are bilious and fat,
 And prone on the floor are behaving unheedingly,
 It's a "sick transit," but never mind that!

There's pleasure in feeling so coldly and clammyly,
 Joy in the needles and pins in my leg;
 Pleasure in watching that foreigner's family
 Eating stick chocolate mixed with hard egg.

There's joy in the berthing that's managed so scurvily,
 Pleasure in each individual lurch;
 Joy in the pitching about topsy-turvily,
 Fun in the custom-house officer's search!

For I'm tired of long *table-d'hôte*-ing formalities,
 Sick of my costly devotion to "red;"
 I'm weary of fathoming gambling fatalities,
 Long for a night in a big British bed!

For whenever I visit the bad Baden rookery,
 Dreams that I dream have a single key-note;
 That I'm fastened, in fetters of cast-iron cookery
 Down to a complex *roulette-table-d'hôte*!

I grieve for my tub and its naked simplicity,
 (Grief that they ask me to drown in a "bowl"!)
 This is ascribed to inborn eccentricity—
"Tiens donc ces Anglais! mais comme ils sont drôles!"

Tired am I of the sea-bathing merman-y,
 Tired am I of the *sabot* and *blouse*,
 Tired am I of the natives of Germany,
 Tired am I of the noisy Mossoos!

After for weeks of my presence bereaving you,
 London, to rush to your bosom I yearn.
 You remember the jokes that I uttered on leaving you?
 Twice as delighted, my boy, to return.

It would appear from the printing of "The Return" that Gilbert was attempting to drain every ounce of humor from the situation of an English traveler's disenchantment with the Continent, since on 7 October, 1865—only two weeks earlier—*Fun* had printed Gilbert's "Back Again," a verse dealing with precisely the same subject in very much the same manner.

It is hoped that these brief remarks will not only help to further our knowledge of Gilbert's career as a comic journalist, but also, by calling attention to the existence of the *Punch* ledgers, inspire some diligent and careful bibliographer to compile a much needed author index to the anonymous verse and prose of perhaps the greatest of the Victorian comic weeklies.

NOTES

1. The Proprietor's Copy of *Fun*, now in the Huntington Library, contains marginal notations by the editors identifying all contributors of both written material and illustrations. For a full list of Gilbert's contributions, including his illustrations for others' writings, see my "W. S. Gilbert's Contributions to *Fun*, 1865-1874," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, LXXIII (1969), 253-266.

2. "The Bab Ballads by Titles," *N&Q*, CLXXII (May 22, 1937), 362-367. None of Bulloch's "new attributions" match up with Gilbert's actual work as revealed by the marginalia of the Proprietor's Copy of *Fun*.

3. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Directors of Punch Publications, Ltd., and to Marilyn Lawes, the *Punch* Librarian for giving me access to the ledgers and for permission to cite material from them for scholarly purposes.

4. Entered in the ledger as "Extraordinary Recovery from Disease."

5. Entered as "Inserted" on 22 April under the title "Handbook for Young Ladies" and grouped with "Is the University Boat Race a Myth?" to equal one-fourth column. "New Poem by a Young Lady" is a one-line joke and would appear to be the same item as the entered "Handbook."

6. Entered in the ledger for 20 May, 1865, as "Over," under the title "The Royal Academy." The piece contains "Bab"-signed illustrations.

7. This large cartoon is signed "Bab" and contains very little text; hence, it was apparently considered artwork and not entered in the ledger of "articles."

8. This poem includes a single "Bab"-signed illustration, on the strength of which the verse was first attributed to Gilbert by Isaac Goldberg, who reprinted it on page 530 of his *The Story of Gilbert and Sullivan*. (New York, 1928.)

9. Entered in the ledger as "Inserted" on 14 October, 1865.

10. The drawing is signed "Bab." The ledger entry for 9 December, 1865, records "A Wonderful Shillingsworth" as "Over" and identifies its author as F. C. Burnand.

Meilhac and Halévy—and Gilbert: Comic Converses

By GEORGE McELROY
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Almost everyone knows that the other group of still-lively 19th-century operettas is by Offenbach; many know that *Trial by Jury* was commissioned as an afterpiece for an English production of his *La Périchole*. But some need to be reminded that the Gilbert for Offenbach's most successful works was two Frenchmen, Meilhac and Halévy. More exactly, Ludovic Halévy, alone, wrote *Ba-ta-clan*; he and Hector Crémieux did *Orphée aux Enfers*, but Halévy and Henri Meilhac wrote the other so-called Offenbachiades: *La Belle Hélène*, *Barbe-Bleu*, *La Vie Parisienne*, *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*, *La Périchole*, and *Les Brigands*.¹ (Since I believe that the controlling point of view was, throughout, that of Halévy, I feel justified in treating all the Offenbachiades as a group.) They also wrote the libretto of *Carmen*, as well as numerous non-musical plays, including *Le Réveillon*, basis of *Fledermaus*.²

Meilhac and Halévy were a challenge and a source for Gilbert; three of the four French works he adapted were theirs,³ and many of his other works have Meilhac-Halévy parallels. But, as I shall try to show, his comic method and theirs were in some ways antithetical.

For one thing, Gilbert's plots are generally burlesque melodramas in their premises and dénouements, while the plot-lines themselves often turn on some revolutionizing idea or discovery (Frederick's birthday; Strephon's power over Parliament) and the logical consequences thereof, on the general model of Aristophanes' plots. But the plots of Meilhac and Halévy are expanded farces, more in the tradition of Greek new comedy: plots of intrigue, in which worldly characters pursue a few standard, relatively light-weight objectives—sex, money, pleasure—and try to avoid unpleasant consequences, seldom being involved in matters of life and death, or even of passionate love. These characters lay schemes which never quite succeed; each failure sets up a new problem, evoking a new scheme, and so on until equilibrium (not necessarily triumph) is reached at the curtain. It is the formula which from Menander and Plautus has descended via Molière and Beaumarchais.

Another aspect of the difference between Gilbert and his French predecessors is that, where a Savoy opera presents a meticulously "realistic" setting and peoples it with out-of-this-world characters, an Offenbachiade commonly has a fantastic setting, lightly based on myth or legend (Olympus and Hades; Old Peru; Bluebeard's Castle), inhabited by characters very much of this world—the world of the Parisian Boulevards. Since, therefore, neither the plot-problems nor the characters of a Meilhac-Halévy libretto are very novel, an illusion of variety is furnished by ingenious embroideries. Characters reappear looking and acting different because they are drunk, or in disguise, or adopting some pretense. A first act normally ends with a rousing departure-chorus; in the second, all hands reappear in a new setting, with new costumes, and often with new status. Moods vary rapidly, from the frenzied gaiety of a bacchanale to the reflective pathos of someone writing or reading a letter, as in *La Périhole's* touching (if temporary) farewell to her lover. People get into strange environments: the Viceroy of Peru goes, incognito, to a café; street singers go to court, and then to prison.

The characters' very lack of individuality is comic when, in parallel situations, similar causes, acting on different people, produce remarkably similar effects. Thus, in *La Périhole*, the Viceroy demands that a girl, a boy, and the notaries all be persuaded to go through with a dubious marriage. From an inn, repeated applications of sherry, malaga, and similar persuasives are rushed in turn to the three houses in which the respective parties are being softened up, until all agree—and stagger—to the wedding.⁴

This kaleidoscope of appearances is given form not only by a straightforward, relatively simple plot (an operetta has about the amount of intrigue Meilhac and Halévy would put into a one-act farce), but by a clear-cut point of view. This was epitomized as early as the one-act *Ba-ta-clan* (1855). Halévy wrote it when he and Offenbach were learning their trade at the tiny Bouffes Parisiens, where their license limited them to four characters (a training-ground which served them much as German Reed's Gallery of Illustration later served both Gilbert and Sullivan).⁵ *Ba-ta-clan* is a *chinoiserie* set in an oriental "empire" of 27 inhabitants, lately reduced from 32 because the emperor, meaning to honour five inhabitants, mis-spoke himself and instead ordered them impaled. His imperfect command of the language results—it turns out—from his being a transplanted Frenchman; so, it seems, are not only his two chief courtiers but the chief conspirator and captain of the guard, the sinister Ko-ko-ri-ko.⁶

These exiled Parisians nostalgically recall

. . . *une vie*
Qui suivait gaiement
La folie. . . .

pursuing those pleasures with which Paris "*A brillé, brille, et toujours brillera.*" I can, sings the soprano, love you whether you are rich or poor,

Mais point de tristesse en vos yeux,
 Je vous bannis de mon empire!
 Toujours chanter et toujours rire,
 C'est la loi de nos amoureux!

Essentially, most later Offenbachiades tell similar stories of frivolous, frank, unsentimental Boulevardiers transported to other strange climes—they appear as Greek gods in *Orphée aux Enfers*, as Greek heroes in *La Belle Hélène*, and as figures of medieval legend in *Barbe-bleu*. The only difference is that, now, their transplantation is merely implicit. These unmistakable Parisians claim to be natives of their putative societies, and instead of sighing for the gaiety of Paris, they bring it with them. The discrepancy between their portentous roles and their shallow selves simultaneously satirizes both role and self. But when, in *La Vie Parisienne*, they finally appear frankly as themselves, they take on an added dimension of self-knowledge. Paris is shown producing pleasure, but selling it at high rates, both to foreigners and to natives. A Brazilian happily expects to be plundered of his third fortune in a few months—but to get his money's worth in the meantime. A Parisian admits that one cannot have both love and women; he has chosen women.

This is not mindless debauchery; it is the Epicureanism of those who know the price and will pay it, who know a bleak dawn is coming and mean to enjoy the night. It is that cult of Bacchus to which, in *Orphée aux Enfers*, Eurydice devoted herself at last, impudently re-making mythology. In *La Vie Parisienne* a courtesan sings sardonically of the brutal and expensive bacchanale that roars nightly in the fashionable Café Anglais until the exhausted revelers order tea—that last surrender of the bon vivant—and stagger home, pallid in the dawn, "drunk with champagne and pretended love." Just the same, when all the sex intrigues of the plot come to nothing (except for the Brazilian's frank purchase of the Glove-Seller's virtue), the party whirls on; the fun is in the chase, not in the kill. The soprano sings,

Drames et comédies
 Allant tant bien que mal
 Puis après ces folies
 Un pardon général!

To which the chorus answers,

Et pif, et paf, et pif, et paf!
 Oui, voilà la vie Parisienne
 Du plaisir à perdre l'haleine
 Oui voilà la vie Parisienne.

A mood quite the reverse of Gilbert's,

Make up your mind that grief 'twill bring
 If you've two beaux to every string!

For Meilhac and Halévy, real love, which is a serious thing, seems a perquisite of the lower classes, which the upper-class bacchantes rather respect when they see it. Thus, in *La Périchole* and in *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*, a triangle is formed when a ruler, playing at love, comes between two lower-class lovers, and it can be plausibly resolved when the ruler withdraws, returning matters to approximately their original state. Meilhac-Halévy plots often end in such much-ado-about-nothing fashion, quite the reverse of Gilbert's dénouements of discovery and transformation.⁷

The comedy of Meilhac and Halévy is, thus, based on premises and constructed on plots very unlike Gilbert's. But their work does resemble his in one very important respect: life is viewed through sharp lenses, which may have small depth of focus but which—unlike those of the perpetrators of so many saccharine musical “comedies,” then and since—are unclouded by sentimentality.

Thus, in 1871, it was natural for Boosey and Co., English publishers of Offenbach, to commission Gilbert to write an English version of *Les Brigands*, last of the Offenbachiades (each new one having, as a matter of course, been promptly done into English since the 1865 success of *Orpheus in the Haymarket*, Planché's adaptation of *Orphée aux Enfers*).

In *Les Brigands*, a band who can't make brigandage pay undertake a fantastically complex scheme to rob the court of Mantua (which, at one point, involves them in disguising themselves to entrap a travelling Princess, much as the bandit-gang in Gilbert's *The Mountebanks* were to plan to trap a travelling Duke and Dutchess). The Brigands fail because, in a

world where everyone “robs according to his station,” the Mantuan treasurer has already emptied the treasury on his own women.

Such universal robbery was a theme more in Gilbert’s vein than was that of any other Offenbachiade, and—since the immoralities were financial, not sexual—it required least alteration to fit Victorian sensibilities and censorship. Nonetheless, Gilbert, evidently anxious to make a thoroughly stageable version, did not content himself with simple translation, but cut many lines and added others of his own. Curiously, he cut some rather Gilbertian-sounding passages, such as one that explains how Falsacappa had inherited his gang at age three, when his father was prematurely hanged, and how honest old Pietro had preserved this inheritance for the lad, then faithfully handed it over when he came of age. In another cut passage, Falsacappa’s daughter, Fiorella, assures her father that—though her own feelings about banditry have become mixed—she honors his conduct:

You carry on the trade gloriously exercised by your father. Nothing is more respectable, and it would be well if the example were more often followed. I am proud to be your daughter—I should like to rob in your footsteps.

Perhaps this was too close to Gentle Alice Brown—whose father was a robber in a small Italian town—and who had, three years earlier, appeared in *Fun*. But the joke about the respectable hereditary profession of robbery was too close to Gilbert’s heart (it had been the basis of his own short story, “The Burglar’s Story”) for him not to elaborate it elsewhere in *The Brigands*. Thus, Fragoletto, a young farmer, fell in love with Fiorella when her father’s gang looted his home. The boy⁸ boldly comes to the robbers’ mountain lair to ask Falsacappa for his daughter’s hand; when the chief hesitates, Fragoletto says (in the original) that he understands all species of *amour-propre*; Falsacappa is a rascal (“*coquin*”) and would no doubt prefer a rascal for a son-in-law. The Chieftain, though starting at the word “rascal,” agrees, whereupon Fragoletto offers to join the band; he demonstrates his courage, they swear him in, and, to celebrate the occasion, Falsacappa authorizes a “small debauch” (or, as Gilbert puts it, “a judicious revel”). Gilbert makes the dialogue more extravagant:

Falsacappa: Marry my daughter to an honest man! Never!

Fragoletto: (taking him by the hand) I honour your sentiments, sir. They do credit to your head and your heart. You are quite right—you are a scoundrel of the deepest dye, and you want

another scoundrel of the deepest dye for a son-in-law. Isn't it so?

Falsacappa: Well, it isn't prettily expressed, but as you put it that way, it *is* so. You see, family traditions must be preserved, and a Falsacappa never yet was guilty of a *mésalliance*.

Thus, Meilhac and Halévy's neat little psychological touch becomes, in Gilbert, a burlesque devotion to principle, with upside-down principles that were to reappear at Penzance, seven years later, when another outlaw band held another judicious revel in honor of another novice becoming a full member.

When Gilbert's friend, Henry Leigh, made a much more literal translation of *Les Brigands* for a forthcoming production, Gilbert withdrew his own version. However, Boosey printed it up, in a French-English text, but only, Gilbert afterwards claimed, to secure copyright; it was withdrawn from sale, and indeed the French text shows signs of haste—it has been cut crudely, only approximately matching Gilbert's abridgements, and is full of errors. Boosey later twice printed Gilbert's text, without the French; once with, once without his name, and in both cases without date; one or both of these printings may be connected with an 1889 production by a provincial touring company, to whom Boosey leased rights to Gilbert's adaptation, despite his furious efforts to keep them from using his now golden name. He protested that his work had never been polished for the stage; Boosey offered to let him make revisions, but he naturally refused to get that involved—gratis—with a third-rate production.⁹

Also in 1871, and probably much about the time he was adapting *Les Brigands*, Gilbert wrote *Thespis*, "A Grotesque Opera," his first collaboration with Sullivan. Not surprisingly, it looks, at first glance, something like an Offenbachiade. Like the second scene of *Orphée*, it is set on Olympus, where the gods complain that sacrifices have dropped off from human, to animal, to preserved Australian beef (much as, in *La Belle Hélène*, Calchas, Grand Augur of Jupiter, had complained he got too many flowers, too little good meat). As in *Orphée*, the gods are not up to their jobs, but whereas the failings of the Frenchified gods were moral, the imperfections of Gilbert's Olympians are merely physical. That is, the gods of Halévy and Crémieux had the souls of playboys, and kept up appearances of morality only from fear of that supreme deity, Public Opinion (an evident satire on the moral principles of Second Empire notables). But Gilbert's gods

have grown old. Diana bundles up against night air; Apollo (“an elderly buck”), too tired to go out at all, sends fogs in his place. Venus employs Mercury—who naturally goes *down* at night—to pilfer makeup and back hair for her. Hoping to discover how to re-establish their standing with mortals, the gods decide to go to earth incognito (a cross between the Olympians of *Orphée*, who went to Hell for fun, and *Périchole’s* Viceroy, who goes to town incognito). But English Olympians have more sense of duty than do French ones; Gilbert’s deities would not think of deserting their posts until they had arranged for substitutes to carry on their functions: a picnicking troupe of actors, led by Thespis, who have, in fact, already impersonated the gods many times—in burlesque. The Thespians sing a round, in which each, in turn, announces what god he now is, that sounds like the kings of Greece introducing themselves, *seriatim*, in *La Belle Hélène*.

But where an Offenbachiade would have followed the old characters into a new milieu, Gilbert keeps us in the old milieu to observe the new characters. The gods’ problems are forgotten, nor do we follow out any connected chain of events. Instead, we explore the absurd consequences deducible from the mortals’ assumptions of divinity. Their personal relationships get tangled: “Venus” finds that the two men in her life, Mars and Vulcan, are impersonated by her father and grandfather, respectively; it inhibits conjugal devotion. A newly-wed couple, now “Apollo” and “Diana,” must be brother and sister, while “Apollo’s” old flame, now “Calliope,” claims him as *her* husband because Lemprière’s Classical Dictionary (Family Edition) says that Apollo “married” Calliope.

Worse, the Thespians fumble their jobs. Thespis enunciates liberal principles: *Laissez-faire* (“take it easy”) and experimentalism. So the substitute “Mars” abolishes battles, as a labor-saving experiment, and now all nations are at war, since only the fear of battle had kept them civil to each other. The new “Father Time” experimentally cut Saturday out of the week (since six is a more divisible number than seven), but Sunday, having strict principles, refused to go on after Friday, and thus neither the week nor the month could end; Thespis, as Jupiter Pluvius, having turned on the water and forgotten to turn it off, Athens has had a wet Friday in November for six months.

This is more the form of an Aristophanic comedy than of an Offenbachiade: instead of a string of thwarted schemes and ingenious expedients, all directed to some specific end, we have one big scheme, which actually pro-

duces a general revolution, and then—as in *The Birds*, or *Utopia Limited*—various absurd consequences follow, in no particular order. Gilbert's absurdities are, however, strictly Gilbertian, involving verbal, more than physical jugglings of people and personifications, words which turn into things, and puns with operational consequences. The weakness of Gilbert and Sullivan's first piece is that it starts from Meilhac-Halévy premises, deduces Gilbertian consequences (though in a form that has to be more talked about than seen in action), and gets nowhere at last; the old Olympians simply resume their roles and drive off the incompetent Thespians.

A year and a half later, Gilbert turned to Meilhac and Halévy's non-musical plays. In March, 1873 the Court theatre had staged *The Happy Land* by "F. Latour Tomline" (i.e. Gilbert) and Gilbert à Beckett, which—in the guise of a burlesque of Gilbert's own fairy comedy, *The Wicked World*—was a lively political satire. It had well-publicized censorship troubles, and Gilbert struck back with an adaptation of a new Meilhac-Halévy one-act farce, *Le Roi Candaule*,¹⁰ which satirized the public's propensity to deplore "immorality" on stage while flocking to see it. Gilbert, as "F. Latour Tomline," made this farce into a burlesque of his brush with political censorship, under the title *The Realm of Joy*, thus giving himself a three-play parlay.

Le Roi Candaule is set in the passageway behind the boxes of a theatre, where a scandalous operetta of this title is at its 159th performance. This imaginary operetta is supposed to depict that King Candaules who, Herodotus and Boccaccio tell us, was so infatuated with his own wife's naked beauty that he posted his lieutenant, Gyges, where he too could appreciate it, and thus procured his own overthrow at the hands of Gyges and the queen. This is obviously a theme no proper young girl should see; Meilhac and Halévy introduce a good bourgeois father who solves the problem of seeing it without leaving his own proper young girls at home, alone, by bringing them but shooing them out into the passageway every time a naughty song begins. Of course, two fashionable young men pick them up and teach them those same naughty songs. Meanwhile, two friends—male—are evading each other, because the first is there with his friend's mistress, whom he hopes to seduce with the aid of the operetta's influence, and the second has brought the first man's wife, with similar views—and the box-office has blunderingly sold both couples the same box. After dodges, discoveries, lamentations, and coaxings, each man ends up seeing out the play with his own lady—who insists that he invite the other man for dinner, soon!

In part, Gilbert sanitized this Gallic sex-comedy by making the "im-

proper" play which everyone wants to see his own *The Happy Land*, transparently paraphrased to "The Realm of Joy," and therefore "objectionable" because of political, not amorous frankness. But he could only make the two would-be seducers less explicit in their intentions, and marry both couples; this waters down the comic effect, and the farce ends weakly.

However, some very Gilbertian twists are added. The French box-opener, practical woman that she is, had been proud of her theatre's success in producing the lewdest show, with the least-dressed girls, yet seen: "what receipts; what a lot of overcoats; that's what it is to strike *la note juste!*" (though she quite agrees that school-girls should not hear the improper songs).

But Gilbert's Cloakwoman is appalled that society should flock to such a play. A box-keeper agrees that it is a disgraceful attack on "the most generally esteemed and unmistakably indispensable of all our Court Functionaries, I allude to the Lord High Disinfectant." The cloak-woman weepingly agrees with the bourgeois Mr. Jellybag that the play is an outrage, and threatens the constitutional principles of his girls, whom he has educated (he explains) "in a firm faith in the members of the existing government, and particularly to believe in the exalted official who will one day have the honour of presenting them at court." The Cloakwoman pleads:

Then take them away before it is too late. Oh sir, listen to the voice of a mother, have mercy on them and suffer them not to witness this horrible and demoralizing spectacle.

Thus, where Meilhac and Halévy had realistically pin-pointed the common man's inconsistent mixture of righteous concern for other people's morals with practical regard for his own interests—whatever pays must be right—Gilbert suppresses all *verbal* practicality and makes his plebeians, though quietly profiting, whole-heartedly adopt and elaborate the premises of the Lord Chamberlain's censorship, thereby reducing those premises to absurdity. Here, again, the change from sexual to political impropriety adds to the fun: the British working class were sufficiently prudish, but they would scarcely have deplored slurs on Her Majesty's Ministers in language appropriate to desecrations of religion and morality.

A full-length Meilhac-Halévy comedy, *Le Réveillon* (the one on which *Fledermaus* is based) was successfully presented in London by a French company at about this time, and Gilbert, again as "F. Latour Tomline," wrote an adaptation staged in January, 1874, as *Committed for Trial*. Much

as in the original, a man who has been charged with misconduct toward a minor public functionary tells his wife he is going off to trial, but takes in a party—with actresses—en route, while a jilted former suitor of his wife's calls on her and gets arrested in the husband's stead (and dressing gown), with much consequent to-do, next morning, at the jail. Gilbert's two-act version cut the scene of the midnight supper—the *réveillon* itself—presumably as too difficult to reconcile to a stage world in which, as in certain other realms, no married man ever flirts; it concentrated on the husband's morning-after attempts, at the jail, to find out what his substitute had been up to with his wife.

In this play Arthur Cecil, who had performed in Gilbert's German Reed entertainments, had his first important role on the "regular boards." The *Illustrated London News*, which wished Gilbert had further bowdlerized the plot, admitted that *Committed for Trial* kept the audience merry, and feared it might become popular despite its impropriety. But it failed, leading the less prudish *Athenæum* to argue that "some radical difference between the English and French languages as means for conveying comic ideas" must be the cause of the weakness French farce always displayed "in English dress"; here, the dialogue had been "in all respects of wit . . . as good or better than the original. Still, with a competent interpretation, the piece failed stongly to amuse."¹¹

Three years later, Gilbert tried again, this time retaining the party scene; the result, re-titled *On Bail*, was somewhat more successful.¹² But meantime (March 25, 1875) *Trial by Jury* had demonstrated that the *Athenæum* and other journals had been right in calling on English authors to stop adapting French comedies and operettas and write their own.

It was not that, in fact, French fun cannot survive in English, but that almost all French comedies involved some sort of sex games, and in England sex was no joke—it was reserved for melodrama. Therefore, in adaptations from the French an important thread of action was removed or attenuated, and the comedy went limp.¹³ Even a Gilbert's wit could not take up the slack, because Meilhac-Halévy characters show wit principally by coping ingeniously with tricky situations; Gilbertian characters show wit by adopting some premise, conventional or outrageous, and deducing verbally plausible consequences with preternatural consistency and disregard of real-life limitations and inhibitions. Gilbertian wit, in a French plot, was thus more apt to digress from the comic line than to forward it.

To see this distinction in basic terms, note that all comedy consists in presenting things so that we perceive them to be, simultaneously, related to each other in two opposed ways. In one view, they are connected incongruously; in another, they are connected logically or naturally. The slapstick comedian slips on a banana-peel and falls in a posture that looks absurd—but is quite in accord with the law of gravity. In a pun, words that are incongruous in sense are connected (outrageously) by sound. Satire promotes a mindless flunky to head of the Royal Navy for never thinking for himself at all, incongruously in terms of the job's demands—logically, in terms of party discipline.¹⁴ Different comic techniques differ by finding these absurdities and their balancing plausibilities in different places.

In Meilhac and Halévy, the basic incongruity is that very ordinary characters are put into extraordinary situations, an exotic decor often accenting this discrepancy. The plausibility and the fun come sometimes from these characters' frantic, very human attempts to cope with problems that are too much for them, sometimes (on the contrary) from their ingenious solutions to such problems, and sometimes from little men blandly assuming the importance belonging to roles several sizes too large for them.

In Gilbert, however, though the situations are—again—extraordinary, so are the characters; these extraordinary people, therefore, fit quite logically into those situations. The incongruity, then, is not between character and situation, but lies in the wild departure of both from the real world of which the meticulously realistic decor reminds us. But since Gilbertian characters are not so inhuman but that they act on recognizable principles, abstracted either from real life or from conventional fictions (though never, by real people, acted on so consistently and single-mindedly) we find the actions of these characters to be perfectly understandable, and indeed plausible—for them.

Thus Gilbert stretches our imaginations. We can believe that a Parisian playboy who happened to be an autocrat might, like Meilhac and Halévy's Viceroy of Peru, send recalcitrant husbands to prison. We can even imagine his reserving a special dungeon for that purpose, and we can certainly believe that, if he did so, no husband would prove recalcitrant enough to be incarcerated. But we can't believe that any autocrat ever made flirting the only capital crime, or that no married man ever flirts. Still, granted such premises, we quite see the dilemma to which the Lord High Executioner and his Bride-that-was-to-have-been are reduced, and the plausibility of the way they get out of it.

It must have been an exhilarating reversal, that night at the Royalty theatre, when the audience was transported from *La Périchole's* exotic Peru, with its familiar French-farce inhabitants, to that least exotic of settings, an English courtroom, and found it inhabited by characters only Gilbert could create, using Gilbertian ingenuity to bring that most un-romantic of actions, a breach-of-promise suit, to a conclusion plausible in a Gilbertian world, and nowhere else. Gilbert would continue to take hints from Meilhac and Halévy—Nanki-Poo, discovered hanging himself from blighted love, and persuaded to marry instead, is a variant of Piquillo in *La Périchole* except that, characteristically, Nanki-Poo is persuaded by argument, Piquillo by sherry. But never again would Gilbert confuse his type of play with theirs.

NOTES

1. Halévy, nephew of the composer of *La Juive*, was a very young bureaucrat when, in 1855, Offenbach commandeered his services to write an opening sketch for his tiny new *Bouffes Parisiens*. Both *Ba-ta-clan* and the first version of *Orphée aux Enfers* were written for the *Bouffes*, but while doing the latter Halévy got a promotion and an intimation that writing musical farce was unbecoming to a serious bureaucrat. He helped finish it, clandestinely; Crémieux alone signed the libretto, coming as close to the truth as they dared by dedicating it to Halévy (not all reference works have, even yet, rectified this fiction). Luckily, no less a personage than the Duc de Morny, president of the Corps Législatif and natural brother of the Emperor shortly asked Halévy to help with some little theatre-pieces he himself was composing. With that kind of precedent, Halévy could openly return to libretto-writing.

Even before this, while working on two non-musical farces, Halévy had co-opted Henri Meilhac, whom he had known slightly at school and who had since been engaged in journalism, as a collaborator. For nearly twenty years (1862-1881) the two did almost all their important dramatic work together; they then drifted apart, largely because Halévy was turning to fiction, while Meilhac's major interest remained the stage. Their work with Offenbach was almost all done in their first decade of collaboration; after the sobering effects of the Franco-Prussian war, and the fall of the Second Empire society they had been satirizing, they lost much of their distinctive flair for irreverent satire and ingeniously innovative dramatic twists, while Offenbach increasingly wanted lavish display, which was not their *forte*.

However, they had numerous non-Offenbach successes. Besides *Le Réveillon* and *Carmen*, these include the libretto for Le Coq's *Le petit Duc*. Meilhac and Gille wrote *Manon*; Meilhac's play *L'Attaché* is the basis of *The Merry Widow*. Thus, one way or another, together or separately, the two men were involved in the most successful works of Offenbach, Bizet, Johann Strauss, Le Coq, Massenet, and Lehar—some sort of a record. They also achieved a success that eluded Gilbert: their serious drama, *Frou-Frou*, was a smash hit. On the other hand, though Offenbach composed more than 100 stage works, *Tales of Hoffman* was the only enduring success he produced without their help.

My principal sources for their work and careers are their collected *Théâtre* (Paris, 1900-02), 8 vols.; Ludovic Halévy, *Carnets* (publiés avec une introduction et des notes par Daniel Halévy) (Paris, 1935) 2 vols.; Alain Décaux, *Offenbach, Roi du Second Empire* (Paris, 1958), and S. Kracauer, *Orpheus in Paris*, tr. Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher, (New York, 1938). All translations from Meilhac and Halévy in this paper are my own.

2. Dr. Terence Rees informed me that *Le Réveillon* is based on *Das Gefängnis*, an 1859 comedy by Julius Roderich Benedix, one of the most successful of the 100-odd plays by this German master of bourgeois comedy. For a once-popular piece, it is surprisingly scarce; even Dr. Rees had not seen a copy. Reading the New York Public Library copy, however, shows why it was eclipsed by the French work, which took over only its basic plot-device of a husband going out before reporting for a short jail term, and a suitor entering to woo the wife, then letting himself be arrested in the husband's place, to preserve the lady's reputation. Benedix had treated it all quite seriously almost melodramatically: the husband is an amiable scholar who neglects his wife only for his books; the suitor a rakish young baron, reformed on the spot by the wife's indignant rejections of his suit, who submits to arrest to atone for the hurt he had caused her. The results are complicated by a second plot, involving several extra characters—and there is no Prince Orlofsky to give a party. Meilhac and Halévy have refashioned Benedix quite as freely as Blue-Beard, or Helen of Troy.

3. Gilbert's first adaptation (as distinct from burlesques) was *The Brigands*, from *Les Brigands*, printed but not staged in 1871. In 1873, he brought out two adaptations in a month: *The Realm of Joy*, from Meilhac and Halévy's *Le Roi Candaule*, appeared at the Royalty on October 18, and *The Wedding March*, from *Un Chapeau de Paille d'Italie*, the 1851 farce by Labiche and Marc-Michel, was presented at the Court Theatre November 15. *The Wedding March* was revived by Lydia Thompson, at the Folly, in January, 1877, and, according to Eric Bentley, it had at least one American incarnation—a school performance at Groton in which Franklin Roosevelt played "Uncle Bopaddy." (*The Modern Theatre*, New York, 1955, III, 304.) About 1880 Gilbert started to adapt the same play as a libretto for Sullivan, but the latter did not want to do it. It was finally presented at the Criterion, July 17, 1892, with music by George Grossmith, as *Haste to the Wedding*; George Grossmith Jr. played "Cousin Foodle."

Gilbert's two-act abbreviation of *Le Réveillon*, entitled *Committed For Trial*, opened at the Globe January 24, 1874, but ran for only a week, plus a brief stay at Brighton. It was Gilbert's third adaptation in less than four months, and its failure to match the successes of the earlier ones may have been fortunate in keeping Gilbert from following so many of his colleagues up the blind alley of dependence on French inspiration. However, Gilbert never threw away anything he had worked on, and he came back to *Le Réveillon* with a full-length, three-act adaptation, *On Bail*, which appeared at the Criterion, Feb. 3, 1877.

Most of the above information is taken from Reginald Allen, *W. S. Gilbert: An Anniversary Survey and Exhibition Checklist* (Charlottesville, Va., 1963). Here and throughout this paper I have also made use of information from contemporary reviews, supplied to me by Jane W. Stedman.

4. I have drawn my examples primarily from *La Périchole* because, thanks to the Metropolitan Opera production with Cyril Ritchard, some seasons ago (of which revivals are rumored), it is the Offenbachiad most likely to be known to Americans. Also, as the operetta to which *Trial by Jury* was the afterpiece, it is, historically speaking, the obvious one to compare with Gilbert. All the above points could have been illustrated equally well, not only from other Offenbachiaades, but from a large proportion of French farces, musical or otherwise. Thus, mirror-image action was a staple of French farce; a good example is *Un Chambre à deux Lits*, one source of *Cox and Box*. Another occurs in Meilhac and Halévy's *Le Roi Candaule*, which Gilbert faithfully exploited in *The Happy Land*.

5. Indeed, Reed's opening bill at St. George's Hall, in December 1867, coupled *Ba-ia-clan*, adapted by William Brough as *Ching-Chow-Hi*, with Burnand and Sullivan's *La Contrabandista*. See below, note 13.

6. Although this redoubtable figure's name is, of course, the way a cock crows in French, one wonders whether the Mikado of Japan's rather less formidable agent of death might not have been his nominal descendant.

7. Discoveries are, of course, at least as common in Meilhac and Halévy's plots of intrigue as in Gilbert's parodies of melodrama. The difference is that, in the plot of intrigue (comic or serious), a discovery is merely of some design, or disguise, or pretense that one or more characters have undertaken to forward their own schemes or to thwart those of someone else. Such an exposure is only one more incident in the battle of cross-purposes being fought out, and is seldom conclusive. Thus, in *La Périchole*, the heroine tries to bribe a jailer, who promptly removes his whiskers to reveal himself as the Viceroy, in disguise. This merely sets in motion a new scheme by which the lovers soon after do succeed in escaping from prison.

Although melodramatic plots, which are a cross between those of tragedy and those of intrigue, may—*en passant*—use such incidental discoveries for thrilling turns of action, the kind of discovery with which they often end is—as in tragedy on the one hand, or in Gilbert on the other—of some fundamental fact (the hero's true parentage; the true state of the mortgage; the actual perpetrator of a grave crime) which may have been unknown even to those most involved and which, once made public, permanently alters their conditions and relationships, and thus puts an end to the plot, as in *H.M.S. Pinafore* or *Oedipus Rex*.

8. Played by Zulma Bouffar, Offenbach's mistress, who was later to be the first Carmen.

9. Miss Stedman has pointed out to me that Gilbert did salvage one number from *The Brigands* for his own uses; in *Princess Toto*, his 1876 operetta with Frederic Clay, the Princess at one point embraces banditry, and Gilbert has her close Act I by singing his version of the song with which Fiorella makes her entrance—

A hat and a bright little feather,
A gun on my shoulder—so;
A dagger in scabbard of leather,
And a pistol for a foe . . .

10. A French company had presented it at the Princess's theatre in July, 1873. *The Athenaeum* (July 18, 1873, p. 54) declared that "none of the whimsicalities of these indefatigable writers is more amusing than this."

Terence Rees has described the history of *The Happy Land*, *Le Roi Candaule*, and *The Realm of Joy* at more length in the informative introduction to his privately printed edition of the last-named play (London, 1969). He quotes Gilbert's statement, in 1909, that he had merely drawn up the scenario

for the play, while à Beckett actually wrote it. But Allen lists a 20-page ms. of Act II of *The Happy Land* in Gilbert's hand (including alterations made to conform to the censor's demands). I conclude, therefore, that when Gilbert minimized his own responsibility for that play he was practicing an "economy of the truth." This would be natural since, by 1909, he had concluded that the censor's objections to it had been well-founded. In any case, Dr. Rees tells me, Gilbert's memory was by this time so unreliable that he could entirely forget having written a play at all.

11. January 31, 1874, p. 170.

12. *On Bail* was produced at the Criterion in February 1877. A lengthy review in *The Times* (February 5) compared it with *Committed for Trial* and discussed the difficulties of adaptation involved, revealing in the process the odd gap between what was permissible on the London stage in French and in English. *Le Réveillon* itself "must by this time be pretty nearly as well known in London as in Paris," having been the mainstay of nearly every French company to visit England since its first appearance in 1872. Thus when, in *Committed for Trial*, Gilbert had omitted that "*scandalum magnatum*," the midnight supper, "everybody knew what had been left out, and . . . propriety approved the omission," but the result was unsatisfactory. *Le Réveillon*, with the *réveillon*, might possibly have been indecorous; without it, it was certainly dull.

But in *On Bail*, *The Times* assured its readers, Gilbert had not avoided but surmounted the obstacles in his path; he had retained all the incidents of the original, yet "the interests of morality and decorum are in no way offended." Scandalous-sounding actions resolve themselves, on examination, into "the most harmless little follies," in language not one syllable of which could "disgust the nicest ears." But the reviewer, with rather ostentatious reticence, left it to the public to decide whether Gilbert had, "while eliminating the lower, preserved the higher qualities of the original." He did admit that the laughter on opening night had been deserved—the original play was so amusing that it could hardly be made dull by a writer of "any experience and capacity," qualities which Gilbert eminently possessed. "Mr. Gilbert has plenty of humor of his own, and is quick at adapting to his immediate ends the humor of other people, while his judgment and experience serve him in good stead in the difficult task of deciding what may and what may not be rendered suitable for his present purposes"—a discernment all too lacking in many adaptations.

The reviewer's specific reservations were that the play was too long and too padded with "business." The latter problem was not, of course, Gilbert's fault, since he did not yet control his own staging. Indeed, *The Athenaeum* (February 10, 1877, p. 202) lamented that Gilbert could not "bring his skill to bear upon the acting, for it, too, 'stands much in need of adaptation'; in the actors' over-broad interpretations 'the individuals designed by the French authors, disappear entirely, and give place to ordinary creatures of English farce.'" But the reviewer agreed that Gilbert had shown great ingenuity in "effacing the *Palais Royal* stamp" from the supper scene with "less damage than might be expected" to its fabric; the result, "though hardly so gay as that it replaces, is not less witty."

Both reviews are discreetly implying the disappointment which *The Theatre* (February 6, 1877, p. 15) expressed roundly. "No piece of its kind" had, either in London or Paris, won a better reputation than this farcical comedy; no living English playwright had shown himself to have "a vein of comedy-wit more original and more rich than that of Mr. Gilbert," yet the hopes of a "thoroughly satisfactory" outcome of this combination of author and subject had been disappointed. Gilbert could be given only the comparatively feeble compliment "of having made a fair but not at all brilliant" translation of the ideas, if not the words, of the original, and of having "in one well-known scene replaced the unpleasant flavour of vulgarity." Except for one clever scene in the second act, Gilbert had left the comedy to rely on "such portion of its unglorious plot, as the British standard of morality allows to remain, and nothing of adequate value has been added by him to make up for what is inevitably lost. It may be that this was the best way to treat *Le Réveillon*; but if so, the treatment might assuredly have been trusted to a pen less able than that of Mr. Gilbert." It too, in some detail, censured the actors' extravagances, but even better presentation, it concluded, could scarcely have warranted "the waste of intellectual force which such work from Mr. Gilbert implies."

13. Back in 1867, *The Tomahawk* had conducted something like a campaign for home-grown comic opera instead of translated Offenbach. It greeted the prospect, and then the advent of an English *Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* with distinctly modified rapture: *La Grande Duchesse*, in Paris, was an excellent piece, but experience had shown that, once French music had been "slashed about" and French libretti "purified," the English public had been treated to "washed-out and colourless" products. Even aside from stage morality, it asserted, native tastes differed; English "humour" and French "wit" were incompatible. An English librettist's book, without half the wit of Meilhac and Halévy, would be twice as much to the audience's taste. Further, Offenbach adapted his music to the talents of the Variétés company; English actors, who had not half the "intelligence" of the French ones, needed such consideration even more. The journal pointed to the successes of Clay and Sullivan in writing, respectively, *Out of Sight* and *Cox and Box* for amateur benefit performances, and to German Reed's "opera di camera" performances at the Gallery of Illustration as showing what native talent could do. When Reed leased St. George's Hall and approached composers like Clay and Sullivan to write for it, *The Tomahawk* enthusiastically declared that the fate of British operetta could hardly be in better hands, and it greeted the Boxing Day opening bill (coupling *Ching-Chow-Hi*, William Brough's adaptation of *Ba-ta-clan*, with Sullivan and Burnand's *La Contrabandista*) as bidding fair to supply "a want so long and so universally felt in London." Burnand's book was "rhythical and fluent," and full of fun,

while Sullivan's music was "gay, tripping, and humorous," neither degenerating into burlesque nor imitating the French.

The Tomahawk was prescient; little more than a year later (March, 1869) Gilbert began his career as librettist by writing *No Cards* for the Reeds. But its enthusiasm for native talent was not disinterested. Its editor was Arthur à Beckett, and his brother Gilbert, who was to collaborate with W. S. Gilbert on *The Happy Land*, was on the staff; even more to the point, Frederic Clay was the music critic who praised *La Contrabandista* and probably wrote the earlier notices.

The Tomahawk I (1867), 174-5; 298-9; 311; 349.

Arthur William à Beckett, *The à Becketts of Punch* (London, 1903), pp. 175-6.

14. He triples the fun in telling us about it. First, he baldly presents his autobiography as a proud success story, which is logical enough, in terms of the ways politicians act and the values which they presumably hold—yet is impossible in terms of the rhetoric they (and indeed all men) use in presenting to the world their claims for admiration. Second, he ingenuously advises all of his listeners to achieve the same success by the same means, which is logical, since they would all be equally qualified to hold the job, and equally capable of pursuing this method of getting it—but is impossible, by simple arithmetic.

Strephon's 'Topsy Lout': To Cut or Not to Cut

By LEONARD MANHEIM

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In Isaac Goldberg's 1928 *Story of Gilbert and Sullivan* (still one of the best books on the subject of the topsy-turvy twins), after recounting in Chapter 17 the plot of *Iolanthe*, the text continues as follows:

Iolanthe as given to-day is not the full operetta that America knew in 1882. A recitative and song for Strephon, notably, have been deleted from later versions of the libretto and the score. The excised scene for Strephon occurs in Act II, after the trio of Lord Tolloller, Lord Mountarat, Lord Chancellor ("Faint heart never won fair lady"). Strephon enters, and after four measures of plaintive music (the song is Verdian of the *Trovatore-Traviata* period) begins:

My Bill has now been read a second time;
His ready vote no member now refuses;
In verity I wield a power sublime,
And one that I can turn to mighty uses.
What joy to carry, in the very teeth
Of Ministry, Cross-Bench and Opposition,
Some rather urgent measures—quite beneath
The ken of patriot and politician!

Song

Fold your flapping wings,
Soaring Legislature!
Stoop to little things—
Stoop to Human Nature!
Never need to roam,
Members patriotic,
Let's begin at home—
Crime is no exotic!
Bitter is your bane—
Terrible your trials—
Dingy Drury Lane:
Soapless Seven Dials!
Take a tipsy lout,
Gathered from the gutter—

Hustle him about—
 Strap him to a shutter:
 What am I but he,
 Wash'd at hours stated—
 Fed on filigree—
 Clothed and educated?
 He's a mark of scorn;
 I might be another
 If I had been born
 Of a tipsy mother.

Take a wretched thief,
 Through the city sneaking,
 Pocket handkerchief
 Ever, ever seeking;
 What is he but I
 Robb'd of all my chances—
 Picking pockets by
 Force of circumstances?
 I might be as bad—
 As unlucky, rather—
 If I'd only had
 Fagin for a father.

Mr. Goldberg made much of the fact that there seem to have been more numbers that were cut out of *Iolanthe* or that never got into it. The Savoyard lyric, "The Reward of Merit,"

Dr. Belville was regarded as the Crichton of his age:

His tragedies were reckoned much too thoughtful for the stage;

seems never to have been set to music any more than were the other texts mentioned, i.e., the never-written song "Sleep On," for Private Willis, or the intriguingly titled "Heigho, Love is a Thorn."

The Strephon number is not so buried in oblivion as Mr. Goldberg seems to have suggested. He admits by implication that the number might have been found in an earlier score, and indeed in the score which I possess and have now before me it does appear. I cannot date the score beyond the fact that it is copyrighted 1882, but I can assure you that I acquired it about 40 years later than that. The lyric is omitted from the so-called *Complete Text of the Savoy Operas* published by the British Macmillan Company originally in

1926. (The copy that I have is dated 1959.) It is, however, included in the old Boni & Liveright Modern Library edition of four of the operas edited in 1917 by Clarence Day, Jr. Let us consider for a moment why the number was probably cut and whether the cut was reasonably justified or justifiable.

Most cuts are rationalized by producers or stage directors on the grounds that the number would "slow down" the action. It is for such a reason that Katisha's second act, "Alone and yet alive," has from time to time been excised from the *Mikado*. Actually, the number seems to be more often included than otherwise. A musical director once defended it to me on the grounds that poor Katisha had to have a decent (by which he meant a sweetly melodic) number after all the mistreatment that she has received. Unfortunate contraltos have also suffered a cut in another number, included so far as I know in all the scores of *Princess Ida* and also in the Macmillan edition of the Savoy Operas, the song of Lady Blanche, which deals with the grammar of her future course of conduct and her fate:

Oh, weak Might Be!
 Oh, May, Might, Could, Would, Should!
 How powerless ye
 For evil or for good!
 In every sense
 Your moods I cheerless call,
 Whate'er your tense
 Ye are Imperfect, all!

Now certainly that number does not have to be cut because it slows down the action—rather the contrary. I have a fancy that it's cut because nobody understands the grammar, though I wonder if this can be true in enlightened Great Britain. And yet, my recollection is that the number was not included in the D'Oyly Carte productions of *Princess Ida*. (I might add parenthetically that instead of cutting out so witty a piece of verbal high-jinks it might be far better to cut Ida's apostrophe to Minerva, or her plaint about the "rock that turned to sand.") As a matter of fact, a good deal of Lady Ida is designed to slow down the action a great deal. Possibly this is prejudice on my part; I object to sopranos and tenors deploring their lot in public utterance, unless it happens to be the quandary of Josephine in *Pinafore*. Certainly if I never again heard Alexis Poindexter in *The Sorcerer* proclaim: "I love that love/ I love it only," I don't think my joy in Gilbert and Sullivan would be much diminished.

But to return to Strephon's aria, I remember at least one production in which it was sung and extraordinarily well sung, too. That was in the days when Winthrop Ames revived *Iolanthe*, back in the 'twenties, and had a brilliant idea of employing singers whom he taught how to act and actors who could learn how to sing. Among the latter was the highly competent actor Joseph Macaulay, whom I also remember in Shaw's *St. Joan*, and he was not to be balked in his account of Strephon's Crusade on behalf of the underdog. For that was precisely what endeared the number to us when we were young and, as we thought, radical, progressive—what have you? Wasn't Gilbert wonderful to call the attention of the British Legislature to human nature? Wasn't it a grand thing to be concerned with Drury Lane, with Seven Dials, in the midst of an operetta that dealt so exclusively with the ease of Belgravia?

But it's worthwhile at this remove to examine the doctrine, if I may use such a term in connection with Gilbert, embodied in Strephon's appeal for the tipsy lout. In the first place his relationship to Dickens is marked not only in the direct reference to Fagin but in the entire emotional attitude toward the alleviation of social wrongs. Dickens would not have even followed Gilbert so far as to think of the possibility of legislation to ameliorate the condition of the "disadvantaged" sections of society, if I may use the more modern term; he had too little confidence in Houses of Parliament and practical democratic institutions for that. After all, though, Gilbert didn't go much further; he says nothing direct about the House of Commons except the back-handed slap that it is more intellectual and competent than the House of Lords, which is damnation with the very faintest of praise. Consider for a moment, though, where Strephon's bill is being considered. Are we to believe that Strephon through the influence of the Fairy Queen has been raised to the peerage? By no other means can he be considered a member of the House of Lords. But, perhaps he is a fairy member of *both* houses of Parliament or of course a half-fairy member of Parliament (you remember—down to the waist!). What bill then is it that he is now talking about as having been read a second time and that may now come to a vote? It can hardly be his bill to open the peerage to competitive examination. That would do very little for Seven Dials or Drury Lane. It is, on the whole, a very vague sort of legislation to which he wishes to direct the attention of the soaring legislature. They'll be "patriotic," they'll "begin at home," they'll be firmly against "crime;" at the same time they will do something to improve the lot of those who have not been "wash'd

at hours stated" or "fed on filigree," those who may be engaged in robbing their fellow citizens, like Fagin's pupils, of pocket-handkerchiefs because they have been robbed of all their chances by an unfair—what? Is it an economic system? Is it a bad heredity? Gilbert seems to envision both possibilities. The "tipsy lout" will be such because he is born of a "tipsy mother" and/or he'll be unlucky because he has "Fagin for a father." This curious blend of economic determinism and genetic predestination makes it rather difficult to accept the song as serious doctrine. I suggest, therefore, that we'll have to find some other reason for restoring it or keeping it in the score or *Iolanthe*. I think it can stand on its own feet. I think the action after the tremendous hilarity of the trio of Mountararat, Tolloller, and the Lord Chancellor needs some slowing down, especially since the Phyllis-Strephon jig will follow shortly, and for that Strephon's aria may well serve a very useful purpose. If the audience gets a little sense of Gilbert's feeling for social justice, that's an additional bonus, and we need not inquire too closely into the political, social, or biological methodology pursued even by a member of Parliament who is endowed with the supernatural aid of a fairy queen. It's all for the best anyway, for very shortly we shall all be going "up in the air, sky-high, sky-high,/free from Wards in Chancery," and the Lord Chancellor will surely be "happier, for/he's such a susceptible Chancellor," and all of the fairies have the good fortune of never aging, and neither does *Iolanthe*.

D'Oyly Carte and the Pirates:

The Original New York Productions of Gilbert and Sullivan

By COLIN PRESTIGE

The success of the original productions of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas in New York, and the battles which Gilbert, Sullivan and D'Oyly Carte waged to outwit the pirates who made free in the absence of an international copyright, comprise a rich part of Savoy history. I must particularly acknowledge a debt to George Odell's *Annals of the New York Stage*, and to certain contemporary correspondents in New York of the British Press: these have been my major sources of information in giving the outline which follows.*

It must be remembered that there was, in the period 1875-1890, a low standard of probity in the conduct of theatrical matters. Unscrupulous managers were frequent. Actors (short of starving) were often at their complete mercy. Sullivan himself considered that the maturity of the United States in 1880 might be compared with the maturity of Great Britain in 1840. It will also be remembered that the United States had not shaken off, politically, the effects of the War between the States. It was, in 1875, a mere ten years since an insane actor, John Wilkes Booth, had assassinated Abraham Lincoln. That crime was committed in Ford's Theatre, Washington, and John Thompson Ford himself spent thirty days in jail for supposed complicity in the murder. Yet Ford in time was to become associated with the original D'Oyly Carte New York production of *The Pirates of Penzance*.

In the absence of an international copyright, managers were often acting fully within their legal rights when they presented operas without permission and without payment of royalties to author and composer. It was vain

*It would need almost line by line footnotes to identify the source of each fact stated in this paper. George Odell's annals were my starting point but I have enriched his arid outline with additional details obtained from many contemporary publications, principally *The Era*, *The Times* (London), *The New York Herald*, and *The Argus* (Melbourne). Cyril Rollins and R. John Witts' *The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company: A Record of Productions 1875-1961* was helpful in identifying forenames or initials of some of the original players named in the Appendix. Successive editions of *Who's Who in the Theatre* aided the cross-checking of dates and names. The pages of *The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal* yielded a number of points. Reginald Allen's *The First Night Gilbert and Sullivan* naturally was partial source material for *The Pirates of Penzance*. George Thorne's little book of memoirs, *Jols*, gave information about the 1885 voyage aboard S.S. *Aurania*. Original research by Professor George Hilton, of Stanford University, California, supplied some of the material upon which the outline of the copyright litigation concerning *The Mikado* was based; this was supplemented by Miss Bridget D'Oyly Carte generously allowing me access to unpublished documents in her archives. Grateful thanks must also be expressed to the staffs of five London libraries—the British Museum Library, the Newspaper Library at Colindale, the Central Reference Library, Westminster, the Chelsea Public Library and The Law Society's Library.

for the British Press to complain of a legal position deplored by certain responsible sections in New York. Only eventually was Congress shamed into granting effective legal remedies. The term "pirate" is thus strictly opprobrious. But it is a term of convenience so long used—"it's shady, but it's sanctified by custom," as Mr. Goldbury sings in *Utopia Limited*—that it may be continued.

THESPIS

Thespis, which R. E. Swartwout has called "the neglected parent of all the Gilbert and Sullivan operas," has never received a professional production in New York. An amateur version, with a "new" score by Frank Miller, was staged in New York in January 1953, but, as Duncan North wrote in *The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal*, "to have associated Sullivan's name with this production is at least a questionable matter."

TRIAL BY JURY

Trial by Jury was first produced on Maundy Thursday, 25th March, 1875, at the Royalty Theatre, Dean Street, London. Eight months later, by when it had already gained considerable success in London, it crossed the Atlantic, to receive its first American performance at the Eagle Theatre, New York, on 15th November, 1875. No earlier production of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera in the New World has yet been traced.

The Eagle Theatre, situated on the west side of Sixth Avenue, between 32nd and 33rd Streets, had opened just five weeks previously. It was a building destined to play a significant role in the story of Gilbert and Sullivan Opera in New York. The name was changed on 20th February, 1878, to the Standard Theatre; and the Standard will recur in this narrative. Later still, the Eagle was known as the Manhattan Theatre.

The Eagle production of *Trial by Jury* soared to no ambitious cloudland. The little piece was played by the theatre's regular company. It conveniently helped to fill out a week's bill. G. H. McDermott was the Learned Judge, and Rose Keene the Plaintiff.

The D'Oyly Carte Company first regularly staged *Trial by Jury* in New York during their historic visit to the Martin Beck Theatre on 13th September, 1934. Some D'Oyly Carte principals did, however, play in a single performance on 24th January, 1883, when *Trial by Jury* was included in a mixed programme for a benefit matinee. Vernona Jarbeau was then the Plaintiff.

THE SORCERER

The Sorcerer, which followed *Trial by Jury*, did not make its bow in chronological sequence. It was only after the success of *H.M.S. Pinafore* that *The Sorcerer* was staged, at the Broadway Theatre, New York, on 21st February, 1879, with William Horace Lingard as John Wellington Wells. The production lasted a fortnight. It demonstrated the mistaken assumption that another opera by Gilbert and Sullivan would be as successful as their *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Another version of *The Sorcerer* was staged in April, 1879, at the Volksgarten, with a cast which included a Fanny Prestige. History does not relate whether she had any deep-rooted affection for Gilbert and Sullivan Opera.

The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company have never staged *The Sorcerer* in New York.

H.M.S. PINAFORE

H.M.S. Pinafore marked the birth of a great tradition. The *American Register* of 10th May, 1879, ventured a prophecy that became astonishingly true:

It is probable that Messrs. Sullivan and Gilbert have builded better than they knew. They could hardly have anticipated so widespread and overwhelming a success for their merry little operetta. But its blended fun and innocency have proved irresistible to our American audiences, who like to take their enjoyment as they do their food, from clean vessels. And it is not improbable that this comparatively unimportant work may be the means of starting the great work of the regeneration of the modern stage in our native land. . . . Clergymen have approved of it. Church choirs have sung in it. Church members have gone to see it, and have been conscious of no moral degradation in the act.

Yet *H.M.S. Pinafore* did not first dock in New York harbour. To Boston belongs that honour. She sailed into that historic harbour on 25th November, 1878, just six months to the day after the first night of the original London premiere. That night, at the Boston Museum, *H.M.S. Pinafore* was presented to the American public for the first time.

By 23rd December the opera had reached the Bush Theatre, San Francisco. The harbour gates of Philadelphia were opened on 6th January, 1879. Within two months, the good ship was sailing the ocean blue in three

theatres simultaneously in the anti-theatrical Quaker city. A journalist in Philadelphia declared, "Such a furore as this opera has created I have never known before in the history of the American stage."

These productions bore little resemblance to the original opera. Nonetheless, they helped to spread its fame far and wide across the Union. The bunting was therefore out on Wednesday, 15th January, 1879, when *H.M.S. Pinafore* sailed up the Hudson river and dropped anchor at the Standard Theatre, New York.

James C. Duff was the managerial captain with the skull and cross-bones flying from his masthead. Thomas Whiffen was his Admiral (as Sir Joseph Porter has been so frequently misrepresented—he was of course a civilian), Eugene Clarke was Captain Corcoran and Eva Mills his daughter Josephine, "the fairest flower/That ever blossomed on ancestral timber."

In the modest under-statement of George Odell, Duff's production ignited "a success never before known in this city." Yet there was an initial hitch even on the maiden voyage. The opera had been inadequately rehearsed and badly produced. The chorus had no sparkle. The principals, not of a high musical accomplishment, forgot both words and music. The first night was immediately followed by a heavy snow storm which dissuaded the public from going to theatres.

With an inaccuracy equalled only by the prophecy of the *Daily Telegraph* in London that *H.M.S. Pinafore* was one of those "frothy productions destined soon to subside into nothingness," the New York correspondent of the *Era* wrote on 17th January, 1879:

Candidly, the result was a disappointment. The delicate quaintness of Mr. Gilbert's words and ideas and the exquisite beauty of Mr. Sullivan's music were recognized by the *dilettanti*, but to the masses they were *caviare*, and it is a very open question whether the piece will prove a metropolitan success.

This prophecy for a metropolitan failure was instantly contradicted. It took but three days for *H.M.S. Pinafore* to capture the affections of New Yorkers. On Saturday night, 18th January, nearly 200 people were turned away at the box office.

A keel plate of another *Pinafore* was at once laid. On 23rd January Edward Everett Rice, famous as producer of burlesques, presented his "burlesque and extravaganza company" in the second version of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. This was at the Lyceum Theatre.

The casting reflects the character of this production. An actress, Lizzie Walton, played Ralph Rackstraw. Tom Tucker, the midshipmite, was taken by Little Jessie Fortescue. The part of Mrs. Cripps, otherwise Little Buttercup, was sustained by George K. Fortescue, who was nearly seven feet tall and broad in proportion. He is said to have played the bumboat woman "with all the dainty coyness of a woman" and to have been "delightfully quaint and charming."

This production, although considered more animated than James Duff's at the Standard Theatre, ran for a mere three weeks, with many changes in the cast. Another production, at Niblo's on 10th February, lasted one week, and was heard no more. It fell flat. There were no mourners. Many other managements were ready to launch craft of the same name. Appreciation of *H.M.S. Pinafore* was spreading fast. Within three weeks of its first appearance the opera was being played simultaneously in five city theatres, the Standard, Fifth Avenue, Lyceum, Niblo's and San Francisco Minstrels.

Cartoons in newspapers were numerous. For example, there was one of a coloured boy on one foot, above the caption, "I Never Saw That Pin-afore," to which another coloured boy ironically questioned, "What, Never?" The witticisms became household words. They were quoted in society, in leading articles, in newspapers, in the law courts, and even, wrote Richard D'Oyly Carte, in the Senate at Washington, D.C. The jokes became so frequent that one humorist confessed:

We never tried to spin afore
A yarn which has been spun afore;
But when we pun on *Pinafore*,
It seems we've heard the pun afore.

On another occasion it was reported that a clergyman had said from his pulpit, in a funeral oration, "We shall miss him very much," whereupon a female relative added *sotto voce*, "and so will his sisters, and his cousins, and his aunts." There was no limit to the mania.

The catchphrases were, of course, worth tens of thousands of dollars in advertising the opera. "His sisters, and his cousins, and his aunts," "For he himself has said it," "He is an Englishman," and most particularly of all the ever-famous exchange:

Corcoran: I never use a big, big D—
Sailors: What, never?
Corcoran: No, never!

Sailors: What, *never?*

Corcoran: Hardly ever!

It is indeed a speculation, and a legitimate one, whether there would to-day be any serious interest in Gilbert and Sullivan as partners, if Gilbert's muse had not one magic night inspired him to write such irresistible lines. It was from these humble beginnings that Sullivan and Gilbert achieved their international success. It was from the over-whelming audience-penetration secured in 1879 that Gilbert and Sullivan Opera attained, in Reginald Allen's words, "an unprecedented concentration of public interest."

The merciless pirating of *H.M.S. Pinafore* meanwhile continued. One manager alone seems to have had some conscience. John Thompson Ford, writing from Baltimore, sent Sullivan a voluntary donation of £100 "as an acknowledgement of your authorship" and in recognition of the huge profit which Ford had personally made. Sullivan, appreciating that he had no legal claim to his own opera, hailed Ford's payment, and publicly described him as "not 'one man in a hundred' but one of a hundred and fifty" American managers.

The 150 different productions were, of course, of varying artistic standard and pecuniary success. On 28th February, Tony Pastor invited "all the actors in *Pinafore* now riding at anchor in New York" to witness a matinee of his burlesque production, *The T. P. Canal Boat Pinafore*. The same evening, the citizens of New Brunswick, New Jersey, showered rotten eggs on a touring company which apparently "deserved all the product of the thrifty hen it received." A few days later another company in a small town in Connecticut was rotten-egged ("rotten-egg" seems to have been an accepted transitive verb in 1879). It soon became a point of honour for audiences to attend every version available.

The 100th performance of Duff's production at the Standard Theatre came and went. Duff gave Thomas Whiffen a purse of 500 dollars as a recognition of his "admirable performance" as Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B. On St. George's day, 23rd April, the Philadelphia Church Choir Company at the Broadway Theatre interpolated the *Gloria* from Mozart's *Twelfth Mass* and the *Hallelujah Chorus*. A Sullivan-Mozart-Handel opera was quite an original combination in those days before it was parodied in *Princess Ida!*

On 28th April, a negro version opened for a fortnight at the Globe Theatre. *The New York Herald* remarked rather patronisingly that the

complexions of the actors "ranged from cream colour, through *café au lait* to strong coffee without milk, with various grades of less coffee and more milk."

A company of children gave a production at Wallack's Theatre, opening 5th May. The cast list included a "First Aunt" which suggests the crude nature of the performance. It would be interesting to know if this production inspired Richard D'Oyly Carte to stage *The Children's Pinafore* in London over the 1879-80 Christmas season.

There was no limit to American ingenuity or audacity. A scratch company sailed on *H.M.S. Pinafore* to invade Havana. The venture was a fiasco, and the Cubans soon sent the pirates packing home. A performance was given in July 1879 on a real lake in Park Garden, Providence, Rhode Island. 3,000 persons witnessed *H.M.S. Pinafore* afloat, fully rigged and manned. Little Buttercup arrived on a small boat. Sir Joseph and his celebrated relatives were rowed from the shore in a barge. Sir Joseph, as "the monarch of the sea," was received with a salvo of artillery.

All the time, however, James Duff—the first Richmond afloat—was drawing the cream of the business at the Standard Theatre. He added *Cox and Box* to his programme on 14th April, 1879, with Thomas Whiffen and Hart Conway as the two lodgers and Charles Makin as their military landlord. Duff's production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* lasted unbroken until 14th June. In five months it had earned him \$35,000. This proved to be, with some 175 performances, the longest afloat of all the productions that year.

The activities of the pirates were serious to Gilbert and Sullivan. Their opera had proved a goldmine, but not to themselves. It was virtually useless to apply to the courts for an injunction. As aliens, the law charmingly told them that they had no rights. It was, incidentally, the same in Australia. Richard D'Oyly Carte therefore sailed from England on 16th June to investigate the position for himself and to make preliminary plans for a projected new opera. On 27th June he gave his colleagues in London a fair idea of the standard of New York presentations:

I saw *Pinafore* on Wednesday. The people had all excellent voices—surprisingly good some, but not the remotest idea how to play the piece. The acting, costumes, time of music, etc. were too atrociously bad for words to express. It is fair to say that this was not one of the best companies. It is clear to me that the "business" of the piece has never been done. Everyone here thinks that the advantage of your rehearsing the piece will be enormous.

Before leaving New York, D'Oyly Carte had to face up to rumours, at once galling and absurd, that he was arranging for some of the American companies to come to London! (On the contrary, pirates were about to strike in London, while Carte was making arrangements to bring a London company to New York.) Carte quickly made a deal with John T. Ford (he who had sent Sullivan £100), first for the authentic presentation of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, and secondly for the world premiere of a new Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic freely wrote that the subject of the latter was robbers.

Carte sailed back to England at the beginning of August 1879. On 25th October Gilbert and Sullivan, accompanied by Alfred Cellier, sailed from Liverpool on the S. S. *Bothnia*. D'Oyly Carte and the main party of principals sailed a week later on the S.S. *Gallia*. A concert during the voyage raised £20 for a nautical charity.

On 5th November, that celebrated ship-building firm, W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, reached New York. They were given a reception of unbounded warmth and hospitality. The arms of New York were opened wide, the affection offered them unmistakable. Had they arrived ten months previously, they would have been unimportant nobodies. Had they given a thought for themselves, they must have reflected that 1879 was a wondrous year; it opened quietly and ended with their being international celebrities.

It was before the age of the little box, but otherwise no greeting ceremony was omitted. Streamers and tugs sailed out to greet them long before they reached the site of the yet-to-be-built Statue of Liberty. Eager journalists were at hand to interview them in their state rooms. Fortunately for posterity, the reporter of the *New York Herald* was lavish in his description of that historic arrival.

There was discussion on how *H.M.S. Pinafore* was created. Sullivan mentioned the physical pains which he had to endure during the period of composition:

“Did those striking airs” he was asked “occur to you spontaneously, or did you have to search for them, as it were?”

“Oh, it’s a great mistake to suppose that the music of an opera bubbles up like spring. We have to dig for music like a miner for his gold. It won’t do for a miner to expect the gold to come up spontaneously. He has to dig deep for it and so we, also, have to dig for our musical treasures.”

It was Gilbert's turn to be quizzed as to the source of his words:

"Did you expect these familiar quotations from *Pinafore* to become the popular catchwords which they now are?"

"Never!" was Gilbert's serious and emphatic reply.

"What! Never?"

"Well, very seldom," the author laughingly assured, "as I once innocently said before to a gentleman who asked me the same question and who laughed uproariously, he thought it so funny. But seriously speaking, I had no idea that these few jocular expressions would pass into the small currency of daily conversation. Had I sat down with the mechanical effort to coin a popular catchword, I probably should have failed completely."

Americans, in the then vernacular, "lionised" Gilbert and Sullivan. Hosts of unknown admirers were ready to greet the *Bothnia* at the Cunard dock. They were given sympathy for the no-copyright or "Steal-right-and-left-law." Their popularity, it was said in several newspapers, was not unlike that of Charles Dickens during his last visit to the Union.

"The greatest craze—or lunacy," as the *New York Herald* had described *H.M.S. Pinafore*, had died down during the heat of the summer of 1879, but it was now in full sail again. One newspaper termed the opera "perennial"—a rich adjective when New York had known the piece for less than ten months. Other adjectives were "inescapable," "ever-desirable," and (truthfully) "never-to-be-played-enough-in-every-style-comic-opera."

Three days after their arrival, the celebrated pair were entertained to dinner by the Lotus Club. A useful friend, Whitelaw Reid, editor of the *New York Herald*, was in the chair. Others present included the "intellectual elite" of the city. Gilbert and Sullivan were wined and dined and toasted. Numerous *H.M.S. Pinafore* jokes were fired off at them. They both made witty speeches, and were uproariously cheered. In the course of his speech, Gilbert declared:

Apart from the fact that we have no copyright, and we are not yet managers in the United States, we see no reason why we should be the only one not permitted to play the piece here!

It was at this time that there occurred one of the most famous of all Gilbert's witticisms. A gushing lady friend said: "I do so admire your friend Sullivan's music. It reminds me so much of dear Bach's music. Tell

me, is dear Bach still composing?" To which Gilbert replied: "No, madam, dear Bach is decomposing." Let us pay tribute to New York for originating this wonderful exchange.

On 11th November, the two partners saw the German Philadelphia Church Choir version of *H.M.S. Pinafore* at Broadway Opera House. At the same time, Sullivan and Gilbert learnt that a children's *Pinafore* company had disbanded at the instance of some society concerned with preventing cruelty to children. The New York public felt that the deprivation was a far greater cruelty to the children than the one alleged.

During the ensuing fortnight, the great pair—united in greatness as never previously—were busy preparing for the premiere on 1st December, 1879, of their own production of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. They recruited an orchestra and chorus locally. The first night audience at the Fifth Avenue Theatre comprised, wrote one journalist:

no finer class of people, representative of all that is intellectual, artistic and socially elevated in New York . . . to do honour to genius and culture.

When Sullivan entered the orchestra pit, he was greeted with such a storm of applause that he was compelled to respond by repeated bows before he was allowed to start conducting his own music. The drums rolled. The chorus sang:

We sail the ocean blue,
And our saucy ship's a beauty:
We're sober men and true,
And attentive to our duty.

It was quickly appreciated that this was the real *H.M.S. Pinafore*. It was found that the orchestrations had a breadth, colour and tone which had been completely missing in the home-made products. It was found that under Gilbert's careful training the lines had a wit and a meaning the very existence of which had hitherto been unknown.

When the evening came to an end, author and composer were summoned before the gas-lamps amid loud cheers. In response to unremitting calls, Gilbert made a speech:

It appears you expect a speech from me. It is only fair to say that I was entirely unprepared for such a reception, and yet it has been such that I should be faulty if the words did not come to me that ex-

press in some measure, ever so small, the thanks due for your pleasant welcome of ourselves and our company.

Concerning the piece, you are quite aware it is not new, and that it has been presented in your metropolis more than once. Our object has been to enable you to institute comparisons with other performances of the kind, because our version of *Pinafore* has had a run of over 500 nights at the Opera Comique in London, and is still on the boards, and we hope to be able to present certain new features that would maintain the great interest that has been shown in the opera in America.

In my own behalf, as well as that of my colleague, I may say that we can never be too grateful for the warmth of your welcome. We are here simply as two hard-working Englishmen whose ambition is to supply your stage and ours with work that is not altogether imbecile, and that shall merit just such praise as has greeted our ears tonight.

The speech was "applauded to the echo." There could, of course, have been no happier touch in it than the modest reference to "two hard-working Englishmen." Everyone realised that it was greatly to their credit, for W. S. Gilbert himself had said it, that they were Englishmen.

This was the first great Gilbert and Sullivan first night in any part of the world. Amongst those in the cast was Jessie Bond, the London creator of the role of Hebe. Signor Brocolini, who played Captain Corcoran in New York, was not Italian. His real name was John Clarke, but he took his stage name from Brooklyn. Blanche Roosevelt, otherwise Rosavella, who played Josephine, was an American singer. She possessed a coloratura soprano voice, and while not altogether sympathetically cast as Josephine (she had played the role occasionally in London in September 1879), she excelled in the "farmyard effects" which Sullivan deliberately gave her to sing as Mabel in *The Pirates of Penzance*.

However, the most interesting piece of casting for this D'Oyly Carte premiere of *H.M.S. Pinafore* in New York was in the chorus. One of the sailors on board his own ship, well disguised with a beard, was W. S. Gilbert! This is the only recorded instance in which the librettist played in a first night performance of one of his own operas.

The New York production was a triumph, but it was too late. The opera had been played to surfeit during the previous eleven months. Gilbert and

Sullivan could do little except hurry on the production of *The Pirates of Penzance*.

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

Rehearsals for *The Pirates of Penzance* were long and arduous, and not without thorns. Gilbert was meticulous in stage-managing. His thoroughness made some of the American chorus at once resentful and admiring. Sullivan composed part of the opera in New York and then had difficulty with the orchestra, who declared that they were entitled to be paid on the salary scale appropriate to grand opera. Remembering his entertainment at the table of the Lotus Club, Sullivan adroitly sought an interview with Whitelaw Reid, editor of the *New York Herald*. Reid kindly published an inspired paragraph to the effect that the composer was contemplating bringing over his own orchestra from England. That problem solved, there was a rush to complete the overture in time for the first night. In consequence of overwork, Sullivan became ill.

On New Year's Eve, the social, artistic and literary aristocracy of New York crowded to attend the first night of *The Pirates of Penzance*. The evening was an overwhelming triumph. Sullivan cabled to his mother in London:

Biscuit, Blood, Candlestick, Caricature,
Laundress, Forgery, Malediction.

Those incongruous and ill-assorted nouns were explicable by reference to the elaborate code which Gilbert devised before they left home in October to cover most conceivable, and some inconceivable, contingencies which could arise during their five-month absence. When Mrs. Sullivan referred to the list of code-words supplied by her son's witty partner she learnt that:

Biscuit—We played new piece last night.

Blood—Piece enormously successful.

Candlestick—Both [Gilbert and Sullivan] equally successful.

Caricature—Both called.

Laundress—£270.

Forgery—Notices generally magnificent.

Malediction—Send this to Mrs. Gilbert, 24 Boltons Kensington [Gilbert's wife, they then living at 24 The Boltons, South Kensington].

Fortunately Sullivan was saved the necessity of cabling "Bridegroom" (piece

hissed) and Mrs. Sullivan was gratified not to receive "Carrot" (Gilbert only called).

Sullivan subsequently wrote to his mother that the new opera had secured a "success unparalleled in New York . . . complete and instantaneous." The critics supported that verdict. The *New York Sun* wrote that the opera was:

sparkling with humorous dialogue, refined in suggestion, pure in style, admirable in dramatic situation, and embellished with music at the same time musicianally and popular.

The *New York World* opined that:

Compared with *Pinafore* [the successor was] infinitely superior in music, plot, language and humor, while musically there can be no comparison. . . . The text is exceedingly funny.

At the conclusion of the evening Gilbert (not this time a pirate) made a brief speech acknowledging the cheers showered upon him and his partners.

J. H. Ryley, as Major-General Stanley, made a strong hit. The audience loved him for his very topical ability to "whistle all the airs from that infernal nonsense *Pinafore*"; just what so many boys had done in the streets of New York during the past year.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that Gilbert chose the theme of pirates with malice aforethought. There is something at once Gilbertianly ridiculous and deliciously funny in the implication that a band of British "bobbies"—"undaunted men in blue"—should set out to arrest "in Queen Victoria's name" the ennobled theatrical pirates.

Packed houses became the order of the night. The receipts were never less than \$1,000 a performance, and sometimes were as much as \$1,600 for a single evening. It was said that no dramatic author had ever made so much money, per night, for a lengthened run, as Gilbert received as his half share in *The Pirates of Penzance*—and this despite the fact that many London allusions were missed by New York audiences.

During the first six weeks of the New York run it was reported that Gilbert and Sullivan had received \$4,000 a week. Good judges estimated that the opera would yield £10,000 a year for two to three years. It was thought that even more could be earned if Gilbert and Sullivan had been quicker in establishing touring companies of *The Pirates of Penzance* on the road.

It is indeed strange that they did not strike while the iron was hot. Rumours were afloat that American managers were secretly rehearsing *The Pirates of Penzance* for piratical provincial tours. Some clever lawyer put forward the argument that since a copyright performance had been given in England, at Paignton, Devonshire, before the New York premiere, it followed that *The Pirates of Penzance* became in the United States public property in the same way as *H.M.S. Pinafore*.

Spies were sent to the D'Oyly Carte performances at the Fifth Avenue Theatre to memorise the score. Bribes were offered, in vain, to the American members of the orchestra. Alfred Cellier, as musical director, took the band parts back to his hotel each night and locked them in a safe which he had installed there. Somehow there was a "leak." When Cellier was in San Francisco, he was offered a complete set of band parts for £5, parts which the vendor claimed to have compiled from memory. Cellier's scepticism was well founded. The parts contained mistakes that existed in the original copies, as well as a portion of the overture which Cellier had outlined and Sullivan had deleted.

Gilbert and Sullivan were vigilant. They instructed their lawyers to ferret out the pirates, and for this purpose they instructed a chain of legal firms throughout the United States to protect their interests and apply for local injunctions. Many pirates abandoned their proposed plans. Some instead staged parodies of the new opera. None surely had a more apt title than the trifle named *The Pirates of Pinafore*. Somewhat heavier was one called *Penn's Aunts Among the Pirates*.

The first provincial production of *The Pirates of Penzance* was at the Broadway Theatre, Philadelphia, on 9th February, 1880. Gilbert superintended the rehearsals. Sullivan conducted the first night before a packed house. Tours going as far south as Atlanta, Charleston and Savannah and north to Boston and Buffalo were arranged. The opera was reaping a rich harvest for its sponsors.

A serious difficulty meanwhile arose over the lease of the Fifth Avenue Theatre in New York where *The Pirates of Penzance* was running. E. E. Rice, the burlesque manager, had previously secured a four week option on the theatre. Gilbert and Sullivan had to pay \$1,500 in order to buy Rice out. Another manager had a subsequent option starting on 6th March. He refused to be bought out. The initial run in New York of *The Pirates of Penzance* thus sadly came to a premature end after nine and a half weeks. The opera was played in other theatres, in Brooklyn as well as Manhattan,

but for all the ovation it received at its first night, it never repeated the great success of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. The craze of one season is seldom the craze of another.

Gilbert and Sullivan sailed home on the S.S. *Gallia* on the 3rd March, to prepare for the London presentation of the opera. They had made much money, and had won a great moral victory against the pirates. They left behind them the affection of all New York. D'Oyly Carte followed a week later on the *City of Chester*, tired but happy after his arduous labours in the New World.

The fact that *The Pirates of Penzance* was partly composed in New York is commemorated with a plaque unveiled in 1927 in the presence of members of Winthrop Ames' Gilbert and Sullivan Company, who were then appearing in *The Mikado*. The plaque is placed on the site of the hotel at 45 East 20th Street, where Sullivan stayed in 1879. The plaque, now rather tarnished, is worded a little inaccurately and reads:

ON THIS SITE
SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN
COMPOSED
"THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE"
DURING 1879

PATIENCE

H.M.S. Pinafore and *The Pirates of Penzance* are the "primitive" operas. Their successor, *Patience*, received its New York premiere five months after its first presentation in London. The New York first night was on 22nd September, 1881, at the Standard Theatre—that same edifice from which the pirates of *H.M.S. Pinafore* had hoisted the black flag in January 1879.

Alfred Cellier was conductor. The cast was not over-impressive, although it included J. H. Ryley who followed the Grossmith pattern by playing Reginald Bunthorne. Augusta Roche was Lady Jane. She had played the part at the Opera Comique in London, as had Arthur Wilkinson and L. Cadwalladr in their respective roles of Major Murgatroyd and Lieutenant the Duke of Dunstable.

Rival managers made no effort to stage piratical versions before D'Oyly Carte's own production. When they found that *Patience* was a success, they were quick to try their luck. One American historian, Allston Brown, went so far as to declare that *Patience* was the greatest financial success which the Standard Theatre had ever known, taking about \$100,000 (a statement of

doubtful validity). This compares with the \$60,000 taken during the original run of *H.M.S. Pinafore* at the same theatre.

Oscar Wilde arrived in New York four days after the gala 100th performance of *Patience*. It is often supposed that Richard D'Oyly Carte employed Wilde as a "sandwich-man" to boost American productions of *Patience* in the belief that Gilbert's satire would be insufficiently understood without the personal presence of the High Priest of Aestheticism. In fact, his presence can only have affected the box-office for touring companies of *Patience*. The New York production ran until 4th March, 1882, a total of 177 performances. It was a run of which any New York manager could justifiably be proud in relation to the circumstances existing in 1882.

Three days after his arrival in New York, Wilde went to see *Patience* at the Standard Theatre. (He had attended the first night at the Opera Comique in London the previous April.) The crowd waiting to see the famous aesthetic leaving the theatre after the performance was so large that Wilde had to retreat through a back door. Such was fame!

Richard D'Oyly Carte arrived in New York a week after Oscar Wilde, and stayed for seven weeks. Apart from his business in connection with *Patience* and managing Wilde's lecture tour, he was busy arranging for other companies to play in non-Gilbert and Sullivan operas in the United States. The burden of coping with these productions fell on Carte's secretary, Helen Lenoir (later his second wife). She had previously visited the United States in connection with *H.M.S. Pinafore* and *The Pirates of Penzance*.

IOLANTHE

Iolanthe enjoys the distinction, unique in theatrical annals, of having received its London and New York premieres on the same day, 25th November, 1882, with only sufficient interval in time as that imposed by the laws of longitude. As New Yorkers filed into the Standard Theatre on the opening night, cables from London told them of the London success of the new opera which they were about to see.

The New York cast was again headed by J. H. Ryley, who sustained the Lord Chancellor. Marie Jansen, who was pretty but could not sing, played the title role, which was created in London by the vivacious Jessie Bond. The equally vivacious Kate Forster played the small part of Leila. Augusta Roche was the Queen of the Fairies, while Cadwalladr and Wilkinson undertook the two earls. The casting was little more than average.

Alfred Cellier was the conductor. The overture used for the New York

production was not that composed by Sullivan, but one compiled by Cellier. Apart from this, the opera heard in New York was, musically, substantially as heard in London. The producer was Charles Harris, brother of that Augustus Harris, the impresario of Drury Lane, who earned for himself (partly on account of his magnificent Christmas pantomimes) the affectionate soubriquet of "Druriolanus." Charles Harris had a long association with D'Oyly Carte.

The performance in New York included Strepson's venture into melodic sociology. This song, "Fagin for a father," was omitted from the London production shortly after the first night following complaints by drama critics that Gilbert had no right, in an entertainment, to draw attention to the appalling slum conditions endured by the working classes in Victorian London. The New York production also retained for longer than its London counterpart Lord Mountararat's deleted song, "De Belleville was regarded as the Crichton of his age."

Business was brisk. The opera ran until 24th February, 1883, some 80 to 90 performances in all. It is said that there was some doubt among New Yorkers whether dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts and barons habitually wore robes in the streets in London. The citizens were not that innocent, but the story reflects that familiarity with the *locale* is often essential to full appreciation of Gilbert's wit.

PRINCESS IDA

Next in sequence of the Savoy operas came the gentle *Princess Ida*. It was produced at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York on 11th February, 1884, five weeks after its premiere at the Savoy Theatre. Frank Thornton, who had played in several operas in London, was sent out by D'Oyly Carte to be the producer.

With the exception of Signor Brocolini (John Clarke) and J. H. Ryley as the rival kings, the cast was undistinguished, if not inadequate. Cora Tanner was, musically, beneath the demands of the title role. She sang, said one critic, "miserably." It was cuttingly pointed out that she had only recently transferred herself from the dramatic to the operatic stage.

The theatre was full for the opening night, because the opera had been widely advertised, but appreciation was limited. Audiences recognized the fine mounting, with handsome scenery and some gorgeous costumes. But—if *Princess Ida* had not been an opera by Gilbert and Sullivan, it would have been a flat failure.

The libretto disappointed, and not merely on account of the blank verse. It was thought uninspired and uninspiring. *The Sorcerer* excepted, *Princess Ida* was the least successful Gilbert and Sullivan opera to date. It was predicted that such success as it might achieve would be solely one of curiosity.

Nevertheless, it ran for six weeks, until 22nd March. It was then sent on tour. Even Richard D'Oyly Carte seems to have had doubts as to the standard of production. When the opera was revived in New York in November 1886, with Geraldine Ulmar in the title role and the popular Courtice Pounds as Hilarion, Carte laid some stress on the inadequacies of 1884. But well produced as was the 1886 revival, it ran then for only three weeks. In New York *Princess Ida* has, regrettably, never enjoyed any great reputation.

THE MIKADO

If *Iolanthe* and *Princess Ida* had revealed a falling-off in the enthusiasm of the New York public, the next opera, *The Mikado*, was to recall all the glories and all the shame of those piratical days of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. As George Odell so savagely commented, there occurred "the second signal seizure of the rights."

Richard D'Oyly Carte contemplated negotiations with two American managers for the New York presentation of *The Mikado*, John Stetson and James C. Duff. Both men came to London and negotiated separately with Carte. After three weeks' negotiation, Duff rejected an offer of a British touring company which Carte offered on the basis that Duff would provide the orchestra and that Carte would have the right to cancel the contract on two weeks' notice when the receipts fell below \$6,000 a week. Under this offer Duff would receive 40 per cent of the gross takings. However, since Duff found these terms not sufficiently attractive, Carte decided to "close" with Stetson, whereupon Duff went home, boasting that he would also stage *The Mikado*, and that the law allowed him to do so.

Time was on Duff's side. *The Mikado* had been produced in London on 14th March, 1885. It was understood that the Carte-Stetson production would not be given in New York until October. Why, one may ask, was such a long interval contemplated? Why did not D'Oyly Carte contemplate simultaneous productions, as with *Iolanthe*?

Duff used this interval to his advantage. He sent an agent to London to buy up Japanese dresses. D'Oyly Carte countered, and promptly acquired every Japanese costume in London and Paris. Duff set detectives to spy on

Stetson and Stetson's theatre, the Fifth Avenue. Carte instructed Stetson to set detectives on Duff and on the Standard Theatre.

Duff then announced that his production of *The Mikado* would take place on Monday, 24th August, 1885. D'Oyly Carte was prepared. He arranged for a company of Savoyards to cross the Atlantic under conditions of the utmost secrecy. Players were quietly warned that their departure was imminent. One Wednesday evening D'Oyly Carte asked George Thorne, who was to play Ko-Ko in New York, if he would leave for the United States in a hurry.

"Yes," said the loyal Thorne.

"How soon?" asked Carte.

"Tomorrow, if you wish."

"It will probably be Saturday . . . When you leave, not a soul must see you away, and you will be entered on the passenger list under a fictitious name."

On Friday evening Thorne received a telegram: "Meet company Lime Street [Liverpool], 6.0a.m. tomorrow special train proceed to Angel Hotel for breakfast from there to S.S. *Aurania* by special tender at 8.0a.m."

The singers were cheerfully locked in their cabins when the passengers' tender arrived at 3.0p.m. that Saturday. They were only too happy to enter into the conspiracy. Mr. E. Clarke and Mr. Fred Hurley, otherwise Savoyards well known to posterity as Fred Billington and George Thorne, rehearsed their new names so as not to make mistakes in the presence of other passengers. Mr. Felix Donn (Courtice Pounds) and Miss T. Caddy (Kate Forster) chatted together genially. D'Oyly Carte himself was disguised, under the *nom de voyage* of Henry Chapman.

Once the *Aurania* had left Queenstown (Cobh) Ireland, the Savoyards revealed their identity. They were then free from the risk of news of their voyage being cabled, ahead of them, to New York. Henry Chapman and his company of ex-aliases reached New York early on Monday, 17th August, 1885, unheralded by newspapers, and eager for the forthcoming battle.

As soon as they had disembarked, Stetson announced that the D'Oyly Carte presentation of *The Mikado* would be on Thursday the 20th. Consternation in theatrical quarters! Duff retaliated by announcing that his unauthorised production would be moved from 24th August back to Wednesday the 19th. Stetson then declared that the D'Oyly Carte first night would also be on the 19th. Duff then announced, with a show of grace that

deceived nobody, that his presentation would, after all, be on the 24th. Duff knew well that no one would attend his premiere if there were a clash of first nights.

The Fifth Avenue first night on 19th August comprised, as the Mikado himself said, a "very good house." One correspondent wrote:

To say it was a great success cannot describe the triumph it received. The house was simply packed, the opera was received with the utmost enthusiasm.

The cast was the strongest that D'Oyly Carte had yet sent to New York. To this factor must be attributed much of the success that enabled the D'Oyly Carte-Stetson production to maintain superiority over the many rival versions of *The Mikado* which New York saw in the ensuing months.

The chorus, always so important to Savoy Opera, was very fine. George Thorne won golden opinions for his interpretation of Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner of Titipu. "His dry humour, clear enunciation and agility at once put him high up in public favour," wrote the New York correspondent of the *Era*. Fred Billington was immense as Pooh-Bah, Lord High Everything Else. Courtice Pounds, then only 23, won the heart of every girl with his good looks, while his voice was a real pleasure to hear. He earned the nickname of "the vest-pocket tenor." Frederick Federici was a magnificent Mikado, and as the run progressed his impersonation of the Emperor of Japan became "the talk of the town."

An American singer, Geraldine Ulmar, did not show as Yum-Yum the promise that later characterised her performances at the Savoy Theatre, London, when she created the roles of Elsie Maynard in *The Yeomen of the Guard* and Gianetta in *The Gondoliers*. Kate Forster, however, as Pitti-Sing captured the house. She quickly established a personal following and became the darling of New York. Her gay and witty personality helped a great deal to ensure a smooth reign for *The Mikado*. (In later years Kate Forster played the leading contralto roles in D'Oyly Carte touring companies in the English provinces.)

In the face of such a successful first night, it was prophesied that James C. Duff's version of *The Mikado* would have to be superb if it were to equal the standard of Carte's and Stetson's production. It was rumoured that Duff's company had barely started to rehearse, and so it turned out. His premiere, five nights later, was a failure, tentative and wholly lacking in authority.

Visually, it was commonplace. Duff had none of D'Oyly Carte's rich colourings in scenery and costumes. His cast was inferior, particularly in their acting. (Singing alone is not sufficient in Savoy Opera.) Thomas Whiffen, who played Sir Joseph Porter for Duff in 1879, was an ineffective Pooh-Bah, falling far short of entertained expectations. J. H. Ryley, no longer under contract to D'Oyly Carte, disappointed vastly as Ko-Ko. Musically, Duff detracted from his own performance by not using Sullivan's own sparkling orchestrations, but instead an imitation which had been made for the purpose of circumventing a copyright technicality. In the face of Carte's superiority, one critic coldly dismissed James Duff's version with the single word "superfluous." Nevertheless, as Lady Blanche would remark in *Princess Ida*, it earned Duff much of the "needful."

It has often been supposed that as a result of Stetson and D'Oyly Carte outwitting Duff, the former gave the first New York presentation of *The Mikado*. This is incorrect. Careful research shows that the pirates had drawn their snickersnees even before Henry Chapman (alias Richard D'Oyly Carte) had embarked on the *Aurania*.

For example, one manager, Robert Grau, caused costumes to be made on the basis of designs that had appeared in English illustrated magazines. He invented business where the printed libretto (sent over from London) gave no hint of what the actors should do. He had his own orchestration made, based on the published vocal score. Two weeks' rehearsals were sufficient for Grau.

Another manager, Sydney Rosenfeld, went, literally, one stage further in his determination. He had already produced *The Mikado* in Chicago on 6th July, and had found that his nightly takings exceeded \$1,000. He therefore announced that *The Mikado* would be played at the Union Square Theatre, New York, on 20th July, 1885.

Lawyers for Gilbert, Sullivan, Carte and Stetson at once invoked the law. Judge Wheeler granted a temporary injunction restraining Rosenfeld from presenting *The Mikado* until there had been a full trial on the question of who owned the American performing rights in the opera.

Rosenfeld adopted a quick subterfuge. He arranged for the Union Square Theatre to be sub-let to a friend of his, Edward J. Abrahams. Rosenfeld's name was taken off the posters, and Abrahams nominally presented the first *The Mikado* in New York on 20th July. It lasted but one night, because the next day warrants were issued for the arrest of Rosenfeld and Abrahams.

Abrahams then made a sudden journey to the State of New Jersey, where the New York marshals had no jurisdiction. Rosenfeld wrote from Chicago, explaining that he had not fled the law, but that he was obliged to keep an urgent appointment. He did not however explain why his celebratory supper after the first night of *The Mikado* had no host. The actors also wanted Rosenfeld. They did not appreciate having played two weeks in his company without salary.

Rosenfeld's production, in truth the first in New York of *The Mikado*, had no honour. It had been hustled on to the boards, regardless of all artistic and aesthetic considerations; Odell found some glee in quoting the critic of the *New York Herald*, who thought it:

. . . wholly discreditable. Through the veil of bad acting and worse singing one could discern that *The Mikado* . . . was a masterpiece of musical drollery. But as here presented, it was butchered, botched, mauled and mangled. Mr. Roland Reed [Ko-Ko] was the only member of the company who met its requirements.

The cast was indeed poor, although Alice Harrison as Yum-Yum did receive some little praise. The chorus was reported as being "vile" and never in accord with the orchestra. The costumes were very common. James Duff was in the audience, and it is ironical that he protested strongly against such a bad production! No great city ever staged a more unworthy premiere of a great theatrical work.

Rosenfeld, together with one of his associates, Ed Clayburgh, was imprisoned for having defied Judge Wheeler's injunction. He was released on payment of a fine of \$750. Since he had no money, this sum was raised by his wife working and by subscriptions from friends.

Another "pirate" version of *The Mikado* was staged before D'Oyly Carte's company reached New York. On 10th August, 1885, Harry Miner presented *The Mikado* at Harry Miner's People's Theatre, with almost the same cast as Rosenfeld had engaged. This time Judge Brown refused to grant an injunction although the facts were similar with those in the Rosenfeld case. Judge Brown would not even consider a temporary injunction. He merely required Miner to enter into a bond for \$7,500. This presented no difficulty, since Harry Miner did a "gold-rushing" business with his indifferent company.

It was, in fact, impossible wholly to protect *The Mikado* against the pirates. The D'Oyly Carte-Stetson production at the Fifth Avenue Theatre

had to fight rival versions staged all over New York. It was its artistic merits which enabled it to survive the long duel. Carte's nightly receipts were, gratifyingly, between \$1,250 and \$1,650. Crowds were turned away, but ticket speculators in the street were rife.

A fortnight after his first night, Richard D'Oyly Carte received the melancholy news that his wife Blanche Julia had died in England, on 31st August, from bronchitis. The shock of bereavement was in part softened by the wave of sympathy offered by friends in New York. Carte had never realised what a popular personality he was in the Union.

A few days later, on 17th September, 1885, Carte received another reversal. Judge Wallace gave an important law decision denying D'Oyly Carte an injunction against James Duff. Wallace showed some sympathy towards the feelings of Gilbert and Sullivan, but he held that the strict legal position was that publication of the libretto and vocal score in England amounted, under American law, to putting the entire opera in the public domain. Judge Wallace added that Sullivan's device of employing George Lowell Tracy of Boston, Massachusetts, to re-arrange the orchestration did not render the music subject to United States copyright law. Tracy had merely culled Sullivan's notes and melodies.

It is not proposed to analyse in this paper the numerous legal actions which D'Oyly Carte, or his representatives, brought in the American courts, nor to comment upon the various technicalities which the Savoyards adopted in the endeavour to claim that they held an accepted copyright under American law. Those are subjects vast enough to warrant a separate monograph. Suffice it to say that these legal actions were costly, but in the long run not without their due effect. Sullivan and Gilbert almost literally made a law of operatic copyright through the tiresome and expensive process of bringing individual cases to the American courts, and then persuading judges to give decisions which would stand as binding precedents. In Massachusetts, for example, they obtained a court decision completely contrary to that granted in New York State by Judge Wallace, with the result that the performing rights of *The Mikado* could be protected in Boston and other parts of the north-eastern circuit of the Union.

The establishment of these legal anomalies helped Gilbert and Sullivan. They gradually converted public opinion. Congress was shamed into enacting legislation. The Berne Copyright Convention of 1886, when member-countries reciprocally agreed to protect works first published in convention countries, gave further moral support to the Savoyards' fight. This, how-

ever, in no way solved the particular problem of Gilbert and Sullivan, since the United States, perversely, was not an adherent to the Berne Convention.

D'Oyly Carte and Stetson were not, meanwhile, content to rest on any laurels. Sir Arthur Sullivan happened in September 1885 to be in the United States, on a private visit to his recently orphaned nephews and nieces. His personal prestige was used to advertise the merits of the D'Oyly Carte production of *The Mikado* at the Fifth Avenue Theatre.

One night the composer sat quietly at the back of Stetson's personal box, and witnessed a performance of his masterpiece. If his presence had been generally known, he would have received an ovation. That ceremony was reserved for the following week, when a gala performance was held (24th September, 1885), Sullivan himself conducting. The prices of all the seats were doubled. There were new and elegant programmes, bouquets for the ladies, buttonholes for the men, an orchestra of 50 instrumentalists and (Gilbert being absent) topical additions to some of the songs.

It was an uproarious evening. Nearly every item was encored. (The audience doubtless demanded the virtual repetition of the opera as consolation for paying double-price for the seats!) They were also determined to make the most of hearing Sullivan's music conducted by the composer. "Such an opportunity may not occur again." Delicious Kate Forster as Pitti-Sing secured the honours of the evening. Courtice Pounds as Nanki-Poo, Fred Billington as Pooh-Bah and Frederick Federici in the title role were all rapturously received.

At the conclusion, Arthur Sullivan made a happy and tactful speech, though not without a barbed sting at the absence of an international copyright. He was cheered until he blushed. D'Oyly Carte, standing in the wings, could not but be proud. Shortly afterwards, Sullivan had supper with Thomas Whiffen (the Pooh-Bah of Duff's piratical production) and his wife at old Delmonico's restaurant (when it was on 26th Street) and reminisced of their early childhood together. Whiffen's father was immortalised by Charles Dickens as the original Town Crier of Eatanswill in *Pickwick Papers*, and when the son died in 1897 Sullivan wrote a letter of condolence to his widow.

Success alone was not, however, the solution to D'Oyly Carte's and Stetson's difficulties. The spirit of *The Mikado* became misrepresented. The opera was used to advertise everything from cigars to tooth-paste. Trade cards were distributed picturing the three little maids in three kinds of corsets. Children's mugs and china figurines became prolific.

Unauthorized productions and burlesques became just as prolific. A German version at the Thalia Theatre included such characters as Puh-Bah, Pisch-Tusch and Pup-Bah. Tony Pastor's Theatre staged an all-female production with one male participant, as Katisha. George Odell traced "something unpleasant" in this travesty.

The Philadelphia Church Choir Company gave performances at the Lexington Avenue Opera House and at the Criterion Theatre, Brooklyn. Colonel John McCaull's company played at the Park Theatre, Brooklyn. (Gilbert and Sullivan had ceded McCaull exclusive rights to play the opera in certain States, but that did not stop McCaull from pirating *The Mikado* in New York State.) The Templeton Company played at the Third Avenue Theatre and the next week at the Theatre Comique, Harlem, where William Gillette had just played in Charles Hawtrey's *The Private Secretary*.

Something less than innocent fun was to be extracted from the crude burlesques staged in New York during October and November 1885. One of these contained such characters as My-card-Oh (which suggests gambling), Nincumpoop, Bah-Pooh-Bah, Push-Push-Tusk, Kat-with-Claw, Sing-a-Sing (suggestive of the opera's theme of capital punishment), Peek-a-Doo and Ko-Ko and Co. It is doubtful if the production was as amusing as the *dramatis personae*.

More cutting, however, was the burlesque on life at Balmoral Castle which Koster and Bial staged during November 1885. In distinction from Gilbert's famous apostrophe on Beerbohm Tree's interpretation of Hamlet, Koster and Bial's burlesque was said to be both funny and vulgar. Katisha was re-interpreted as Vicky Shaw, and was played by a man. To a certain section of American taste, it was tickling to hear references to Queen Victoria's supposed addiction to Scotch. Nanki-Poo was renamed Freddy-Pooh, while Nanki-Poo's affianced rather crudely appeared in this burlesque as Langtry-Pooh. The piece somehow also introduced a "late gillie of the Royal Household." He may have been mouldering in his grave, but evidently his soul went marching on!

The Mikado, in short, was subjected to every sort of cruel treatment and fiendish punishment. It is almost astonishing that it should have survived at all but it is said that in one evening in 1886, 170 separate performances took place throughout the United States. The authentic D'Oyly Carte-Stetson production at the Fifth Avenue Theatre continued its serene way, although many liberties were frequently taken with Gilbert's text. Gags

which pleased the gallery were alien to the more refined taste of the better parts of the house.

The officially styled 100th performance was given on 25th November, 1885, before a crowded audience. They were duly presented with the traditional D'Oyly Carte souvenir. The takings at the box-office were still at the phenomenal level of the first week of the run. The opera had established itself as unquestionably the most popular theatrical venture—play, opera or burlesque—in New York. Elsewhere also it was doing well, particularly in Boston (where Richard Mansfield played Ko-Ko in an eye-glass), Chicago and Philadelphia.

And yet, at this very juncture, Stetson on behalf of D'Oyly Carte was obliged to go cap in hand to his chief rival, Duff! Stetson's lease of the Fifth Avenue Theatre was drawing to an end. Four managements had previously booked the theatre for January and February 1886. *The Mikado*, still at the high noon of its prosperity, would have to end its run if Stetson could not secure a suitable alternative theatre.

Carte became involved in a contradictory controversy as to the facts, so that it is difficult to reconstruct exactly what happened. It would however appear that Stetson, with Carte's knowledge, offered Duff \$10,000 if Duff would remove his piratical company either to Boston or to Chicago, and there present the opera as a licensed production. In this Gilbertian way, Duff would obtain the profits from presenting his company in Boston or Chicago and at the same time would collect rent for the Standard Theatre in New York. It was a *Cox and Box* situation.

At any rate, Duff did take his company to Chicago, and Stetson did move Carte's company to the Standard Theatre for a month. The difficulty was overcome, although the change of theatre dampened business. On 22nd February, D'Oyly Carte and Stetson's production of *The Mikado* returned to its original home at the Fifth Avenue Theatre.

All good things come to an end, and so did *The Mikado*. Courtice Pounds was honoured with a matinee benefit concert at Chickering Hall. Every young lady in New York attended. The concert was reported as being "wonderfully successful"! George Thorne meanwhile introduced some new business into his part of Ko-Ko. It was to do with his big toe. He held it down with his fan. He stamped on it with the other foot. The audience came to expect the toe ceremony as a regular and necessary part of the performance.

The last night came, on 17th April. *The Mikado* had run for 250 per-

formances. It was a sad evening; "joy" did not "reign everywhere around." The cast were popular friends, and had been feted. Now they were sailing back to England. Many of them would proceed afterwards on a tour round the continent of Europe. Happily, many of the singers were to return to New York nearly two years later, to appear in *Ruddygore*.

RUDDYGORE

It is a sobering contrast that hardly any excitement accompanied the D'Oyly Carte production of *Ruddygore*—it was spelt with the accursed "y" throughout its original run in New York. The theatrical sharks did not, this time, expect a tasty meal.

Ruddygore was first presented at the Fifth Avenue Theatre on 21st February 1887, a bare month after its London premiere. A notable audience foregathered, more Bohemian than fashionable. The overture was received with hearty applause. The players were warmly greeted as old friends when they made their first entrances. But half way through the evening, disenchantment set in. Endurance replaced enthusiasm.

It was not that the singers did not work hard enough. Geraldine Ulmar and George Thorne were charming as Rose Maybud and Robin Oakapple, in their duet of unconfessed love. Courtice Pounds as Richard Dauntless reaped the personal success that had been accorded to him when he had played Nanki-Poo. Fred Billington was properly amusing as Sir Despard Murgatroyd.

Yet Gilbert's wit was too subtle: the audience, missing the finer points in the opera, merely felt that the plot was weak and that his methods had palled by repetition. George Odell, however, considered that for sheer fooling the debate with the ghosts that they ought never to have died was one of the funniest things which Gilbert ever wrote.

The opera ran in New York until 9th April. A score of some 45 performances in six weeks was thought respectable in those days, but it was no glorious achievement. *Ruddygore* brought no fresh laurels to Gilbert and Sullivan. The opera remained neglected in New York until the D'Oyly Carte Company revived it on 24th September, 1934, with the three baronets played by Martyn Green, Sydney Granville and Darrell Fancourt.

THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD

An elaborate attempt was made to protect the music copyright in the next opera, *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Joseph H. Wadsworth of Boston,

Massachusetts, was employed to prepare a "piano and pianoforte copy" of the score. The intention was to argue that it was then an American composition, and so subject to American copyright law. This device, based on one used in connection with *The Mikado*, was hardly worth the effort. The *Yeomen of the Guard* achieved only a moderate success. It has never gained in the United States the position in popular favour accorded to it in Great Britain.

The new opera was produced by D'Oyly Carte's old lieutenant, Richard Barker, and was first performed in New York at the Casino Theatre on 17th October, 1888, a fortnight after its triumphant first night in London. The usual crowded and, for the most part, fashionable audience found the cast below the standard expected from D'Oyly Carte.

J. H. Ryley had been recruited back to the D'Oyly Carte fold. He was admirable as Jack Point, but the public had forgotten his previous triumphs in Savoy Opera. Fred Solomon was said to have caught the spirit of Wilfred Shadbolt, the lugubrious headjailer. Henry Hallam, however, was anything but satisfactory in the tenor lead as Colonel Fairfax. He could manage neither his words nor his music.

The Yeomen of the Guard ran for 100 performances, closing on 19th January, 1889. The great deal of money which D'Oyly Carte reputedly lost over the opera in America showed only too plainly that the taste of New Yorkers did not coincide with the taste of those who were meanwhile flocking regularly to the Savoy Theatre in London.

THE GONDOLIERS

Disappointing as was the public response to *Ruddygore* and *The Yeomen of the Guard*, no one could have foreseen the fiasco of indifference which greeted *The Gondoliers*, the last of the great operas. Gilbert and Sullivan found that they had to swallow a bitter pill—made more bitter by the scintillating success of the opera in London.

The opening night in New York, 7th January, 1890, was at the Park Theatre. It severely damaged the reputations of both Gilbert and D'Oyly Carte. Gloom settled over the audience. There was an atmosphere of heavy effort about the production. There was an absence of that piquancy which marked Gilbert's earlier work. The audience thought the scenery bad, the lighting bad, and the acting bad. The critics were unanimous in their condemnation. The opera was nick-named, with some justification, "The Gone-Dollars."

There were rumours that Park, with whom D'Oyly Carte had arranged this production, would sue D'Oyly Carte for sending over such an inferior company of artists. They were not, in fact, all that inferior. George Temple and Kate Talby, both of whom had had previous Savoy experience, were the Duke and Duchess of Plaza-Toro. Richard Clarke was an adequate Marco. But in the face of prejudice, it was only Esther Palliser, as Gianetta, who received good notices.

The acrid attacks in the Press lost none of their virulence. Sarcasms at the expense of Carte and his company continued, symptomatic of the news-value interest which the public took in *The Gondoliers*. The Press gratuitously advertised the opera, with the result that its first week's takings were stated to be the large sum of \$7,525. (As Don Alhambra del Bolero, the Grand Inquisitor, sings, "Up goes the price of shoddy!")

With the exception of Esther Palliser, the players were affected by the gloom. Lines were freely cut, and local gags were generously interpolated, in a vain endeavour to enliven the performance. Such a fiasco inevitably prejudiced American provincial tours of the opera.

Richard D'Oyly Carte in London was not unnaturally disturbed by the news that audiences, deterred by the savage criticisms, were falling away. At once he determined to investigate for himself. He sailed from Southampton on 17th January, 1890, accompanied by his second wife, the former Helen Lenoir. On 28th January the Cartes spent an embarrassing evening, seated in the almost empty Park Theatre. The company were so timid that they sang worse than ever. Immediately the curtain had fallen, Carte called them together for a rehearsal, and cabled back to London for recruitments to the cast.

With D'Oyly Carte present personally, *The Gondoliers* was radically re-staged. On 18th February all was ready. The opera was transferred to Palmer's Theatre, and given virtually a second first night.

Frank Davis, who had some reputation in burlesque as a low comedian, was installed as the Duke of Plaza-Toro. It is doubtful if Gilbert would have recognised his performance, but it gave some life to the opera. That faithful Savoyard, Helier Le Maistre, was promoted from the unimportant part of Antonio to appear as Luiz. Richard Temple, who had created so many bass-baritone roles in London, took over Giuseppe Palmieri, the part which Rutland Barrington had created at the Savoy Theatre. Temple proved very satisfactory. And as Don Alhambra del Bolero, the Grand Inquisitor of Spain, there was now Fred Billington, always reliable. His droll, humorous characterisation of His Distinction was much appreciated.

The audience was delighted. For the first time, it was possible to appreciate the merits in Gilbert's libretto and in Sullivan's score. The critics were reasonably generous with their praise. Yet not even so drastic a reproduction could entirely save the situation. The opera ran until 19th April, but to this day it is stated that American audiences do not care for *The Gondoliers*.

There was understandably, little pirating of "The Gone-Dollars." John Stetson gave an all-American production at the Amphion Theatre, Brooklyn, on 3rd February. Richard and Helen D'Oyly Carte were present. It was only a moderate success. It was discernible that Gilbert's wit was broadened to the extent that it became cheapened. Signor Brocolini (John Clarke) played the Duke of Plaza-Toro in his native town. The honours of the evening went to Marian Manolo as Gianetta. Unfortunately for Stetson, an injunction forced her to leave the cast, as she was under contract to Colonel McCaull.

UTOPIA (LIMITED)

Gilbert and Sullivan had found no great success in New York since *The Mikado* in 1885. It was thus with some foreboding that *Utopia (Limited)*—with the parenthesis—was staged on 26th March, 1894, at the Broadway Theatre. There was a brilliant and enthusiastic audience. The mounting was superb, the colours delightful. But the company which D'Oyly Carte had sent over was undistinguished. The opera ran for six weeks, and closed on 12th May.

THE GRAND DUKE

New York has never honoured the Gilbert and Sullivan swan-song, *The Grand Duke*, with a full scale professional production. The nearest approach has been Dorothy Raedler's "museum piece" presentation given at the Greenwich Mews Theatre for a few nights beginning 11th May, 1961. A piano and Hammond organ served in place of a "full band." Sixty five years after the opera's original production in London, the least successful of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas was reported by the Press of New York primarily on account of its curiosity value.

* * *

In London, W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan were feted as the author and composer of a brilliant series of operas. In New York, during the period from 1879 to 1894, they were honoured as the author and composer of two magnificent masterpieces, *H.M.S. Pinafore* and *The Mikado*. The other operas enjoyed a varying success.

APPENDIX

Casts of Original Productions in New York

This appendix gives the cast for the original presentation in New York of each opera except *The Sorcerer*. Research has not so far ascertained the full cast for the original (non-D'Oyly Carte) presentation of *The Sorcerer*.

The D'Oyly Carte presentations of *Trial by Jury*, *H.M.S. Pinafore* and *The Mikado* were in each case forestalled by an unauthorised "pirate" production. The casts for the first D'Oyly Carte presentations of these three operas are also given.

TRIAL BY JURY

Eagle Theatre
15th November 1875

Martin Beck Theatre
13th September 1934

The Learned Judge	G. H. McDermott	Sydney Granville
Counsel for the Plaintiff	G. H. Coes	Leslie Rands
The Defendant	W. Forrester	Robert Wilson
Foreman of the Jury	J. Danvers	Frank Steward
Usher	J. Hogan	Richard Walker
Associate		C. William Morgan
The Plaintiff	Rose Keene	Doreen Denny
First Bridesmaid	Julia Hogan	Kathleen Frances

H.M.S. PINAFORE

Standard Theatre
15th January 1879

Fifth Avenue Theatre
1st December 1879

The Rt. Hon. Sir		
Joseph Porter, K.C.B.	Thomas Whiffen	J. H. Ryley
Captain Corcoran	Eugene Clarke	Signor Brocolini
Ralph Rackstraw	Henri Laurent	Hugh Talbot
Dick Deadeye	W. Davidge	Furneaux Cook
Bill Bobstay	Charles Makin	Fred Clifton
Bob Becket	H. J. Burt	Cuthbert
Tom Tucker	Master Herbey	—
Tom Bowline	J. Wilmot	—
Josephine	Eva Mills	Blanche Roosevelt
Hebe	Vernona Jarbeau	Jessie Bond
Little Buttercup	Blanche Galton	Alice Barnett

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

Fifth Avenue Theatre
31st December 1879

Major-General Stanley	J. H. Ryley
The Pirate King	Signor Brocolini
Samuel	Furneaux Cook
Frederic	Hugh Talbot
Sergeant of Police	Fred Clifton
Mabel	Blanche Roosevelt
Edith	Jessie Bond
Kate	Rosina Brandram
Isabel	Billie Barlow
Ruth	Alice Barnett

PATIENCE

Standard Theatre
22nd September 1881

Colonel Calverley	William T. Carleton
Major Murgatroyd	Arthur Wilkinson
Lieut. the Duke of Dunstable	L. Cadwalladr
Reginald Bunthorne	J. H. Ryley
Archibald Grosvenor	James Barton
Mr. Bunthorne's Solicitor	William White
The Lady Angela	Alice Burville
The Lady Saphir	Rose Chappelle
The Lady Ella	Jenny Stone
The Lady Jane	Augusta Roche
Patience	Carrie Burton

IOLANTHE

Standard Theatre
25th November 1882

The Lord Chancellor	J. H. Ryley
Earl of Mountararat	Arthur Wilkinson
Earl Tolloller	L. Cadwalladr
Private Willis	Lithgow James
Strephon	William T. Carleton
Queen of the Fairies	Augusta Roche
Iolanthe	Marie Jansen
Celia	Mina Rowley
Leila	Kate Forster
Fleta	Billie Barlow
Phyllis	Sallie Reber

PRINCESS IDA

Fifth Avenue Theatre
11th February 1884

King Hildebrand	Signor Brocolini
Hilarion	Wallace Maccreery
Cyril	W. S. Rising
Florian	Charles F. Long
King Gama	J. H. Ryley
Arac	M. Ainsley Scott
Guron	James Earley
Scynthus	E. J. Cloney
Princess Ida	Cora S. Tanner
Lady Blanche	Genevieve Reynolds
Lady Psyche	Florence Bemister
Melissa	Hattie Delaro
Sacharissa	Eva Barrington
Chloe	Eily Coghlan
Ada	Clara Primrose

THE MIKADO

Union Square Theatre
20th July 1885

Fifth Avenue Theatre
19th August 1885

The Mikado of Japan	J. W. Herbert	Frederick Federici
Nanki-Poo	A. Montequiffo	Courtice Pounds
Ko-Ko	Roland Reed	George Thorne
Pooh-Bah	Herbert Archer	Fred Billington
Pish-Tush	George H. Broderick	G. Byron Browne
Yum-Yum	Alice Harrison	Geraldine Ulmar
Pitti-Sing	Belle Archer	Kate Forster
Peep-Bo	Lizzie Quigley	Geraldine St. Maur
Katisha	Emma Mabella Baker	Elsie Cameron

RUDDYGORE

Fifth Avenue Theatre
21st February 1887

Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd	George Thorne
Richard Dauntless	Courtice Pounds
Sir Despard Murgatroyd, of Ruddygore	Fred Billington
Old Adam Goodheart	Sebastian King
Sir Roderic Murgatroyd, <i>deceased</i>	Frederick Federici
Rose Maybud	Geraldine Ulmar
Mad Margaret	Kate Forster
Dame Hannah	Elsie Cameron
Zorah	Aida Jenoure
Ruth	Amy Augarde

THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD

Casino Theatre
17th October 1888

Sir Richard Cholmondeley	George Broderick
Colonel Fairfax	Henry Hallam
Sergeant Meryll	George Olmi
Leonard Meryll	Charles Renwick
Jack Point	J. H. Ryley
Wilfred Shadbolt	Fred Solomon
Elsie Maynard	Bertha Ricci
Phoebe Meryll	Sylvia Gerrish
Dame Carruthers	Isabelle Urquhart
Kate	Kate Uart

THE GONDOLIERS

Park Theatre

7th January 1890

(Original Production)

Palmer's Theatre

18th February 1890

(Revised Production)

The Duke of Plaza-Toro	George Temple	Frank David
Luiz	Arthur Marcel	Helier Le Maistre
Don Alhambra del Bolero	John A. Muir	Fred Billington
Marco Palmieri	Richard Clarke	Richard Clarke
Giuseppe Palmieri	Duncan Barrington	Richard Temple
Antonio	Helier Le Maistre	O. J. Rowlands
Francesco	McCarthy	Boole
Giorgio	Alec Lee	Albert Kavanagh
Annibale	Percy Charles	Percy Charles
The Duchess of Plaza-Toro	Kate Talby	Kate Talby
Casilda	Agnes McFarland	Norah Phyllis
Gianetta	Esther Palliser	Esther Palliser
Tessa	Mary Duggan	Mary Duggan
Fiametta	A. Watts	Mattie Geoffrey
Vittoria	Sadger	Cora Tinnie
Giulia	Grace Pyne	A. Watts
Inez	Marie Rochefort	Rose Leighton

UTOPIA (LIMITED)

Broadway Theatre
26th March 1894

King Paramount the First	J. J. Dallas
Scaphio	J. W. Hopper
Paantis	Frank Danby
Tarara	J. H. Poskitt
Calynx	Leslie Walker
Lord Dramaleigh	Frank Boor
Captain Fitzbattleaxe	Clinton Elder
Captain Sir Edward Corcoran, K.C.B.	W. A. Peterkin
Mr. Goldbury	John Coates
Sir Bailey Barre, Q.C., M.P.	Eckford Smith
Mr. Blushington	Buchanan Wake
The Princess Zara	Isabel Reddick
The Princess Nekaya	Ailcen Binke
The Princess Kalyba	Millicent Pyne
The Lady Sophy	Kate Talby
Salata	Alice Pennington

W. S. Gilbert and the London Pantomime Season of 1866

By TERENCE REES

For the Christmas Season of 1969, Londoners were offered a choice of four pantomimes: one good production (minus harlequinade) in the West End, and three rather paltry offerings in the suburbs. Compared with this, the season of 1866 looks in retrospect to have been some sort of Golden Age. There were no less than fifteen pantomimes, all complete with their harlequinades, and a further four extravaganzas, so that the public had a selection of nineteen items of seasonable entertainment. The famous Paynes were at Covent Garden, and the Conquests (as usual) were at the Grecian.

Extravanzas and burlesques were not so rigidly linked to the season as pantomimes, but all three had a certain amount in common. While the 'burlesque opening' of the pantomime was limited to fairy-story, and the *extravanza*/burlesque more usually dealt with literary, historical or mythological figures, all conducted their action in rhyming couplets generously sprinkled with outrageous puns and interspersed with music lifted from opera, ballet, popular song and the nursery rhyme. A certain amount of satire of current affairs was admitted, often embodied in lyrics which were cast as parodies of popular songs. At the close of the *extravanza*/burlesque, there was a spectacular 'development scene' to bring the curtain down. This was no more than the 'transformation scene' of the pantomime shorn of its motivation, since there was no harlequinade to follow, and hence no need for anyone to be transformed.

The following list of productions gives the full title, author, place and date of first performance.

PANTOMIMES

<i>A. Apple Pie; or, Harlequin Jack-in-the-Box and The Little Boy Blue.</i>		
J. B. Johnstone	Surrey	26 December
<i>Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves; or, Harlequin and the Genii of the Arabian Nights.</i>		
G. à Beckett	Covent Garden	26 December
<i>The Devil on Two Sticks; or, Harlequin the Golden Tree, Bird and Apple.</i>		
G. Conquest	Grecian	24 December
<i>Ding Dong Bell, Pussy's in the Well; or, Harlequin and the old Woman who Lived in a Shoe.</i>		
N. Lee, Jnr.	City of London	26 December

<i>Ding Dong Bell, Pussy's in the Well; or, Harlequin, who killed Cock Robin?</i>		
R. Soutar	Marylebone	26 December
<i>The Golden Cask, the Princess, the Page and the Pageant; or, Harlequin and Queen Grumble.</i>		
A. J. O'Neill	Sadler's Wells	26 December
<i>Harlequin Cock Robin; or, The Children in the Wood.</i>		
W. R. Osman	Victoria	26 December
<i>Harlequin Fun; or, The Judgements of Fancy, and the Nursery Rhymes of Olden Time.</i>		
Anon	Effingham	26 December
<i>Harlequin Valentine and Orson; or, The Queen of the Lillies [sic.] and Jewels, and the Green Knight of the Horseshoe Dell.</i>		
J. D. Mathews	Bower Saloon	?
<i>Hush-a-bye Baby on the Tree Top; or, Harlequin Fortunio, King Frog, of Frog Island, and the Magic Toys of Lowther Arcade.</i>		
C. Millward ¹	Astley's	26 December
<i>Little Miss Muffet, She sat on a Tuffit; or, Harlequin King Spider.</i>		
N. Lee, Jr.	Crystal Palace	24 December
<i>Number Nip; or, Harlequin and the Gnome King of the Giant Mountains.</i>		
E. L. Blanchard	Drury Lane	26 December
<i>Prince Pippo and the Fair Mayde of Islington; or, Harlequin the Fairy Magpie, and the Twelve Magic Spoons.</i>		
C. H. Hazlewood	Alexandra	26 December
<i>The Princess of the Pearl Island; or, The Three Kingdoms of Pearl, Gold and Silver.</i>		
C. H. Hazlewood	Britannia	24 December
<i>Sinbad the Sailor; or, Harlequin and the Old Man of the Sea, the Emperor, the Ogre, the Good Fairy and the Princess.</i>		
C. H. Hazlewood	Pavilion	24 December

EXTRAVAGANZAS AND BURLESQUES

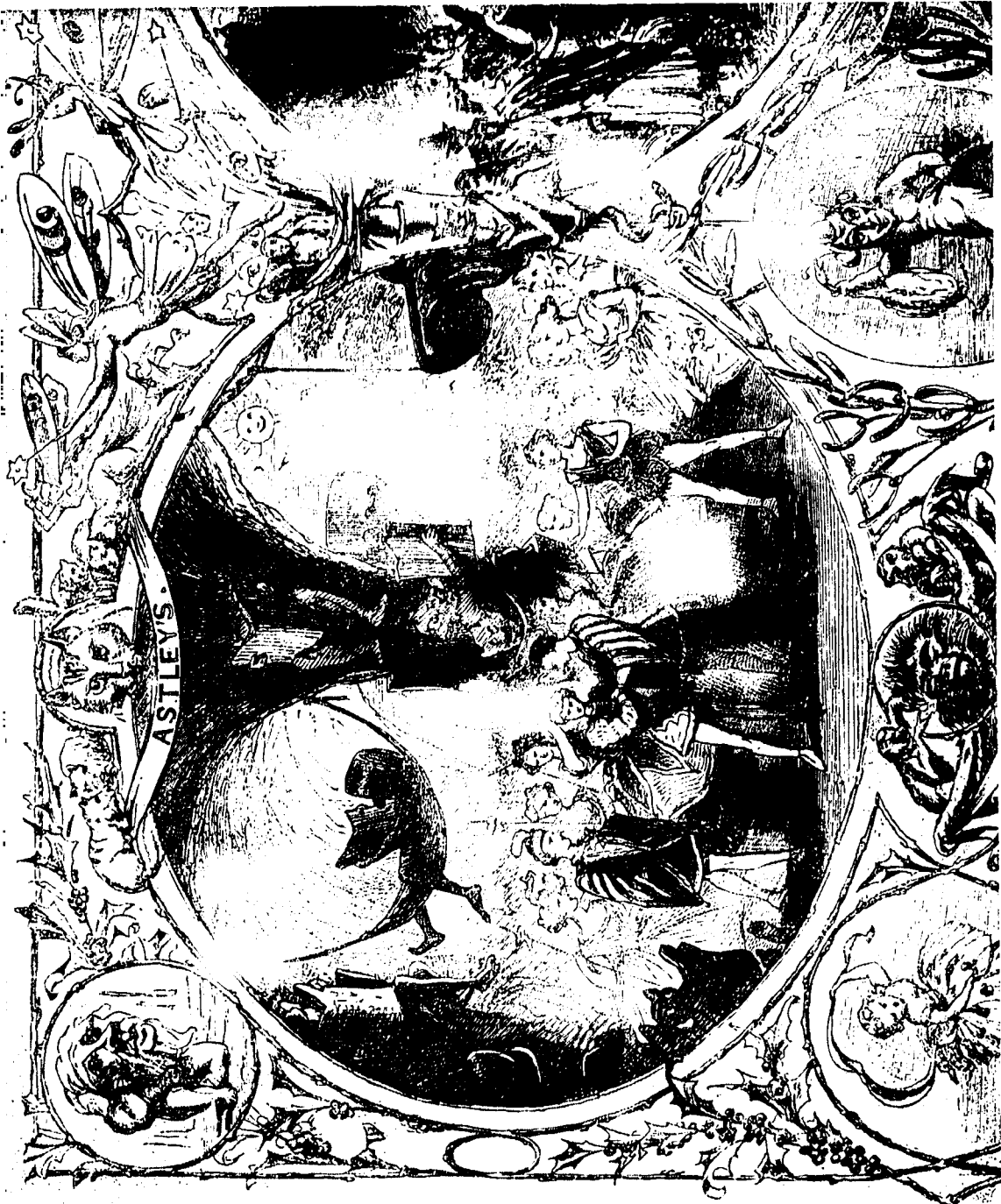
<i>Dulcamara; or, The Little Duck and the Great Quack.</i>		
W. S. Gilbert	St. James's	29 December
<i>Guy Fawkes; or, The Ugly Mug and the Couple of Spoons.</i>		
F. C. Burnand	Strand	26 December
<i>The Mountain Dhu; or, The Knight, the Lady and the Lake.</i>		
A. Halliday or	Adelphi	26 December
F. C. Burnand ²		
<i>Pandora's Box; or, The Young Spark and the Old Flame.</i>		
H. J. Byron	Prince of Wales'	26 December



Engaging children for the pantomime at Drury Lane Theatre. The ballet of one hundred 'lady birds' in the second scene of *Hush-a-bye Baby* would have been drawn from similar sources.



Children being rehearsed for a pantomime at the Lyceum Theatre (1868).



Composite illustration to *Hush-a-bye Baby* from the *Illustrated London News*. This is the earliest known illustration of any theatrical production by W. S. Gilbert.

THEATRE ROYAL:
ASTLEY'S
LICENSED BY THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN TO
MR. W. H. C. NATION,
 ACTUAL AND RESPONSIBLE MANAGER,
IN AMPHITHEATRE ROW, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD.

THE
NATIONAL PANTOMIME
 IN THE
TENTH WEEK
 OF ITS EXISTENCE,
 MORE VIGOROUS THAN EVER!!

THE FREE LIST ENTIRELY SUSPENDED
 THE PUBLIC PRESS EXCEPT.

MONDAY, FEB. 25th, 1867, AND DURING THE WEEK,
The Performances will commence at SEVEN o'clock with the Eldest COMEDY.

DELICATE GROUND

Citizen Sangroid, " " " " Mr. FERNANDEZ,
 Alphonse de Grandier, " " " " Mr. W. T. RICHARDSON,
 Pauline, " " " " Miss LOUISE LAIDLAW.

AFTER WHICH, AT A QUARTER TO EIGHT, THE
 GREAT **NATIONAL PANTOMIME,**

ENTITLED
HUSH-A-BYE
BABY
ON THE TREE TOP:

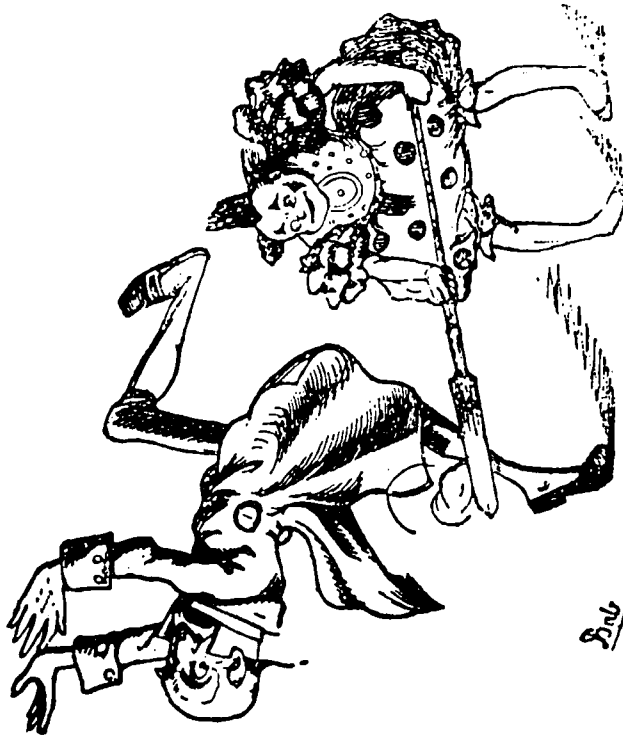
OR,
HARLEQUIN FORTUNIO,
 KING FROG, OF FROG ISLAND, AND THE
 MAGIC TOYS OF LOWTHER ARCADIA.

WRITTEN BY CHARLES MILLWARD, ESQ.

Part of a playbill for *Hush-a-bye Baby* at Astley's Theatre. Note the attribution to Charles Millward.



The Fairy's Dilemma
1904



Gentle Archibald Molloy
1866

Plus ça change . . . !

Gilbert's success with *Dulcamara*, a burlesque of Donizetti's opera *L'Elisir d'Amore*, has been widely recorded and requires little comment here. What is in need of examination is a statement which has appeared at least three times in print to the effect that Gilbert was joint author with Charles Millward of the pantomime *Hush-a-bye Baby*. These statements are to be found in *The Stage Cyclopaedia*³, in *A History of English Drama*⁴ and in *Gilbert. His life and Strife*.⁵ Several questions occur at once; if Gilbert did in fact write part of *Hush-a-bye Baby*, how great was his contribution to it? How was it that he did this anonymously? And why did he subsequently describe *Dulcamara* as his first piece for the stage?

Any scrutiny of the text to determine Gilbert's part in it must be limited by the copy or copies which have come down to us. But there seems never to have been a definitive version. To begin with, the one in the Lord Chamberlain's archive is in the hand of a copyist, so that there is no question of finding sections in Gilbert's autograph. It is also incomplete, and one cannot look for internal evidence in pieces of text one does not possess. However, a libretto was put on sale in the theatre and this contains at least one section omitted from the Licensing Copy. Unfortunately, there are even larger and more serious omissions from the printed text, which lacks most of the lyrics, but by using it in parallel with the Licensing Copy, it is possible to arrive at a reasonably complete working version.

Looking for internal evidence is always difficult and frequently unreliable, but we are perhaps fortunate with W. S. Gilbert in that he so often re-used or re-worked certain of his ideas. The products of his topsy-turvy imagination are often highly characteristic and it has been a popular exercise to list their recurrence throughout the canon of his works. It may now be possible to apply this process in reverse and seek in this early work the germs of ideas which are to be found better developed in his later dramatic output. To this end, I propose to examine the text of the 'burlesque opening' of *Hush-a-bye Baby*, scene by scene.

Scene 1. *The Temple of Fairy Fiction in the Realms of Nursery Lore*

A chorus of Invisible Fairies sings the nursery rhyme of 'Hushabye Baby' and the curtain rises to discover Hushabye, the Good Genius of Nursery Lore, assisted by Butterfly, invoking the stars. The sole point of this scene seems to be the introduction of some remarks on the subject of the November meteoric showers.⁶

Angered by her failure to invoke the stars, Hushabye touches a pillar

with her wand and at once trees become visible, with two cradles swinging from the branches. The cradles are respectively labelled 'Olive Branch' and 'Fortunio.' Henchmen of Hop o' my Thumb, one of the two villains of the piece, are discovered dancing around the cradles in great delight, but are shortly dismissed by Hushabye.

It is soon made clear that the babies have been kidnapped and left to perish. Advice is at once sought from two new characters who now enter opportunely. One of them is Wedding Ring, the Genius of Married Life, and his companion is Latchkey, the Genius of Single Life. They assume responsibility for the children and their first act is to cause the children to grow up.

Latch. Why should we drag these welcome little strangers
Through tedious infancy and all its dangers?
In this remarkably precocious age,
From babyhood to manhood's but a stage.
Let's change this pair of kids, they are too small—

Hush. 'Twill be no small change.

Latch. Oh dear, not at all [*a tall*].

Here we encounter two very typical Gilbertian devices. The 'grown-up child' was exploited many times by Gilbert during the earlier phases of his career. He is touched upon in the little one-act drama *Uncle Baby* (1863), and reappears in *Warne's Christmas Annual* for 1866 as the subject of 'The History of the Gentleman who was born at an Advanced Age.' As 'The Precocious Baby' (1867) he enters the canon of Bab Ballads, giving an encore in a short piece called *No Cards*, written for German Reed in 1869. He reappears in *Thespis* (1871) if only by proxy, when Mercury explains to the outraged gods that Deputy Venus has caused all the babies to be born grown up, and we hear of him again in *Topsy-turvydom* (1874).

Secondly, there is the idea of the stolen or changed baby, usually involved with an access of rank and wealth. This particular situation crops up in one of the Bab Ballads 'The Baby's Vengeance' (1869), in *H.M.S. Pinajore* (1878) and in *The Gondoliers* (1889). Perhaps Robin Oakapple in *Ruddy-gore* (1887) is a more distant development of the same idea. In *Hush-a-bye Baby*, both the stolen infants are of royal lineage, though the motivation for the kidnapping is far from clear.

Meanwhile, Wedding Ring and Latchkey have their own problems, for it seems that they are constantly bickering as to which of their functions is

the more important. The scene has a very Gilbertian flavour. Consider for example the speech in which Latchkey puts his point of view to Hushabye:

Latch. (Interrupting)
 Don't go on so, but let me state my case
 With legal brevity and manly grace.
 I set up no pretensions as a talker
 Like "Mrs. Brown" or Dr. Mary Walker.⁷
 I'm young, good looking and of wealth I've plenty,
 I'm too unthinking and I'm two and twenty.
 I ride, dance, sing, and play a fairish rub,
 Subscribe to Tattersall's and have a club.

Hushabye, taken with Latchkey's charming manner, is unable to decide between them and decides to throw the matter open to competitive examination. In these terms, reminiscent of *Iolanthe* (1882), it is decided that Wedding Ring shall endeavour to bring about the marriage of Olive Branch and Fortunio while Latchkey must try to see that they remain single.

There follows a trio for the three fairies, set to the music of the 'Harem Scarem Galop.'

Latch. Blundering thundering ha! ha! ha!
 To carry his purpose through,
 'Twill easy be I plainly see
 My rival here to do.

Wed. Wondering dundering ha! ha! ha!
 What plan I shall pursue.
 It seems to me that clearly he
 Will look extremely blue.

Latch. We'll steal away, commence
 To open our contention O.

Hush. But fairies pray mind what you say
 And moderate dissension O.

Wed. We'll bear in mind that you designed
 A peaceful intervention O.

Hush. I'm glad to find that you're inclined
 To do just as I mention O.

Latch. Hoping, coping all day long.

Hush. Smacking, whacking all very wrong.

Wed. Thrashing, smashing awfully strong.

Latch. Boring, flooring capital song. [etc.]

This lyric also Gilbertian parallels. The odd internal rhyming in lines like

Blundering, thundering ha! ha! ha!

and

Smacking, whacking all very wrong.

certainly has a near relative in 'Down to the Derby,' a Bab Ballad of 1864^B while the sequence of eight lines beginning

We'll steal away, commence
To open our contention O

has its twin in the quintet in the second act of *Princess Ida* (1884):

The woman of the wisest wit
May sometimes be mistaken, O! [etc.]

The three fairies go out, leaving the prince and princess to confront each other.

Fortunio As old acquaintances we now appear.
We've known each other from the cradle, dear,
And may I add since we knew right from wrong,
We've loved each other little, likewise long,

This is, of course, the basis of the situation which obtains between Hilarion and Ida in Gilbert's 'Whimsical Allegory' of *The Princess* (1870), and through it, *Princess Ida* (1884). It recurs in *The Grand Duke* (1896) where it involves Duke Rudolph and the Princess of Monto Carlo. And its source is to be found in Tennyson's poem 'The Princess,' first published in 1847.

At this point in the action, prince and princess are discovered by Heydiddle, Fortunio's villainous elder brother, who at once recognizes him despite his sudden advance in age. Heydiddle is also attracted to the charming Olive Branch.

Scene 2. *Ladybird's Bower and Fairy Valley of the Emerald Stream*

The fairy Hushabye tells Ladybird that her daughter Olive Branch has been found and is safe, and there follows a Grand Ballet of Lady Birds, performed by one hundred dancers.

Scene 3. *The Castle Ramparts and Castle Keep of King Kafoozlum*

In this scene, Fortunio returns to his father's court, bringing Olive Branch with him. In the dialogue, there is mention of the telegraph and of messages that travel so quickly that they arrive before they are sent. Fortunio takes the matter up:

If science is not checked, we soon shall seek
To jump into the middle of next week.
I hear that Neptune and his court are frantic
O'er what was lately done in the Atlantic

This is a reference to the dramatic recovery of the broken end of the Atlantic cable, formerly given up for lost, the splicing of new cable to it and the triumphant completion of the journey to Canada, thus restoring the first telegraph link between the continents. It achieved mention in six other pantomimes during the season,⁹ but in none of them was it couched in such amusing terms.

Fortunio has not yet finished his short dissertation on the telegraph. He continues:

And Luna dreads to look on a balloon,
Lest it should bring a cable for the moon

a conceit that returns us to the second act of *Princess Ida* where we hear it from the mouth of Hilarion:

They intend to send a wire
To the moon—to the moon

The scene is a long one and contains even more germs of ideas that are to be found redeveloped in libretti written decades later by Gilbert. Kafoozlum, it would appear, is financially embarrassed:

Kaf. Our bank being limited is safe—
Folderol Just stopped.
Kaf. Our plate and jewels, where are they?
Fol. All popped.
Kaf. 'Tis all a sham, my riches are untold.
My locks are silver and I'm *growin* (g)old.
Kafoozlum Oh! Oh! what will you do?
Fol. My liege, the tradesmen's bills are *oh-ing* too.

What is to be done? The Queen has an idea:

Queen Is there not for our son some wealthy match?

thereby anticipating the intentions of the Duke of Plaza Toro (*Gondoliers*) and the Prince of Monte Carlo (*Grand Duke*). Fortunately, there arrives a message from King Woodenhead.

Heydiddle (reads) "My daughter Waxdoll, to my throne successor,
Young, fair and wealthy, wants a husband."

Kaf. Bless her!

Hey. "Can you supply the article? Reply
With age, height, weight and lowest price."

Fort. My eye.

Hey. "Or if you have a handsome son to suit,
Send him at once and close the sale."

Olive Branch The brute.

Fortunio is at once chosen to be 'the article,' much against his wishes.

Scene 4. *Hop o' my Thumb's court in the Kingdom of the Froglanders*

After a chorus and grotesque dance, the Froglanders observe Heydiddle walking along the bank of their pond. They retire and Heydiddle enters, misled by a Will o' the Wisp. He intends to consult the villainous Hop o' my Thumb and appeals to the now hidden Froglanders.

Hey. Minstrels invisible, accept my thanks,
If you don't mind a run upon your banks.
I'll seek their aid 'ere I resume my journey;
They look as safe as Overend and Gurney.¹⁰

The Froglanders appear, surround and seize him.

Hey. This most *refreshing* scene before I've conned.
Yes, here I see the *Spiers* and there the *Pond*.¹¹

Hop arrives and releases Heydiddle. They plan to dispose of Fortunio, thus leaving the way clear for Heydiddle to marry Olive Branch, but they are overheard by Wedding Ring and Latchkey.

Scene 5. *Distant View of Lowther Arcadia*¹²

A brief confrontation between Fortunio and Hop o' my Thumb contributes nothing of interest, but gives time for the setting of

Scene 6. *The Territory of Toys and Palace of King Woodenhead in Lowther Arcadia*

Clearly a 'production' scene. The directions are as follows:

Preparations for the Grand Tournament. Procession of Toy Troops and imposing entrance of King Woodenhead, Princess Waxdoll and Toy Court, bowed on by Courtiers, and when they are seated upon Throne, the Troops present arms.

King Woodenhead comes forward and proceeds to issue instructions to his courtiers for the celebration of the forthcoming wedding.

King W. Today indeed makes me a lucky pappy.
 Let everybody be absurdly happy, (a)
 As Princess Waxdoll, whom I think you know,
 Marries today the Prince Fortunio.
 Your King behaving like a man of sense,
 Will do the thing regardless of expense. (b)
 To no extravagance will he say 'no' to,
 That is, to none that other people go to. (c)
 Be all assured, he means to do the thing
 In fashion worthy of so great a King.
 Let every subject who has any 'nous,'
 At his own cost illuminate his house. (d)
 What! Shrink at the expense—Pooh! Pooh!
 You'll see
 The more you *burn*, the *lighter* you will be.
 Pay all the taxgatherers what you owe to 'em.
 Give banquets, and invite your King to go to 'em. (e)
 Let everyone consider he has paid
 This quarter's rent. Let every unbooked maid
 Fancy she's wedded to her heart's own choice.
 Let all not voters think they've got a voice,
 And let them use it—shout like men of rougher age,
 Or you shall feel an universal *suffer-age*.
 (knocks courtiers down)
 This is true happiness and joy. (Laughs) Ha! Ha!

It must surely be upon the precedent set here that the parsimonious Grand Duke Rudolph founded the protocol for his own wedding celebrations.

The quotations given below are from his speech in Act 1 of *The Grand Duke*, and are directly comparable with those couplets in the speech of King Woodenhead marked with a letter.

- Rudolph* My Lord Chamberlain you will be good enough
to see that the rejoicings are on a scale of
unusual liberality. (b)
- The leading pastry-cooks of the town will be
invited to compete, and the winner will . . . enjoy the
satisfaction of seeing his breakfast devoured
by the Grand Ducal pair (c)
- All the public fountains of Speisesaal
will run with Gingerbierheim and
Currantweinmilch at the public expense. (c)
- At night, everybody will illuminate;
and as I have no desire to tax the public funds unduly,
this will be done at the inhabitants' private expense. (d)
- The entire population will be
commanded to enjoy themselves (a)

The wedding celebrations get under way and Fortunio defeats simultaneously both Heydiddle and Hop o' my Thumb in a tournament. The palace is immediately filled with Froglanders armed with bullrushes. There is a general overthrow of the Lowther Arcadians, and Olive Branch and Fortunio are taken prisoner.

Scene 7. *Interior of Hop o' my Thumb's Palace*

Enter *Latchkey*.

Excuse me! Hope I don't intrude.¹³

But he finds himself alone, and in the course of a soliloquy remembers the charms of the fairy Hushabye.

Latchkey The charms of single life you've sworn to prize
Beyond these tempting charms of Hushabye's.
Be resolute, old boy, don't be downhearted,
But follow up the game you've fairly started.

As he sings a parody of the latest popular song 'Champagne Charlie,' Hushabye and Wedding Ring enter to join in the chorus.

Olive Branch, Fortunio and the court are brought in prisoners by Hop o' my Thumb and Heydiddle. Heydiddle intends to make off with Olive Branch, but finding resistance from both the lady and Fortunio, issues to his followers the beautifully Gilbertian instruction:

Seize 'em again, you've seized them once before.
And that does not suffice, seize them once more.

Fortunio laments the fall of King Woodenhead and the Toys.

Well, better kings, and worse, have done the same
When subjects stake their *sovereigns* in a game.
Strange times are these, when in a single day
Kings lose their crowns and kingdoms pass away.¹⁴

Before the scene closes, they all sing couplets, joining in the chorus and dancing a 'breakdown.' At one point, Hop o' my Thumb has the following lines:

Walk round, no you don't if that's your little game.
Walk round, skid-a-ma-link, a-who's this what's-his-name?

The unusual word 'skid-a-ma-link' was Victorian slang meaning 'secret' or 'shady,' and it appeared in two other pieces during the course of that season. One of them was *Ding Dong Bell* at the Marylebone Theatre, the other was Gilbert's *Dulcamara* at the St. James's. It also appeared in a favourable review of *Dulcamara* printed in *Fun*. Writing of Gilbert, the author commented on the conventions of burlesque writing:

. . . where the humblest peasants talk in rhyme, where each speech must have a pun in it, and that if he attends to its rules, he will by and by allude to 'the neighborhood of Chancery Lane as Skid-a-ma-Lincoln's Inn.'¹⁵

Scene 8. *An Awful Cell! Slimy snakes and creeping things of all kinds on the walls, exaggerated beetles, lizards, etc. King Woodenhead, Princess Waxdoll, King Kafoozlum and Queen Cinderella appear, their hands chained convict fashion. They nod at each other, sigh, moan etc. and are slowly retiring when Heydiddle confronts them and they retire up in line.*

The main point of this scene is to show the hero and heroine entirely in the clutches of the villain of the piece.

Hey. Clear out, the lot of you. I *am* a bad 'un
 Like those described in novels by Miss Braddon.¹⁶
 I hate my kindred, father, mother, all,
 And soon I'll make the lot of 'em sing small.
 Stand back, I know you not! My heart is marble.
 Like other stony-hearted swells, I'll warble.

How the Gallery must have hissed him!

The action is now held up while Heydiddle sings a number, the text of which runs to some thirty lines. It consists of a sequential parody of four popular songs of the day and contains six changes in metre. Of particular interest is the third of the sequences, a parody of *The Mousetrap Man*.

When on old tunes we give ourselves airs,
 Others for music so apt might have sighed.
 None shall in vain try to cast off their cares,
 While dance tunes to song are so closely *A Lloyd*.
 What though some grumblers may think them absurd,
 Claptrap or not, we shall have them again.
 Sing "dance comic songs" and then 'pon my word,
 Great Vance, Lloyd and Nash have not *Leybourned* in vain.
 Claptrap, Claptrap, Oh! my.
 Claptrap, Claptrap, but why
 Public will have and singers will cry.
 Claptrap will sell whilst we've patrons to buy.

The four names mentioned in the lyric are those of famous writers and performers of comic songs for the music hall. George Leybourne, who had performed "The Mousetrap Man" with great success, had also written the words to "Champagne Charlie," a song which the 'Great' Vance had made very much his own.

What is really surprising about this lyric is the relative virulence of the attack on the popular song of the day. While it was quite common for the writers of pantomimes to include a certain amount of mild moralising in their texts, they were usually careful to see that it did not directly involve their audiences. It was one thing to mention violence in a distant country, bribery in Great Yarmouth, or the need for electoral reform—all these and many others could be dismissed with a brief remark of 'shame.' But here we have an attack on the appallingly trite nature of the popular song, and

therefore an attack on the tastes of those that enjoyed them. And why should so many of the latest hits be included in *Hush-a-bye* by its creators, if not because the regular Astley's patrons were expected to like them?

Olive Branch is carried off by Heydiddle, and Fortunio is left alone in the dungeon. His lament is interrupted by the timely arrival of the fairies Wedding Ring and Butterfly. They are about to release him when Hushabye and Latchkey appear. Latchkey, it seems, has succumbed to the charms of Hushabye and thereby lost his part in the dispute with Wedding Ring.

The story is effectively at an end. The other principal characters appear and in no time at all we find ourselves at the

Grove of Golden Palms

and transformation scene.

Apart from a solitary complaint that "the burlesque introduction is unusually long,"¹⁷ *Hush-a-bye Baby* seems to have held its own in the course of the 1866 season. The transformation scene was particularly admired:

[It] is truly gorgeous, and yet arranged with such taste and art that we are almost inclined to pronounce it the best of the season—and that is saying something when every year such scenes become more elaborate and expensive.¹⁸

Reviewers generally accepted the attribution to Millward printed on the playbill and libretto, though the writer in *The Illustrated London News* for December 29, 1866, might have known something to the contrary:

Mr. Charles Millward has furnished the pantomime for Astley's—*which he states to be his own invention* (my italics).

Certainly those categorical statements of Gilbert's part in the writing of the pantomime which have appeared in print call for further scrutiny, since they all point to a prime source of information, presumably common to all three, that has not yet been identified for the benefit of scholars. A long and detailed search on my part has so far failed to locate it. Meanwhile, there remains the matter of the extent to which William Gilbert made contributions to the text of this piece.

Arguments founded entirely on the basis of internal evidence are rightly to be treated with some reserve. In *Hush-a-bye Baby*, there are many internal suggestions of Gilbert's collaboration, not all of equal value. The idea of stolen babies, for example, is limited neither to Gilbert nor to pantomime,

but it was quite characteristic of and popular with that author, and when it appears in connection with the separate and distinct idea of the grown-up baby, it acquires a certain significance.

Fortunio and Olive Branch are present to provide the central romantic interest, such as it is, and there is hence no real need for them to be shown originally as infants. The purpose would have been equally well served had they been represented as a pair of adolescent ‘babes in the wood.’ One might argue that they appear first as infants in order to justify the title of the piece. But the title is really the least important part of the work, and unless the theatre were absolutely committed to it, might well be left till last so that it can be made to agree with the content of the piece. Nevertheless, the author clearly felt the need to incorporate the ‘growing up’ of the infants, if only as a bit of rather unspectacular pantomime magic.

The penniless aristocrat trying to arrange a wealthy partner for one or other of his children is an important personage in, for instance, the pantomime of *Cinderella*, and the brief appearance of the idea in *Hush-a-bye Baby* could mean no more than that the various authors were all drawing on an older common tradition. But the importance of all these Gilbert ‘fingerprints’ and their strength as evidence of his collaboration lies in their occurrence simultaneously in the one piece.

How did Gilbert come to be involved in the writing of *Hush-a-bye Baby*, and why anonymously? From what we know of the career of Charles Millward, it hardly seems to be the case of a tired, senior author, patronizing a junior. True, he was six years older than Gilbert, but at no time was he ever so prolific. Here is a complete list of Millward’s known works for the stage:¹⁹

1851	<i>Bloomerism</i>	Farce (with J. H. Nightingale)
1864	<i>Sir Hugh Middleton</i> etc.	Pantomime
1865	<i>Cock-a-doodle-doo</i> etc.	Pantomime
1866	<i>Hush-a-bye Baby</i> etc.	Pantomime (with W. S. Gilbert)
1871	<i>Little Snow White</i>	Extravaganza
1872	<i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i>	Burlesque
1877	<i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i>	Pantomime
1886	<i>Rose Michel</i> etc.	Drama

Millward, then, was never a very active writer, nor was *Hush-a-bye Baby* his first collaboration. He began his career as a clerk in a shipping office whence he moved into journalism, which he seems to have practised to the end of his life with such excursions into the theatre as we have listed. But he maintained a large number of theatrical connections who were accustomed

to gather at each other's houses for entertainments in which they all took part.²⁰ The Kendals, the Hares, the Bancrofts, J. L. Toole, George Grossmith, John Hollingshead and Tom Robertson all attended from time to time. There is no hint that Gilbert was ever invited to one of these functions, but the link between him and Millward might well have been Robertson.

Tom Robertson had been a regular visitor to the Millward establishment even before he had made his name. There had been a time when he was practically penniless, and the generosity and support that he received from Millward left Robertson rather much in his debt. By 1866, however, he had brought out nineteen works for the stage, including a libretto *Constance* (1865) for Frederic Clay. He was also a member of Gilbert's own circle which called itself 'The Serious Family' and met regularly at Gray's Inn. He knew Gilbert's aspirations to theatrical authorship, and in the event recommended him as being a person competent to write a Christmas extravaganza (*Dulcamara*) at short notice for the St. James's Theatre. Who could have been better situated and qualified to initiate the collaboration with Millward?

When the playbills and libretto for *Hush-a-bye Baby* appeared, Gilbert's name was conspicuous by its absence. This must have been a part of the agreement under which he made his contribution; it is otherwise highly unlikely that the management of Astley's would have been able to omit the name of a practising barrister. Whatever the reason, we here see Gilbert turning an honest penny by 'ghosting' for others, a job he may well have done on many occasions. Indeed, if he had not had a great deal of previous experience, why should such a senior person in the theatre as Tom Robertson risk his reputation by promoting the commission from the St. James's Theatre?

There is sufficient evidence to show that, unlike Pallas Athene, William Gilbert did not leap fully armed into the arena. It is now well established that he brought out a one-act comedietta, *Uncle Baby*, as early as 1863.²¹ And with regard to his career during these years, he gave to Kate Field in the course of a personal interview, some interesting and significant information:

While contributing to 'Fun,' he produced play after play; indeed, was the author of fifteen before he had attained his twenty-fourth year, and had offered them in vain to managers. They were mostly burlesques and farces, but their rejection will not seem so remarkable when it is known that in the exuberance of a luxuriant imagination, the author introduced in one piece, eighteen scenes, four cataracts and

a house on fire! No theatre could have borne up under such an embarrassment of riches.²²

Some of this early experience might have been in the realm of pantomime. Gilbert has given a well-known account of his experiences in respect of his 1867 pantomime *Harlequin Cock Robin*.²³ But this description of the way things were managed (and mismanaged) is remarkably anticipated in a short story called "Maxwell and I" which he brought out at the beginning of 1866 and before *Hush-a-bye Baby*. The eponymous gentlemen are practising barristers who supplement a meagre living by writing for a variety of journals and for the stage. When the story opens, they have been having trouble with their 'Grand Christmas Extravaganza.'

. . . . There had been an aggravating rehearsal, that morning, of our extravaganza. It was then discovered that a 'carpenter's scene' must, absolutely, be introduced in order to allow time for the elaborate 'set' with which the piece was to conclude. The last scene was, as a matter of course, unfinished; the chorus that opened the piece had not yet been written; and several 'cuts' had to be made in our favourite scene. Moreover, the leading lady, Miss Patty de Montmorenci, had expressed her intention of ruining everything if she were not permitted to introduce the 'Miserere' from the 'Trovatore,' after the comic duet between Mesrour and Zobeide; and Mr. Sam Travers, the leading low comedian, had insisted on our finding occasion for him to get over a brick-wall with glass on top of it for him to stick in.

Gilbert even gives us a quotation from the said extravaganza, in rhyming couplets that were good enough to have passed muster in any of the Christmas offerings for 1866. Here is part of it:

Scherazade One morning, early, when I sought my bower
Without spec-tater, just to *cull-a-flower*,
I found my cavalier astride the wall,
And in the glass entangled, cloak and all!
And then I heard the wretched youth, alas!
Casting some strong reflections on the glass,
And, after having to perdition booked it,
He first un-hooked his cloak, and then—he hooked it!²⁴

The idea of a barrister sitting in his chambers writing pantomimes for money is here exploited for its humour, but Gilbert did just this later the

same year when he wrote *Dulcamara* in the space of ten days.²⁵ The story of "Maxwell and I" suggests that this was not an entirely new experience for him. There was an enormous demand for pantomime in London and the provinces, and therefore a regular market for good librettos. It was not unknown for an author to bring out more than one in a particular season as C. H. Hazlewood aptly demonstrated by having three accepted for the season of 1866.

There is little to be learned from the Lord Chamberlain's Day Book in the matter of the relative dates of completion of *Dulcamara* and *Hush-a-bye Baby*. Managements were notoriously remiss in the matter of the submission of copy for licensing, so that at best, the date of receipt at the Lord Chamberlain's office will give an unreliable maximum date for the completion of the text. As it is, *Dulcamara* was received (under the title of *Elixir of Love*) on December 17, which is in some disagreement with Gilbert's own statement that the work was 'rehearsed in a week.' *Hush-a-bye Baby* did not arrive until December 24, accompanied by a letter of apology from the Acting Manager:

Dear Sir,

Enclosed you'll find the Copy of the Pantomime. I am very sorry but circumstances prevented us sending it before.

Yours truly,

W. H. Liston

This is odd, because according to advertisements of the day, the theatre would be closed after a benefit performance on Dec. 17 in consequence of preparations for the pantomime. Whatever the circumstances may have been, *Hush-a-bye Baby* preceded *Dulcamara* in performance by three days and therefore represents William Gilbert's first known excursion into Christmas entertainment. But in the absence of evidence to the contrary, *Dulcamara* must continue to be the first piece that was commissioned from him under his own name.

After *Harlequin Cock Robin* in 1867, Gilbert seemingly left pantomime for other things. We do not know that he ever wrote another burlesque opening, but an interest in pantomime remained with him for the rest of his days and informed his dramatic writing from time to time. It is not surprising that this should be so when we consider that one of the key scenes in mid-Victorian pantomime, the Transformation Scene, is one wherein a group of characters is transformed at the wave of a wand into a very dif-

ferent set of characters. This particular dramatic situation is at the heart of many of Gilbert's topsy-turvy plots, except that a stroke of the Fairy Queen's wand is replaced by a stroke of logic or a plain statement of fact.

It is not known that Gilbert ever created a full-scale Harlequinade (they were rarely 'written' in the strict sense of that term). Those provided for *Hush-a-bye Baby* and *Harlequin Cock Robin* were certainly not his; but traditional Harlequinade figures, sometimes only thinly veiled, appear in many of his subsequent libretti. *Thespis* was an acknowledged Christmas entertainment, complete with a development scene and an opportunity for the famous pantomimists Frederic and Harry Payne to exhibit their own specialty.²⁶ The comic policeman, so often brutalized by Clown, appears in *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879) accompanied by a semi-chorus of his colleagues, and they are all comically brutalized by the pirates. In *The Yeomen of the Guard* (1888) we find a Clown in *ur*-form, restricted to quip and quiddity only by the conventions of operetta. The coquettish Phoebe has many of the attributes of Columbine, while Wilfred Shadbolt is very much a Pantaloon who loses a bunch of keys to Columbine instead of stolen jam-tarts to Clown.

Since in operetta the relatively strict requirements of the Harlequinade are abandoned, or more accurately are not relevant, the characters and the transformation become separable, and it is hence possible to transpose the sequence of events. Thus the Harlequin, Clown, Columbine and Pantaloon figures can be transformed into someone else, rather than the reverse. We see this in *Happy Arcadia* (1872) where the place of the Fairy Queen is taken by the male Astrologos, and the function of the wand is divided between four magic talismans, a cap, a cloak, a ring and a stick. At the appropriate moment, these talismans mediate an actual physical transformation of the principal characters, all of whom change their sexes!

As in *Happy Arcadia*, so in *Iolanthe* we discover Harlequin and Columbine lightly disguised as a couple of Arcadians, but with Pantaloon masquerading as a Lord Chancellor, the young lady's lover instead of her father. There is even a Fairy Queen complete with wand, and the makings of a full-blown Transformation Scene:

Queen You're a fairy from this moment (*wings spring from Sentry's shoulders*). And you, my Lords, how say you? Will you join our ranks?
(*Fairies kneel to Peers and implore them to do so.*)

- Ld. Mount.* (to *Ld. Tolloller*). Well, now that the Peers are to be recruited entirely from persons of intelligence, I really don't see what use *we* are, down here.
- Ld. Tol.* None whatever.
- Queen* Good! (*Wings spring from shoulders of Peers.*) Then away we go to Fairyland.

The game is, perhaps, given away by a piece written after the death of Sullivan, and well after the long series of their very special form of operetta had come to an end. In 1904, Gilbert brought out *The Fairy's Dilemma*, "an original domestic pantomime in two acts." The central characters, all of whom have their antecedents in the Savoy libretti, are involved in a burlesque of the romantic drama. Due to a misunderstanding between the Fairy Rosebud and the Demon Alcohol, the genteel atmosphere of the drawing room of an Anglican vicarage is invaded by more robust figures from the world of pantomime, and the characters of the romance are soon involved in a Harlequinade as the principal participants. Mr. Justice Whortle, described by himself as "the embodiment of the Abstract Majesty of the Law . . .", is clearly a transmogrification of the Lord Chancellor, and at a further remove, of the Judge in *Trial by Jury* (1875). He is horrified to find himself involved as Pantaloon in the theft of sausage rolls. His partner in crime bears the outward aspect of Clown but is in fact Colonel Sir Trevor Mauleverer, Bart., of the Household Cavalry. In the eyes of the Fairy Rosebud, Sir Trevor is very much a 'bad Bart.,' and he has links with Sir Despard in *Ruddygore* and Colonel Calverly in *Patience* (1881). All three of them undergo radical changes of manner and costume.

Gilbert's apprenticeship to the theatre is not well documented and has been little studied, but it is obvious that some of his best ideas were already in process of evolution during the earliest stages of his career as a dramatist. To those characters and ideas which he so often reworked throughout the canon of his works, we must now add those of the traditional Harlequinade as performed in Britain during mid-Victorian times. They do not usually appear undisguised, and further scrutiny will probably reveal them in the most interesting places.

REFERENCES

1. Millward is given as sole author on both playbill and libretto.
2. A review in *Illustrated London News* December 29, 1866, attributes the piece to Burnand.
3. Compiled by Reginald Clarence, London, "The Stage," 1909.
4. Vol. 5. Allardyce Nicoll, Cambridge University Press, 1959.
5. Hesketh Pearson, London, Methuen, 1957.

6. Known as the *Leonids*, they are seen three times a century. They were also mentioned in *Sinbad the Sailor* and in *Ding Dong Bell* (Lee).
7. The famous American physician and advocate of women's rights. Also mentioned in *Dulcamara*.
8. "Down to the Derby" is in turn based on a song called "When a man marries" by J. Ashby Sterry, and I am grateful to Professor James Ellis for this information.
9. *Number Nip, Devil on two sticks, Harlequin Valentine, Harlequin Cock Robin, Golden Cask, Ali Baba*.
10. A firm of bankers. Samuel Gurney (1786-1856) became known as the 'banker's banker.' Stoppage of the firm on "Black Friday," May 11, 1866, was followed by scenes of commercial panic in London.
11. Spiers and Pond are still well-known in the field of catering, maintaining a series of buffets on certain stations of the London Underground (Metropolitan Line).
12. Lowther Arcade was situated in the Strand near Charing Cross Railway Station and was famous for the enormous variety of children's toys to be found in its shops. This scene is entirely lacking in the Licensing Copy.
13. Probably a reference to Douglas Jerrold's comedy *Paul Pry* (1827) in which the line occurs. It was a popular work and, in the mouth of the comedian J. L. Toole, the line rarely failed to stop the show.
14. Alexander I of Rumania was deposed on February 23, 1866. As a result of the Austro-Prussian War (June 16—July 26), the states of Hanover, Hesse, Nassau, and Frankfurt were formally annexed by Prussia on September 20; Schleswig-Holstein was annexed on December 24. Reference to these events appeared in *Devil on two Sticks* and *Harlequin Fun*.
15. *Fun*, January 12, 1867, p. 185. Partly quoted from *Dulcamara*.
16. Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1837-1913) authoress, wrote *Lady Audley's Secret* and about seventy-nine other novels.
17. *Bell's Life in London*, December 29, 1866.
18. *Fun*, January 26, 1867, p. 206.
19. Nicoll *loc. cit.*
20. Millward, Jessie. *Myself and Others*, London, Hutchinson & Co., 1923.
21. Gilbert, W. S. *Uncle Baby: A comedietta*. Edited, and with an introduction by Terence Rees. London, 1968.
22. Field, Kate. "W. S. Gilbert," *Scribner's Monthly*, 18 (1879) 751-755.
23. "*The Era*" *Almanack*, 1884.
24. The full title is "The Income-Tax reads a story, found in a drawer, and called 'Maxwell and I.'" Printed in *Rates and Taxes and how they were collected*. Ed. Tom Hood. London, Groombridge and Sons, 1866.
25. According to his own account in "An Autobiography," publ. in *The Theatre*, 1883.
26. Rees, Terence. *Thespis. A Gilbert and Sullivan enigma*. London, Dillon's University Bookshop, 1964.

The Hymn Tunes of Arthur Seymour Sullivan

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In contrast to Sir Arthur Sullivan's reputation in the areas of light opera and popular song, his work as a writer of hymn tunes has passed almost without notice. Two obvious reasons for this exist. Initially, the composer's renown in the first two categories simply overshadows the latter. Secondly, the problems associated with hymn tunes, particularly difficulties in identifying and authenticating authorship, tend to discourage full investigation by musicologists and hymnologists alike. However, in spite of the problems, one cannot honestly turn his back on Sullivan's hymn tunes, for to do so is to ignore one of the elements essential to understanding the full range of his creative power.

I shall begin this discussion of Sullivan's hymn tunes by concentrating on matters biographical and historical. Primarily I believe that the composer's early training—specifically the years 1852 to 1857, during which he came under the influence of Reverend Thomas Helmore at the Chapel Royal—marked him as a potential contributor to that period in the history of Anglican hymnody known generally as the "Oxford Revival." Certainly something more than coincidence or mere juvenile whim prompted young Sullivan (in 1855, and at age thirteen) to compose his first legitimate piece of music, the anthem entitled *Sing unto the Lord and Praise His Name*—for which he received from his patron the sum of one pound. That something—or, more accurately, *someone*—was Thomas Helmore (1811-1890), master of the choristers of the Chapel Royal, St. James, and a significant force in promoting congregational song within the hymnody of the Anglican Church.

Briefly, the Oxford Revival within the hymnody of the Church of England attempted to turn the minds of Anglican ecclesiastics (who also tended to be the composers of its hymns and the editors of its hymnals) from the freedom of the Evangelical hymn—the voice of the believer—to the Liturgical hymn—the voice of the worshipping church. Led by John Mason Neale (1818-1866), Anglican hymnodists proposed that "the Church of England should forego the use of English Protestant hymns altogether in favor of English versions of the pre-Reformation hymns."¹ In 1852

appeared part one of Neale's *Hymnal Noted* (published in London by Masters and Novello), containing forty-six hymns, mostly from the Sarum office books, set to their plain-song melodies. The second part appeared in 1854, with fifty-nine hymns from various ancient sources; the final form of the *Hymnal* came in 1858 and contained 105 hymns, with accompanying harmonies. The *Hymnal Noted* was sponsored by the Ecclesiological Society and listed as its music editor the name of Thomas Helmore. Within the same period, 1852-1858, the Society for Promoting Church Music issued Helmore's *Accompanying Harmonies to the "Hymnal Noted,"* while his and Neale's collections entitled *Carols for Christmas-Tide* and *Carols for Easter-Tide* were published in 1853 and 1854 respectively.

One cannot escape noticing that Helmore's important contributions to the conservative philosophy within the Oxford Revival bore fruit during the same general period in which young Sullivan, as a chorister of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal, lived and studied with him at the Chapel boarding school at No. 6 Cheyne Walk. From the outset, there was never any doubt as to this stern and demanding master recognizing the talent in his pupil. When young Sullivan applied for entrance to the Chapel Royal, he was beyond the age limit of nine years, but after an audition Helmore procured his admission. When there was need for a chorister to sing a solo part at the Palace, Helmore on more than one occasion selected Sullivan. When, in 1856, the committee for the Mendelssohn Scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music announced an open competition for the prize, Thomas Helmore prepared the eventual winner—fourteen-year-old Arthur Sullivan.

Sullivan never forgot Thomas Helmore, as witnessed by the latter being asked to read the service at the funeral of the composer's mother in 1882. Yet, he never really caught the full force of his teacher's efforts to impose Neale's Tractarian principles upon the hymnody of the Anglican Church. In 1852, as a rival to the *Hymnal Noted*, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge had issued a collection entitled *Hymns* to represent for the Evangelicals "a lower type of sacramental doctrine and a less self-assertive churchmanship."² Successive revisions of 1855, 1863, and 1869 led, in 1871, to a revised edition entitled *Church Hymns*; the ultimate success of this collection grew out of the musical edition of 1874. Its editor was Arthur Sullivan, and the work contained twenty-four of his original tunes. One may conclude, however, that although Sullivan eventually represented an opposing view to that of Helmore, his teacher's work as arranger of hymn tunes and editor of hymnals—appearing when it did—allowed the young

chorister to observe and learn from the methods of a practicing hymnologist. The seventy-six hymns still associated with Sullivan tunes—either originals or arrangements of others' tunes—provide ample evidence that Helmore early kindled Sullivan's life-long interest in composing hymn tunes, services, anthems, and carols.

The majority of Sullivan hymn tunes were concentrated in two separate collections. In 1870 and 1872, Benjamin Webb (Vicar of St. Andrews, Wells Street, London, and coadjutor of John Mason Neale) and Canon William Cooke published *The Hymnary: A Book of Church Song* (London: Novello and Company). This developed into "the most complete manual of High Anglican Hymnody, in its provision for hour and day, times, seasons and occasions, with a view to daily 'celebrations.' There is great use of Latin hymns . . . and an ecclesiastical if not monastic atmosphere remote from actual life."³ Through the effort of its music editor, Sir Joseph Barnby, the hymnal became important as a source-book of tunes, and it is generally referred to as "Barnby's *Hymnary*." Thirteen Sullivan tunes appear in *The Hymnary*: Angel Voices; Gennesareth; Gentle Shepherd; Lacrymae; Lux Mundi; Onward, Christian Soldiers; Propior Deo; Safe Home; St. Edmund; St. Kevin; Saviour, When in Dust to Thee; Venite; and Welcome, Happy Morning. One of these tunes—Onward, Christian Soldiers—had appeared previously, in the *Musical Times* for December 1871; another—Gennesareth—appeared in the *Sarum Hymnal* of 1868. In 1874 the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge published Sullivan's musical edition of its *Church Hymns* of 1871, referred to earlier. This collection contained twenty-three of his original tunes: Christus, Clarence, Coena Domini, Dulci Sonantia, Ever Faithful, Evelyn, Golden Sheaves, Hanford, Holy City, Hushed Was the Evening Hymn, Lux Eoi, Lux in Tenebrae, Paradise, Pilgrimage, Resurrexit, St. Francis, St. Millicent, St. Patrick, St. Theresa, Saints of God, Ultor Omnipotens, Valete, and Veni Creator.

Nineteen original Sullivan hymn tunes and arrangements were published in nine other hymnals:

Audite Audientes (I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say), #408; Constance, #511; Ecclesia (The Church Has Waited Long), #64; Promissio Patris (Our Blest Redeemer), #167—in *New Church Hymn Book*. London: Shaw, 1874.

Bolwell (Thou to Whom the Sick and Dying), #45; Chapel Royal

- (O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go), #44; Victoria (To Mourn Our Dead We Gather Here), #33—in *Hymn Tunes*. London: Novello and Company, 1902.
- Carrow (My God, I Thank Thee), #496—in Henry Allon's *The Congregational Psalmist*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875.
- Courage, Brother; and Hymn of the Homeland—in Norman Macleod's *Good Words*. London: Strahan, 1872.
- Formosa, #273; Mt. Zion, #221; St. Luke, #285—in James Hamilton's *Psalms and Hymns for Divine Worship*. London: James Nisbet and Company, 1866.
- Gennesareth, #288—in Horatio Nelson's *Sarum Hymnal*. London: Novello and Company, 1868.
- Of Thy Love, #320; Thou God of Love, #306—in John Hullah's *Hymnal*. London: Macmillan, 1868.
- Roseate Hues, #553—in the *Parish Choir Book*. London: Novello and Company, 1901.
- The Son of God (an arrangement), #74; Strain Upraise, #68—in Robert Brown-Borthwick's *Supplemental Hymn and Tune Book*, 3rd edition. London: Novello and Company, 1869.

Finally, eight hymn tunes were published separately: four by Novello and Company—*Hearken unto Me* (1877), *I Will Lay Me Down in Peace* (1910), *I Will Mention the Loving-Kindness* (1875), and *I Will Sing of Thy Power* (1877); one each by Chappell (*Dominion Hymn*, 1880), Boosey (*I Will Worship*, 1871), Eyre and Spottiswoode (*O King of Kings*, 1897), and Metzler (*Upon the Snow-Clad Earth*, 1876). In addition, one may well add another twenty-four titles to this section of the Sullivan canon by including fifteen anthems, five services, and four carols.

Of primary interest to the hymnologist, however, are the seventy-six hymns associated with Sullivan hymn tunes—whether original compositions or arrangements. The summary table that follows this essay provides a brief history of each hymn, and indicates where the hymn appeared with a Sullivan tune or arrangement. Naturally, the vast majority of these hymns (66) belong to the nineteenth century; six were written during the eighteenth century, and four during the seventeenth. Included in the list are some of the most prominent names in eighteenth and nineteenth-century British hymnody: John Mason Neale, Thomas Benson Pollock, James Montgomery, John Ellerton, Horatius Bonar, Charles Wesley, William

Walsham How, and Nahum Tate. Literary figures are represented by William Cowper, Robert Herrick, John Henry Newman, and John Milton. Although Sullivan remains most known for his tune (St. Gertrude) to Sabine Baring-Gould's "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and an alternate tune to Augustus Montague Toplady's "Rock of Ages" (Mt. Zion), he composed or arranged tunes that became affixed to other well-known hymns: Godfrey Thring's "Heal me, O my Saviour"; John Ellerton's translation, "Welcome, happy morning, age to age shall say"; John Mason Neal's translation, "Come, ye faithful, raise the strain"; Sarah Flower Adams' "Nearer, my God, to Thee"; Catherine Winkworth's translation, "Father of Heaven, Who has created all"; James Drummond Burns' "Hushed was the evening hymn"; Adelaide Anne Proctor's "My God, I thank Thee, Who has made"; Charlotte Elliott's "Jesus my Saviour, look on me"; and Thomas Joseph Potter's "Brightly gleams our banner."

Arthur Sullivan's contribution to church music and song appears, from one point of view, a complete contradiction to the popular conception of his character. One can easily associate his genius in comic opera and popular song with that aspect of his temperament that sought out the company of royalty, drawing-room wits, and gambling hall parasites. However, the other side of Arthur Sullivan belonged to the world of serious music, with the love and understanding of family and close friends providing necessary encouragement and enjoyment. Eventually, most of these were denied or taken from him. Thus, he lived a lonely man, and the loneliness perhaps became more depressing when, in 1872, the pain that would plague him for the rest of his life began to wrack his body. For the most part, Sullivan's hymn tunes post-date his initial collaboration in 1871 with William S. Gilbert. From that time, his primary commitment would be to the orchestra pit of the comic opera stage. The hymn tunes, then, may well have been for Sullivan a way out of the pit—a means whereby he could fill the void in his lonely existence, replace lost ambitions and desires, and ease the pain within him. Therefore, Arthur Sullivan found religion not within the walls of a church or the tenets of a denomination, but from the balm provided by his own genius for composing music for hymns and sacred songs.

NOTES

1. Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship* (New York: George H. Doran Company), p. 503.
2. Benson, p. 507.
3. Benson, p. 514.

HYMNS ASSOCIATED WITH SULLIVAN TUNES

A	B	C	D	E
First Line	Author	First Published	Tune	Published with Sullivan Tune*
All this night bright angels sing (carol)	William Austin (d. 1633)	Ann Austin, <i>Devotionis Augustinianae Flamma</i> (1635)	Arrangement of old carol	1
Art thou weary, art thou languid (hymn)	from the Greek Κόπον τε Καὶ Καματον (Rest in Jesus) by St. Stephen the Sabaitte (725-794); Trans. John Mason Neale (1818-1866)	Neale's <i>Hymns of the Eastern Church</i> (London, 1862)	Rest	2
At thine altar, Lord, we gather (hymn)	Mary Bradford Whiting		Dulce sonans	2
Be Thou with us every day (metrical litany)	Thomas Benson Pollock (1836-1896); stanza 8 of his "Jesu, from Thy throne on high" (for children)	Pollock's <i>Metrical Litanies for Special Services and General Use</i> (Oxford, 1870)	Litany #3	2
Brightly gleams our banner (processional)	Thomas Joseph Potter (1827-1873)	<i>The Holy Family Hymns</i> (1860); #5, 8 stanzas of 8 lines, 4-line chorus	St. Theresa	2
Christ is risen (Easter hymn)	Archer Thompson Gurney (1820-1887)	Gurney's <i>A Book of Praise</i> (1862); #119, 3 stanzas of 12 lines	Resurrexit	2
Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire (hymn)	from the Latin "Veni Creator Spiritus, Mentis tuorum visita" (12th	Cosin's <i>Collection of Private Devotions in the Practice of the Ancient</i>	Veni creator	2

<p>century); Trans. John Cosin (1594-1672), Bishop of Durham</p>	<p>St. John of Damascus (8th century); from the first ode (Ἀσμητ παρτες καοί based on the Canticle "The Song of Moses," Exodus XV) of the nine Canticles of the Greek service; Trans. John Mason Neale (1818-1866)</p>	<p>Neale's article "Greek Hymnology" in <i>Christian Remembrancer</i> (April 1859); then in Neale's <i>Hymns of the Eastern Church</i> (1862); 4 stanzas of 8 lines</p>	<p>St. Kevin</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Come ye faithful, raise the strain (Easter hymn)</p>	<p>Norman Macleod (1812-1872); the first line of a hymn more popularly known by its refrain, "Trust in God, and do the right"</p>	<p>Macleod's <i>The Edinburgh Christian Magazine</i> (January 1857)</p>	<p>Courage, brother</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Courage brother! do not stumble (hymn)</p>	<p>Matthew Bridges (1800-1894)</p>	<p>Bridges' <i>Hymns of the Heart for the Use of Catholics</i> (1848)</p>	<p>Coronae</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Crown Him with many crowns (hymn)</p>	<p>"Sancti venite, corpus Christi sumite"; from the <i>Antiphonarium Benchorensis</i> (680-691), Ireland</p>	<p>Neale's <i>Mediaeval Hymns</i> (1851), p. 13; 10 stanzas of 2 lines; Trans. John Mason Neale</p>	<p>Coena Domini</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Draw night, and take the body of the Lord (hymn)</p>	<p>Albert Knapp (1808-1889); "O Vaterherz, das Erd' und Himmel schuf";</p>	<p>Knapp's <i>Christenlieder</i> (1841); #89, 4 stanzas</p>	<p>St. Francis</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Father of Heaven, Who has created all (hymn)</p>				

HYMNS ASSOCIATED WITH SULLIVAN TUNES (Continued)

A	B		C	D	E
First Line	Author	First Published	Tune	Published with Sullivan Tune*	
A few more years shall roll (hymn)	Trans. Catherine Winkworth (1829-1878)	of 9 lines	Leominster; arranged from George W. Martin (1828-1881)	2	
For all thy love and goodness (hymn)	Frances Jane How Douglas, as a poem for her collection <i>April Verses</i> ; revised as a hymn by her brother, Bishop William Walsham How (1823-1897)	Printed in 1842 on a fly-leaf for Bonar's congregation (Free Church of Scotland) in Kelso, Scotland; published in Bonar's <i>Songs for the Wilderness</i> (1844); #2, 6 stanzas of 8 lines, entitled "A Pilgrim's Song"	Springtime, arranged from Henry Aldrich (1647-1710)	2	
For ever with the Lord (hymn)	James Montgomery (1771-1854)	<i>The Amethyst</i> (issue for 1835); Montgomery's <i>Poet's Portfolio</i> (1835), p. 233; 22 stanzas of 4 lines; 2 parts; entitled "At Home in Heaven, I Thess. iv. 17"	Nearer home	2	

From Egypt's bondage come (hymn)	Thomas Kelly (1769-1854); original title "From Egypt lately come"	Original in Kelly's <i>Collection of Psalms and Hymns Extracted from Various Authors, with an Appendix</i> (1802); #250; 7 stanzas of 6 lines; revision in Thomas Cotterill's (1779-1823) <i>Selection of Psalms and Hymns</i> , 8th ed. (1819)	Pilgrimage	2
Glorious things of thee are spoken (hymn)	John Newton (1725-1807)	Newton's <i>Olney Hymns</i> , Book I (1779); #60, 5 stanzas of 8 lines, entitled "Zion, or the City of God, Is. xxxiii. 20, 21"	Formosa (Falfield)	5, #273
God bless our wide dominion (dominion hymn)	From a poem by John George Douglas Sutherland Campbell, Marquis of Lorne, 9th Duke of Argyll (1823-1900)	6	Dominion hymn	6
God moves in a mysterious way (hymn)	William Cowper (1731-1800); in 1773, after an attempt at suicide by drowning, in the Ouse at Olney	John Newton's <i>Twenty- Six Letters on Religious Subjects; to Which Are Added Hymns, etc.</i> , by <i>Omicron</i> (London, 1774); 6 stanzas of 4 lines, entitled "Light shining out of Darkness" (unsigned)	St. Nathaniel	2
God the All-Terrible	Original by Henry Fothergill Chorley (1808-	Original in John Hullah's <i>Part Music</i> (1842);	Ultor omnipotens	2

HYMNS ASSOCIATED WITH SULLIVAN TUNES (Continued)

A	B		C	D	E
First Line	Author	First Published	Tune	Published with Sullivan Tune*	
(hymn)	1872)—"God the all-terrible! King, Who ordainest"; imitation (1870) by John Ellerton (1826-1893)—"God the Almighty One, wisely ordaining"; "God the All-Terrible," a combination of the two	imitation in Robert Brown-Borthwick's (1840-) <i>Select Hymns for Church and Home</i> (1871); combination in <i>Church Hymns</i> (London: S.P.C.K., 1871); #262; stanzas i-iii from Chorley, iv-vi from Ellerton			
Great King of nations, hear our prayer (hymn)	John Hampden Gurney (1802-1862)	Gurney's <i>Luterworth Collection of Hymns for Public Worship</i> (1838); #76, 3 stanzas of 4 double-lines, entitled "Fast Day; or, Time of Public Calamity"	Old 137th Psalm, arranged from Geneva Psalter	2	
Happy children we have been (hymn)	Sarah Wilson	7	Happy children	7	
Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding (hymn)	St. Ambrose; "En clara vox redarguit"; Trans. Edward Caswall (1814-1878)	F. H. Murray's <i>Hymnal for Use in the English Church</i> (1852); #2	Lux eoi	2	
Hark! what mean those holy voices? (Christmas song)	John Cawood (1775-1852)	Thomas Cotterill's <i>Selection</i> , 8th ed. (1819); #269, 6 stanzas of 4 lines; unsigned. First attributed	Formosa (Falfield)	5	

He is coming, He is coming (hymn)	Cecil Frances Humphreys Alexander (1823-1895)	to Cawood in John Montgomery's <i>Christian Psalmist</i> (1825)	Formosa (Falfield)	5
He is gone— a cloud of light (hymn)	Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815-1881); original title: "He is gone— Beyond the skies"	First appeared in <i>Macmillan's Magazine</i> , VI (June 1862), 153 (signed "A.P.S."); first appeared in a hymnal in Philip Schaff's (1819-1893) <i>Christ in Song</i> (New York, 1869; London, 1870), p. 261; first published in full length in <i>The Westminster Abbey Hymn Book</i> (London, 1883), 7 stanzas of 8 lines; abbreviated version with revised title in the Chapel Royal, Savoy, <i>Hymnary Appendix</i> : (1870) and <i>Church Hymns</i> (London: S.P.C.K., 1871)	St. Patrick	2
Heal me, O my Saviour, heal (hymn)	Godfrey Thring (1823-1903)	Thring's <i>Hymns Congregational and Others</i> (1866), 5 stanzas of 4 lines; enlarged in Thring's <i>Hymns and Sacred Lyrics</i> (1874), 8 stanzas; originally set to music by H. H.	Lacrymae	3

HYMNS ASSOCIATED WITH SULLIVAN TUNES (Continued)

A	B	C	D	E
First Line	Author	First Published	Tune	Published with Sullivan Tune*
Hearken unto Me my people (anthem)	from <i>Isaiah</i> , 51:4-6	Pierson in his <i>Hymn Tunes</i> , 2nd ser. (1872)	Hearken unto me	8
Holy Spirit! come in might (hymn)	Original "Veni Sancte Spiritus, et emitte coelitus"; Trans. Edward Caswell (1814-1878)—"Holy Spirit, Lord of Light"	Caswell's <i>Lyra Catholica</i> (1849), p. 234; "Holy Spirit! come in might" in <i>Church Hymns</i> (London: S.P.C.K., 1871)—Caswell's translation without stanzas 3-4	Light	2
Hushed was the evening hymn (hymn)	James Drummond Burns (1823-1864)	Burns' <i>The Evening Hymn</i> (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1857); 5 stanzas of 6 lines	Hushed was the evening hymn	2
I heard the voice of Jesus say (hymn)	Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)	Bonar's <i>Hymns Original and Selected</i> (1846); 3 stanzas of 8 lines, headed "The Voice from Galilee"	Audite audientes me	9, #408
I will lay me down in peace (hymn)	Psalms 4:9	10	I will lay me down in peace	10
I will mention the loving- kindness (anthem)	Psalms 63	11	I will mention the loving-kindness	11
I will sing of thy power (anthem)	Psalms 59	12	I will sing of thy power	12

I will worship towards Thy holy temple (hymn)		13	I will worship	13
In the hour of my distress (litany)	Robert Herrick (1591-1674)	Herrick's <i>Noble Numbers</i> (1647); 12 stanzas of 4 lines	Evelyn	2
Jesus my Saviour, look on me (hymn)	Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871)	Miss Elliott's <i>Thoughts in Verse on Sacred Subjects</i> (1869); #23	Hanford	2
Lead kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom (hymn)	John Henry Newman (1801-1890)	<i>British Magazine</i> (March 1834)	Lux in tenebrae	2
Let no tears to-day be shed (burial hymn)	Original "Funerium ne date planetum" (French author unknown); Trans. Richard Frederick Littledale (1833-1890)	<i>Church Times</i> (Nov. 10, 1865)	St. Millicent	2
Let us with a glad some mind (hymn)	John Milton (1608-1674) in 1623; paraphrase of Psalm 136	Milton's <i>Poems in English and Latin</i> (1645); 24 stanzas of 2 lines	Ever faithful, ever sure	2
Lord, in this, Thy mercy's day (metrical litany)	Isaac Williams (1802-1865)	Taken from Williams' "Image the Twentieth," a poem on "The Day of Days or, the Great Manifestation"—a part of his <i>The Baptistery; or, the Way of Eternal Life</i> (1844); 105 stanzas of 3 lines. As a hymn in <i>The Church Hymnal</i> (1853) of William Cooke and	Lacrymae	3

HYMNS ASSOCIATED WITH SULLIVAN TUNES (Continued)

A	B	C	D	E
First Line	Author	First Published	Tune	Published with Sullivan Tune*
Love Divine, all loves excelling (hymn)	Charles Wesley (1707-1788)	William Denton; 6 stanzas, 3 lines	Falfield (Formosa)	5
My God, I thank Thee, Who hast made (hymn)	Adelaide Anne Proctor (1825-1864) as "I thank Thee, O my God, Who made"	Wesley's <i>Hymns for Those That Seek, and Those That Have Redemption</i> (1747); #9, 4 stanzas of 8 lines	Carrow	14, #496
Nearer, my God, to Thee (hymn)	Sarah Flower Adams (1805-1848)	Miss Proctor's <i>Legends and Lyrics; A Book of Verse</i> (1858); p. 207; 6 stanzas of 6 lines	Propior Deo, or Aspiration	3
O Jesu, our Salvation (hymn)	James Hamilton (1819-1896)	W. J. Fox's <i>Hymns and Anthems</i> (1841); #85	Lux Mundi	3
O Jesu, Thou art standing (hymn)	William Walsham How (1823-1897)	Richard F. Littledale's <i>The People's Hymnal</i> (1867) as "O Jesu! Lord most merciful"; altered to "O Jesu, our Salvation" in 3	Lux Mundi	3
O King of Kings, Thy blessing shed	Original (anonymous) "For the King"; altered	<i>Supplement to Psalms and Hymns, Compiled by the Rev. Thomas Baker Morrel ... and the Rev. William Walsham How</i> (1857); 6 stanzas of 4 lines	O King of Kings	15

(national hymn)	form by William Walsham How, "O King of Kings, Whose reign of old"	<i>Psalms and Hymns for Public and Private Use, Adapted to the Festivals of the Church of England</i> (8th ed., 1819); #266, 5 stanzas of 4 lines; altered form written for the national thanksgiving at the celebration of Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1897)	
O Love that wilt not let me go (hymn)	George Matheson (1842-1906) in 1882	Matheson's <i>Sacred Songs</i> (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1890)	Chapel Royal 16, #44
O Paradise, O Paradise (hymn)	Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)	Faber's <i>Hymns</i> (1862); 7 stanzas of 8 lines	Paradise 2
O Strength and Stay, upholding all creation (hymn)	Original 8th century Latin hymn, "Rerum Deus tenax vigor"; Trans. John Ellerton (1826-1893) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892)	<i>Church Hymns</i> (London: S.P.C.K., 1871)	Marlborough; arrangement of an old tune 2
O where shall rest be found (hymn)	James Montgomery (1771-1854)	Broadsheet for the Anniversary Sermons of the Red Hill Wesleyan Sunday School, Sheffield, March 15-16, 1818; 6 stanzas of 4 lines	Ecclesia 9, #64
Of thy love some gracious token (hymn)	Thomas Kelly (1769-1854)	Kelly's <i>Collection of Psalms and Hymns</i> (Dublin, 1802); #256	Of thy love 17, #320

HYMNS ASSOCIATED WITH SULLIVAN TUNES (Continued)

A	B	C	D	E
First Line	Author	First Published	Tune	Published with Sullivan Tune*
Onward Christian Soldiers (processional hymn)	Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)	<i>Church Times</i> for 1865; 6 stanzas	St. Gertrude	18, 3
Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed (hymn)	Harrier Auber (1773-1862)	Miss Auber's <i>Spirit of the Psalms</i> (1829), p. 147; 7 stanzas of 4 lines	Promisso Patris	9, #167
Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore Him (hymn)	Psalms 148; author unknown	Four-page tract pasted at the end of some copies of the musical edition of John Kempthorne's <i>Psalms, Hymns, and Anthems of the Foundling Hospital</i> (London, 1796)	Formosa	5
Rock of Ages, cleft for me (hymn)	Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778)	<i>Gospel Magazine</i> (October 1775), p. 474; revised version in <i>Gospel Magazine</i> (March 1776)	Mt. Zion	5, #221
Safe home, safe home in port (hymn)	St. Joseph the Hymnographer (d. 883); Trans. John Mason Neale (1815-1866)	Neale's <i>Hymns of the Eastern Church</i> (1862); 6 stanzas of 6 lines	Safe home	3
The Saints of God, their conflict past (hymn)	William Dalrymple Maclagan (1826-1910)	<i>Church Bells</i> (1870)	Saints of God	2
Saviour, when in dust to thee (hymn)	Sir Robert Grant (1785-1838)	<i>The Christian Observer</i> (1815), p. 735; 5 stanzas of 8 lines; entitled "Litany"	St. Mary Magdalene	3

<p>Show me not only Jesus dying (Easter hymn)</p>	<p>Josiah Conder (1789-1855)</p>	<p><i>Congregationalist Hymn Book</i> (1836) as "O show me not my Saviour dying"; #160, 4 stanzas of 8 lines. "Show me not only Jesus dying" an abridged form in <i>Church Hymns</i> (London: S.P.C.K., 1871); 3 stanzas</p>	<p>Christus</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Sing alleluia forth in duteous praise (hymn)</p>	<p>"Alleluia pius edite laudibus"; anonymous, 5th century. Trans. John Ellerton (1826-1893)</p>	<p><i>The Churchman's Family Magazine</i> (1865)</p>	<p>Holy City</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The Son of God goes forth to war (hymn)</p>	<p>Reginald Heber (1783-1826)</p>	<p>Heber's (posthumous) <i>Hymns Written and Adapted to the Weekly Church Service of the Year</i> (London: J. Murray, 1827), p. 17; 8 stanzas of 4 lines</p>	<p>St. Anne, arranged from William Croft (1677-1727)</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Stars of evening softly gleaming (hymn)</p>	<p>Mary Bradford Whiting</p>	<p>John Bradford Whiting's <i>Hymns for the Catholic Church</i> (1822)</p>	<p>Angel voices</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Sweet Saviour, bless us ere we go (hymn)</p>	<p>Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)</p>	<p>Faber's <i>Jesus and Mary; or, Catholic Hymns for Singing and Reading</i> (London, 1849); 7 stanzas of 6 lines</p>	<p>Valete</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Tender Shepherd, Thou hast still'd (hymn)</p>	<p>Johann Wilhelm Meinhold (1797-1851) as "Guter Hirt, du hast gestillt"; Trans. Catherine</p>	<p>Original in Meinhold's <i>Gedichte</i> (Leipzig, 1835), vol. 1, p. 38; 3 stanzas of 6 lines. Trans. in Miss</p>	<p>Gentle shepherd, or The long home</p>	<p>3</p>

HYMNS ASSOCIATED WITH SULLIVAN TUNES (Continued)

A First Line	B Author	C First Published	D Tune	E Published with Sullivan Tune*
	Winkworth (1829-1878), as "Gentle Shepherd, Thou hast still'd"	Winkworth's <i>Lyra Germanica</i> , 2nd ser. (1858), p. 122. "Tender Shepherd, Thou hast still'd" in the <i>Appendix to Hymns Ancient and Modern</i> (1868); #358		
Thou God of love, beneath thy sheltering wings (burial hymn)	Jane Euphemia Browne Saxby (1811-1898)	Mrs. Saxby's <i>The Dove and the Cross</i> (1849)	Thou God of Love	17, #306
Thou, to Whom the sick and dying (hymn)	Godfrey Thring (1823-1903) in 1870	Thring's <i>Supplement</i> (Lincoln, 1871)	Bolwell	16, #45
To mourn our dead we gather here (burial hymn)	Mary Bradford Whiting	C.W.A. Brooke's <i>Additional Hymns</i> (1903)	Victoria	16, #33
To Thee, O Lord, our hearts we raise (hymn)	William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)	The St. Raphael's (Bristol) <i>Hymns for the Service of the Church</i> (1864); #202, 4 stanzas of 8 lines	Golden sheaves	2
We are but strangers here (funeral hymn)	Thomas Rawson Taylor (1807-1835) as "I'm but a stranger here"	W. S. Matthews' <i>Memoirs and Select Remains</i> [of T. R. Taylor] (1836); 4 stanzas of 8 lines, headed "Heaven is my home"	Fatherland, or St. Edmund	3

<p>Welcome, happy morning, age to age shall say (Easter hymn)</p>	<p>Venantius Honorius Clementianus Fortunatus (c. 530-609) as "Salve, festa dies, toto venerabiliis aevo"; Trans. John Ellerton (1826-1893)</p>	<p>Original in Book III of Fortunatus' <i>Poems</i>; #9. Trans. in Robert Brown- Borthwick's <i>Supplemental Hymn and Tune Book</i> (1867)</p>	<p>Welcome, happy morning, or Fortunatus</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>When through the torn sail the wild tempest is streaming (hymn)</p>	<p>Reginald Heber (1783-1826)</p>	<p>Heber's (posthumous) <i>Hymns Written and Adapted to the Weekly Church Service of the Year</i> (London: J. Murray, 1827)</p>	<p>Heber</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>While shepherds watched their flocks by night (Christmas hymn)</p>	<p>Nahum Tate (1652-1715)</p>	<p>Tate and Brady's <i>Supplement to the New Version</i> (1702); 6 stanzas of 4 lines</p>	<p>Bethlehem</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Who trusts in God a strong abode (hymn)</p>	<p>Joachim Magdeburg (c. 1525-?) as "Wer Gott vertraut, hat wohl gebaut"; Trans. Benjamin Hall Kennedy (1804-1889)</p>	<p>Original in Magdeburg's <i>Christliche und frostliche Tischgesenge, mit vier Stimmen</i> (Erfurt, 1572); trans. in Kennedy's <i>Hymnologia Christiana</i> (1863)</p>	<p>Constance</p>	<p>9, #511</p>
<p>Winter reigneth o'er the land (hymn)</p>	<p>William Walsham How (1823-1897)</p>	<p><i>Church Hymns</i> (London: S.P.C.K., 1871); #64</p>	<p>Clarence</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>With the sweet word of peace (hymn)</p>	<p>George Watson (1816-1898) in 1868</p>	<p>Paxton Hood's <i>Our Hymn Book</i> (1868); #572, 6 stanzas of 4 lines</p>	<p>Parting</p>	<p>2</p>

HYMNS ASSOCIATED WITH SULLIVAN TUNES (Concluded)

* KEY TO COLUMN "E": *Works containing hymn with Sullivan tune*

1. Henry Ramsden Bramley and John Stainer. *Christmas Carols, New and Old*. London: Novello and Co., n.d. [1870].
2. Arthur Seymour Sullivan. *Church Hymns* [musical edition]. London: S.P.C.K., 1874.
3. Benjamin Webb and William Cooke. *The Hymnary: A Book of Church Song*. London: Novello and Co., 1872.
4. Norman Macleod. *Good Words*. London: Strahan, 1872.
5. James Hamilton. *Psalms and Hymns for Divine Worship*. London: James Nisbet and Co., 1866.
6. Arthur Seymour Sullivan. *Dominion Hymn*. London: Chappell, 1880.
7. *Hymns for Children*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1888.
8. Arthur Seymour Sullivan. *Hearken unto Me*. London: Novello and Co., 1877.
9. *New Church Hymn Book*. London: Shaw, 1874.
10. Arthur Seymour Sullivan. *I Will Lay Me Down in Peace*. London: Novello and Co., 1910.
11. Arthur Seymour Sullivan. *I Will Mention the Loving-kindness*. London: Novello and Co., 1875.
12. Arthur Seymour Sullivan. *I Will Sing of Thy Power*. London: Novello and Co., 1877.
13. Arthur Seymour Sullivan. *I Will Worship*. London: Boosey, 1871.
14. Henry Allon. *The Congregational Psalmist*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875.
15. Arthur Seymour Sullivan. *O King of Kings*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1897.
16. *Hymn Tunes*. London: Novello and Company, 1902.
17. John Hulla. *A Hymnal* [chiefly from *The Book of Praise*, ed. Sir Roundell Palmer, Lord Selborne, (London: Macmillan, 1862)]. London: Macmillan, 1868.
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Gilbert's Stagecraft: Little Blocks of Wood

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As we all know, W. S. Gilbert was his own director and used a model stage on which to work out the staging of his libretti. His actors were represented by little blocks of wood, painted in various colours to indicate different voice ranges, and he grouped them on sets prepared for him by his scenic artists. In thus working out effects on a miniature stage, Gilbert was not unique; his rival, F. C. Burnand, for instance, also used models in planning the eccentric stage business which was his trademark. But in Gilbert's case, his little theatre and wooden actors were part of his controlling theory of comedy which underlies all the Savoy libretti.

Although Gilbert's stagecraft is usually discussed in terms of anecdote—what he said to Barrington when Barrington sat heavily on a skylight—his knowledge and direction embraced every aspect of play production, from choosing what views of the Tower of London would be represented in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, to stipulating that the arquebus Wilfred Shadbolt has presumably just fired must have smoke curling from its muzzle, to suggesting that a chorus lady's costume needed cleaning during the run of *Utopia Limited*.

This control was part of a general revolution within the entire Victorian theatre, in respect to the question of whether the actor or the author should dominate production. Artistically allied to this struggle were the increasing complexity and literal reality of stage illusion, which, like the Victorian *zeitgeist*, was oriented to things and *thing-ness*. Throughout much of the nineteenth century, the theatre was an actor's theatre; that is, the dominant stars controlled the texts of the plays in which they acted, and their performances depended upon the making of "points"—picturesquely dramatic moments by which the artist's greatness was tested, much as an opera singer's is by certain display arias. Shakespeare's plays, of course, furnished innumerable opportunities, but one of the most famous "points" in Victorian drama was the "curse of Rome" scene in Bulwer-Lytton's *Richelieu*. Here, the Cardinal, Julie clinging to him, faces the King's emissaries and, with a statuesque gesture, exclaims:

Mark, where she stands, around her form I draw
The awful circle of our solemn Church!
Set but a foot within that holy ground,

And on thy head—yea, though it wore a crown—
I launch the curse of Rome!

Gilbert parodied this scene in *Ruddigore*, combining it with a popular confrontation in nautical melodrama, when Richard Dauntless produces a Union Jack and announces:

Here is a flag that none dare defy, and while this
glorious rag floats over Rose Maybud's head, the
man does not live who would dare to lay un-
licensed hand upon her!

Audiences watched for exciting “points,” often with much connoisseurship but little attention to the total form and development of the drama itself, thereby permitting the actor to fragment the text of the play as he chose. For, if a play had to be cut to fit into a long evening's program, the star deleted exposition, probability, minor characters, but never his own points. Text, even in Shakespeare's case, was thus subservient to isolated display. Gilbert, in an essay on “Unappreciated Shakespeare,”¹ objected to the “insufferably vain and sacrilegious imposter” who shortened *Henry VIII* to the three acts in which the star role, Wolsey, appears and who deleted Act V of *The Merchant of Venice* because Shylock is not in it. Gilbert calculated that contemporary productions robbed *Hamlet* of half and *The Taming of the Shrew* of two-thirds of their respective lines. So long, then, as the all-engrossing star remained in control of the stage, textual integrity was in danger and ensemble playing generally at a minimum. Comedy, to be sure, because it depends on timing, was more apt to find a virtue in ensemble, but even so, the chief comedian's ad libs, gags, and idiosyncratic routines took precedence over the dramatist's lines, however witty. Another of Gilbert's critical essays, “Actors, Authors, and Audiences,” attacks this imbalance by depicting a low comedian who helps to destroy a play by introducing his own business, including “a scene in which [he] ignorantly attempted to convert a guinea-pig into a rabbit by rubbing it with Mrs. Allen's Hair Restorer.”² To the imaginary author's objection, the comedian replies, “I am accustomed to author's protests. I consider that authors should feel much indebted to me for the valuable interpolations suggested by my humour, experience and good taste.”³

Perhaps the most famous (or notorious) instance of a comedian supplanting a dramatist was E. A. Sothorn's creation of Lord Dundreary in Tom Taylor's play, *Our American Cousin*. Originally the character was merely

a secondary old man role, but Sothorn so elaborated costume, gesture, gait, delivery, and dialogue itself that Dundreary became the leading character, achieving an independent existence almost totally the work of the actor rather than of the dramatist.

Gilbert had no intention of this happening at the Savoy, and he kept his comedians on a tight rein lest they run away with his carefully planned stage business and characters. When, for instance, Rutland Barrington in *The Gondoliers* asked him to let the courtiers remain on stage until Barrington dismissed them, Gilbert exploded in a letter to D'Oyly Carte:

. . . there never was a more preposterous suggestion. Why, the song he has just been singing explains that he is the humble servant of his courtiers who order him about as they please as if he were a menial—and then he proposes to “dismiss them”! I never heard a more inartistic suggestion. The man's personal vanity is at the bottom of it all.⁴

In “Actors, Authors and Audiences” the intrusive low comedian has bought “a remarkably clever mechanical wig” and “introduced much practical ‘business’ into the part . . .”⁵ On Gilbert's own stage, he knew how to deal with problems like this. “There is a man in the chorus named Moss,” he wrote to Mrs. Carte during an 1898 revival of *Trial by Jury*,

a “funny” man who is the bane of true comic opera. He has over-acted right through rehearsals &, although I told the “jurymen” not to make up with wigs &c., he nevertheless took upon himself to appear last night in a grotesque flaxen wig He occupies a place in the jury box close to the footlights & so, is extremely conspicuous. I suggest that he be put in the back row at the end furthest from the stage—then his exaggerations will not be important.⁶

Although Gilbert did not like to see performances of his own pieces “from the front,” he was quick to pick up reports about them from friends and correspondents, as well as from his wife, whom he reported as saying that during the wooing trio in *The Yeomen of the Guard* “Ulmar & Bond go a great deal too far in pinching & tickling Grosssmith—tweaking his nose & punching him about.” “Now,” Gilbert wrote to Carte, “whatever they do should be done *neatly & Delicately* & not *overdone*. I wish you would look at this, some night, & judge for yourself.”⁷ This letter is dated 25 December, indicating that Gilbert thought the correction of stage business sufficiently important to interrupt his Christmas.

His dialogue was likewise tightly controlled, not only in original productions but in any revivals he supervised. Rutland Barrington seems to have been an inveterate taker of liberties, for Gilbert wrote to Carte on 30 April 1890,

I hear great complaints of Barrington's gagging. . . . The piece is, I think, quite good enough without the extraneous embellishments suggested by Mr. Barrington's brief fancy. Anyway it must be played *exactly as I wrote it*. I wont have an outside word introduced by anybody. If once a license in this direction is accorded it opens the door to any amount of tomfoolery.⁸

Nearly twenty years later Helen Carte—to set questions of ad lib in *The Mikado* at rest—submitted for Gilbert's authorization a list of all additional lines which had crept into the text. Some of these, Gilbert admitted, had always been allowed—after all he was not utterly adamant—but others, among them Pooh-Bah's "I'll give you such a Japanese smack in a minute" drew such comments from him as "utterly stupid—please omit."⁹ From this list and from Gilbert's correspondence with the Cartes it is clear that he objected to gags which did not further the meaning of his lines or which obscured sense or characterization. Likewise, his finding "the introduction of *inappropriate exaggerated and unauthorized* 'business' " as much an infraction of discipline as altering dialogue repeats the inviolable connection he saw between words and staging. In this respect he was indeed the disciple of Tom Robertson, of whom Gilbert said that he invented stage-management, and from watching whose rehearsals Gilbert learned much about giving "life and variety and nature to the scene, by breaking it up with all sorts of little incidents and delicate by-play."¹⁰

Robertson and the Bancrofts had perfected ensemble playing in the realistic domestic sets of *Society*, *Ours*, and *Caste*, and had begun a vogue for a sort of bourgeois realism in staging, suited very well to the Victorian emphasis on physical objects for their own sake and as social indicators. The cup and saucer, ham and milk-can of *Caste* are consonant with Dickens' tea-tables in *Barnaby Rudge*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, or *Great Expectations*, where a multiplicity of detail, like Robertson's props, indicates character, situation, and gives a solid sense of reality. At the Savoy Gilbert used fewer props than Robertson had at the Prince of Wales's, obviously because few of Gilbert's libretti are set indoors. But his lyrics and dialogue often fill the audience's mind with objects: Josephine's home with ancestral armour, old

brasses, carved oak, Venetian finger-glasses, rich oriental rugs, and luxurious sofa-pillows; or Bunthorne's tablespoon with which he eats fresh butter in Patience's dairy—a very Robertsonian touch even if it happens off-stage.

Robertson was, of course, not the first nineteenth century dramatist to attempt realistic stage pictures, and Gilbert preserves some elements of his predecessors. Ever since the tank at Sadler's Wells was filled with scale-model fleets, melodramatic spectacle had impressed audiences with real water, real horses, and finally with steamboat explosions, locomotives, and houses afire. On the musical stage spectacular realism often took the form of fairytale *vraisemblance* in the extravaganzas of J. R. Planché designed by William Beverley. Gilbert's closest approach to this sort of staging is the elegant mediaevalism of *Princess Ida*, which elicited superlatives such as the following from the *Sportsman's* reviewer:

one of the most perfect landscapes ever put upon the stage. If it be possible to imagine a fairy Cliveden on one side of the Thames, and a touch of Rhineland Castle on the other, to throw between the two a sleepy stream, marged with calm woods and deep translucent backwaters, to set the whole in a frame of golden sunlight, and the quivering fretwork of summer boughs, then some faint idea can be formed of the beauty of this set.¹¹

A second sort of stage realism encouraged by Planché, i.e., historical accuracy, is more directly in the background of Robertson's innovations and in the authenticity of the set for *The Yeomen of the Guard*. As an authority on period costume, Planché helped to improve Shakespearean productions, and when he staged a play about Mary Stuart, even the handkerchiefs bore reasonably exact monograms. For his classical burlesques Planché dressed mythological characters in appropriate Greek costumes and prevented the comic lead from playing Prometheus "dressed like a great lubberly boy in a red jacket and nankeens, with a pinafore all besmeared with lollipop!"¹²

This discovery that absurdity is rendered more comic when contrasted with authenticity of appearance was developed to a high point by Gilbert, who, like Planché, often combined it with beautiful and picturesque backgrounds. Reviewers sometimes objected to music, to performance, to dialogue at the Savoy, but seldom failed in enthusiasm for the pictorial effects. In fact, the costumes in Savoy productions, often designed by Gilbert himself and always supervised by him, were regularly reviewed in fashion columns and women's magazines. Mildred of the London *Figaro*, for in-

stance, exclaimed over the colours of the professional bridesmaids' costumes:

so tasteful, so delicate, so harmonious, that if I ever raved about anything, I should be tempted to rave about them. Some of them were soft, fairy-like tints that it is hard to find a name for. But it seems to me that the twenty-four frocks included every sweetly delicate hue an imaginative colourist can fancy, from jonquille to blush pinks, from tender apple green to soft pearl grey, from primrose to fawn.¹³

The *Lady's Pictorial*, reviewing *The Gondoliers*, was charmed by Casilda's first act costume of *eau de nil*, salmon and gold, and noted how Decima Moore's fair complexion was set off to advantage by her second act "Spanish costume of rose-pink and pale turquoise, with a satin train of the latter colour trimmed with gold."¹⁴

But more important to the intellectual and comic effect of Gilbert's plays themselves was the verisimilitude of sets and costumes. One might even argue that *Princess Ida* and *Utopia Limited*, lavishly though they were set, were less successful than *H.M.S. Pinafore* or *Iolanthe* because they lacked recognizable reality of setting, the absence of which was not sufficiently compensated for by spectacle, even though Gilbert attempted to supply realism in *Utopia Limited* by a meticulous reproduction of a royal ceremony. Only in *The Mikado* and the first act of *The Gondoliers* did he completely integrate the exotic with the authentic, and it is the authentic which is essential to his comic method.

Gilbert used Tom Robertson's realistic stage techniques to give his own plots and satire a basis in reality and a point of reference to human beings. The assumptions and logical adductions of his plots may become fantastic or impossible (although never improbable), but they operate in a real physical milieu. *Iolanthe*, for example, may conclude with wings springing from the peers' shoulders and a flight to fairyland, but that flight takes off, so to speak, from Palace Yard, Westminster, depicted on stage by a "wonderfully massive-looking scene" in which "The effect of the white moonlight in contrast with the yellow gas of the lamps is very accurately reproduced. . . ." ¹⁵

The solid reality of Gilbert's stage picture is an anchor for the impossibility of his denouements and a means by which the plausibility of his logic can supersede its physical impossibility. If *H.M.S. Pinafore* seems as authentic as *H.M.S. Victory*, its captain's surprising infancy is also authentic. Likewise, accuracy of costume confers reality both directly and indirectly. If the Peers are real—and their regalia is exactly that of real peers—the fairies

must be real also. This function of costumes and sets is analogous to that of Gilbert and Sullivan's serious songs ("Try we life-long," "Love is a plaintive song," "To a garden full of roses," etc.), which link the stage with the emotions and conditions of life outside the theatre. Together they and the *mise-en-scène* are anchors for Gilbert's cloud-cuckoo lands, thus enabling his satire to relate to human beings. *De te fabula*: these plays are about us; and when mid-twentieth century productions of Gilbert and Sullivan disregard, as they often tend to do, the realistic elements of Gilbert's stage pictures, they are in danger of cutting his satire adrift.

To achieve this necessary verisimilitude, Gilbert took endless pains. The military uniforms worn by the *Ruddigore* male chorus were correct to a button, and a program note listed the regiments represented in the order in which the chorus stood. A discreet credit line and less discreet reviewers informed the audience that a famous corsetière had remodelled the figures of Leonora Braham and the women's chorus to render them suitable for high-waisted empire fashions. Japanese gait, giggles, and fan-manship were demonstrated to the *Mikado* cast by two little maids *cum* interpreter from the Japanese Village at Knightsbridge. Durward Lely, playing Nanki-Poo, was complimented by the press for "his heroism in sacrificing some of his personal attractiveness to the exigencies of a Japanese make-up in the matter of hair and eyebrows."¹⁶ More than one reviewer pointed out the resemblance of Gilbert's stage picture to "vase and jar . . . screen and fan." It must be admitted, however, that here Gilbert's verisimilitude was perhaps most faithful to export *japonnerie*, which, fortunately, constituted the reality of Japan as his audiences understood it.¹⁷ On the other hand, when Gilbert visited India, he brought back seventy papier-mâché heads, representing a wide range of characters, so that if he ever did an Indian opera, the cast's makeup would be authentic.¹⁸

For the 1897 revival of *Yeomen*, he met Hawes Craven, the designer, at the Tower "& selected a capital & most effective scene."¹⁹ For the 1901 *Iolanthe*, he suggested

practicable hands to the clock in Act 2, with *real* clockwork—(to be wound up every night before the Act opens) & set to the actual hour of the night—say five minutes past ten (or whatever the hour may be) & let it move on through the act to ten minutes past 11—or whatever the hour of finishing may be—showing always & throughout the Act, the actual current hour.²⁰

Thus time itself would *real-ize* the play.

The mizzen mast for the first revival of *Pinafore* came from an Australian liner; a retired boatswain superintended the rigging;²¹ and Gilbert found a sailor who would knot thirty-eight lanyards elaborately for two shillings each.²² For the second revival, Mrs. Carte suggested flying a flag aboard, to which Gilbert agreed, but pointed out that

it should be the White Ensign—not the Jack—which is essentially a merchant flag & is only flown on the bowsprit of a Man of War. The most effective thing to fly would be the Royal Standard—but this is only used when Royalty is on board. Still one might stretch a point under the circumstances, & fly it, though only a First Lord be present.²³

During the first, and only, Savoy production of *Utopia Limited*, Gilbert increased his usually voluminous correspondence with the Cartes as he contended with integrating a large cast and a lavish production in which elaborate ceremonial played an important part. “Dear Mrs. Carte,” he wrote on 29 August 1893,

I forgot to say in my other letter that Goldbury & Blushington in Act 1 are dressed in Tropical suits—Goldbury very smart drab coat—white shirt—crimson cummerbund round waist—drab breeches—russian leather high boots—helmet & puggeree—Blushington in plain white suit, with helmet & puggeree—Goldbury’s helmet smart & becoming—Blushington’s helmet rather grotesque.²⁴

This costume note obviously differentiates the suave company promoter from the unsophisticated county councillor. In his letter Gilbert further explained that Mr. Goldbury *must* wear a first class minister’s dress as Chancellor of the Exchequer in Act 2—

otherwise we should have him in a court suit like Blushington—& this would not be very effective. He has a very important song in Act 2—& ought to be a showy conspicuous personage.

Tarara would be much better as an undress Sheriff—as the personage also has to execute the King, if needful. The Engineer’s uniform would not suggest this—moreover he has strong business with the two scarlet judges—& his black plain cloth court dress would contrast well with thier’s [sic].

This emphasis on effective contrasts indicates Gilbert’s obvious desire

to combine accuracy with artistic vividness. In another letter written to Mrs. Carte on the same day, he thought of sending to Paris for Princess Zara's first act costume: "a most important dress"—"lace-y, 'chiffon-y,' dainty."²⁶ Earlier he had suggested examining dress materials at night by electric light to make sure that the colours would look well on stage.

In September he worried because Miss McIntosh's corsets were not tight enough,²⁶ and on October 6, he asked for more diamonds on her court gown and for more experimentation with Tarara's exploding crackers.²⁷ Five weeks before *Utopia Limited* opened, he was urging Mrs. Carte that

We ought, at once, to get at someone from the L^d Chamberlains office to put us up to the minor ceremonial points of—Drawing Room—who spreads the trains—who gathers them up after presentation—and the *precise dress* of the three gentlemen (one of whom is L^d Chamberlain) who pass the presented lady's name to the Sovereign. Ladies are so confused when they are being presented that they never notice these things & can give no information.²⁸

On an undated sheet of Grim's Dyke stationery, Gilbert had jotted down nine questions to ask about the procedure, including how far each lady should back from the presence after presentation and whether the Royal Party should stand on a dais "& if so, at what elevation above the general level?"²⁹ On his miniature stage he was accustomed to work out this sort of grouping: "how many people I could have on this bank, how many on that rostrum. . . ."³⁰

But Gilbert's concern over the rightness of large-scale actions and groups did not make him forget smaller movements; to make his actresses walk like princesses, he dressed them in brown holland trains during rehearsals, much as he had made the men's chorus accustom themselves to their peers' robes for *Iolanthe*.

In his conception of gesture Gilbert followed Robertson with suitable allowances for the parodistic elements of his own plots, which often required melodramatic movements. An examination of his Savoy promptbooks³¹ indicates that he preferred a continual *enchainement* of small motions, each one carefully suited to the immediate line or word that it accompanied. When Dick Dauntless offers to propose to Rose on Robin's behalf, Robin (obviously thinking of his own nervousness), feels Dick's pulse to see if Dick can do it. The promptbook here notes that Robin, while doing so, looks at his watch, thus giving the comic gesture thorough-

ness and literality. When Rose consults her etiquette book and on its authority announces, "Always speak the truth," the prompt note directs her to kiss the book, thus parodying the oath taken by a witness in a law court and continuing the satiric parallel Gilbert draws between the Bible and the sacred volume of etiquette.

In *Iolanthe*, at the end of the trio "Of all the young ladies I know," the peers "take handkerchiefs out of coronets, wipe right eye, wipe left eye, rub their noses with handkerchiefs, and return them to coronets, which they replace on their heads." This "business" was picked up and continued in a following number, "What joy to be a nobleman's pet," which was cut during rehearsal. In it the lords importuned Phyllis to accept their proposals, pointing out the practical advantages. At the lines "On you they'd set/A coronet," the Lord Chancellor was to take the coronet from Tolloller's head, "hand it to PHYLLIS, who admires it; LORD CHANCELLOR then wipes it with the handkerchief that TOLLOLLER has placed in it, as if it were a hat, and replaces it on TOLLOLLER'S head." At the end of this number, all the peers "take off their coronets and offer them (kneeling in semi-circle) to PHYLLIS, who seems fascinated by them. She is tempted at first, but eventually resolves to reject them." Then follows a very practical parenthesis in the promptbook: "(Note.—Peers being dressed in white silk tights, do not actually kneel, but only appear to do so. Peers allow their handkerchiefs to drop on stage as they lower their coronets, and then place coronets on handkerchiefs.)"³² The care which the peers take of their coronets not only saves cleaning costs, but also indicates how much they value their own positions—the coronets being external signs that they are indeed "peers of highest station," even though keeping one's handkerchief in one's hat is vulgar. Throughout this scene, the peers' business gives them something to do with their hands, and these gestures through repetition become characteristic of them. The use of the handkerchiefs when weeping is another small realistic touch. Indeed, when Gilbert's characters cry, he almost always gives them handkerchiefs to cry into, whether they are peers or pirates.

At the first act finale of *Iolanthe*, Gilbert's original stage directions underlined his political satire: "during the Queens speech, & during the whole of the final ensemble Strephon assumes a statesmanlike attitude—right hand in breast, with bland smile on face—he relaxes during coda, but resumes after Phyllis has fainted."³³ Ensemble movements of principals were never left to chance. The first promptbook for *Princess Ida* describes the combat in exciting detail:

They fight half round stage for eight bars. Then Arac falls L Hil: standing over him Then Guron up stage C rushes to Arac's help—left This time Scyn. (R) is down Arac rises & rushes to Scyn's help—Arac & Florian get up stage C fighting—All fight half round stage—then three knights fall wounded as chorus exclaims "Hilarion" the 3rd time.

Unlike the famous scene in *Caste* in which a contrapuntal effect is produced by Robertson having Esther and D'Alroy exchange affectionate remarks on one part of the stage while Polly and Sam are quarreling on another, Gilbert rarely split his stage action into two separate centers, but preferred diagonals and semi-circles as his lines of development. He also liked to make his contrastive or opposing characters recognize each other in a single, integrated confrontation, generally highlighted by a group of principals or led by principals themselves in opposition to each other. His finales to first acts often involve such a confrontation, which will be reconciled by the end of the second act. For example, Major General Stanley, surrounded by his daughters, produces a British flag, while the Pirate King at the head of his band produces the Jolly Roger; the peers and fairies advance on each other alternately, the fairies threatening the peers with their wands; Princess Ida and her girls hurl defiance at Hildebrand and his soldiers. Occasionally a single character confronts other principals who are allied with the chorus, such as Dick Deadeye's opposition to Ralph, Josephine, ladies and sailors at the end of Act I of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. A less usual tableau is that of the Executioner, Fairfax, and the fainting Elsie, which concludes Act I of *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

Perhaps it is in devising business for the chorus that Gilbert was pre-eminent. As a dramatic critic he had ridiculed slovenly supers and other stage-fillers; the usual aimless movements of a nondescript singing chorus were not for him. "*All this requires animated gesture on part of chorus*" is noted after business accompanying "Go away, Madam" in an early *Iolanthe* promptbook.

The presence of any sort of chorus, moreover, presented a problem of a kind never faced by Robertson, that is, the necessity of combining verisimilitude with a large, obviously artificial stage element. Grand opera, faced with the same problem, generally tends to make only a token gesture toward verisimilitude, letting the beauty of the music compensate for the audience's inability to suspend disbelief in the chorus. In such pre-Sullivan musical

plays as *The Gentleman in Black*, Gilbert had generally contented himself with a conventional chorus consisting vaguely of villagers, who had little to do anyway. But with Sullivan, he gave his choruses a closer connection to the principals than merely the coincidental one of place; or, if one chorus is present simply because of locale (such as the nobles of Titipu), the other has more immediate justification (such as Yum-Yum's schoolmates). Significantly, the choruses of *The Grand Duke*, the least successful of the series, have least individuality.

In *Pinafore*, *Pirates*, and *Iolanthe*, for instance, Gilbert gave the female chorus a very close relationship (sisters, cousins, aunts) to one or more principal characters. Otherwise he tended to make the chorus a group or pair of groups of which one or more principals might be members. Thus the male chorus of *Pinafore* is composed of Ralph Rackstraw's messmates; that in *Gondoliers* of the Palmieri brothers' fellow gondoliers and republicans; that in *Yeomen* of Sergeant Meryll's and his supposed son's fellow yeomen; that in *Patience* of the Dragoons whose officers are engaged in a rivalry with Bunthorne. The principal character retains some of his group identity, another means of integrating chorus into plot, stage action, and stage picture, since main characters such as Mountarat and Tolloller also act as chorus leaders, or chorus leaders such as Fleeta, Leila, and Celia may also be minor characters in their own right. This relation of chorus and principals is not unique to Gilbert. To a certain extent Meilhac and Halévy had given the chorus a group identity in some of their libretti for Offenbach, but Gilbert went further than this and conceived of his choruses as composite characters whose reaction to the drama in which they are engaged is that of a single individual caught up in the action. Visually this treatment helped to center attention on the group of principals upon whom the chorus were concentrating. It was also very useful comically, for almost any movement could be made amusing simply through numerical extension and scrupulous uniformity.

In this respect Gilbert's stagecraft illustrates what Henri Bergson described in his essay on *Laughter*, published in 1900 but containing ideas which Bergson had begun to work on by 1884. Gilbert and Bergson evidently arrived independently at the same conclusion, expressed by Bergson as "The attitudes, gestures, and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine"³⁴—or conversely, automatism is comic when it imitates life.³⁵ Here one can only regret the stage business lost when Gilbert did not pursue his own idea of

writing a Frankenstein libretto, with Grossmith as a scientist and Barrington as an automaton. Finally, Bergson asserts that "Any arrangement of acts and events is comic which gives us, in a single combination, the illusion of life and the distinct impression of a mechanical arrangement."³⁶ This combination is present in all of Gilbert's staging for chorus at the Savoy. Uniformity of motion and *enchainement* of gesture suggest a mechanical arrangement, while the appropriateness of gesture and the chorus's close relationship to the main characters give an illusion of life.

In the *Pirates* promptbook, for example, General Stanley is discovered, pensively seated in the midst of his daughters. The girls' chorus sings:

Oh, dry the glistening tear
 That dews that martial cheek,
 Thy loving children hear,
 In them thy comfort seek.
 With sympathetic care
 Their arms around thee creep,
 For, oh! they cannot bear
 To see their father weep.

Notations indicate that the girls begin with arms extended towards their father; on the word *dry*, their arms are out; at *loving*, they clasp their hands; at *sympathetic*, arms out again; at *oh!* "clasped & turning"; and on the last line, they drop their hands. As Dame Hannah of *Ruddigore* sings the legend of Sir Rupert Murgatroyd, the listening chorus of bridesmaids are directed to lean forward while the curse is enunciated; to make a movement at "Once, every day, for ever!"; to "cover faces with hands" at the line "In torture he shall die," and so on. Among other directions for Nanki-Poo's entrance song in *The Mikado* are "chorus strike attitude" when Nanki-Poo addresses them as "Gentlemen"; "all fan slowly in time" through the first four lines of "A wandering minstrel"; they put their fans away at the ninth line; and when Nanki-Poo asks, "Are you in sentimental mood?", "all assent/all sympathize." They clasp hands at "lover's fears"; touch their eyes at "sympathetic tears"; drop their heads at "Oh, sorrow, sorrow!" All assent that patriotic sentiment is indeed wanted; all are delighted with a song of the sea, and perform "rowing action four times/twice *on* stage and twice *off*/hauling eight beats/then smack & hitch" as they sing their chorus.

Larger stage evolutions went like clockwork. To choose only one of the concerted movements: Iolanthe's first entrance involved each member of

the chorus directly and illustrates Gilbert's favourite use of circular motions. In the first promptbook *Iolanthe* is still named *Perola*.

At "*Welcome to our hearts again*," *Perola* goes to fairies, L 1 who form a small circle round her, during which, *Perola* casts off her outer dress, which is smuggled off stage by a fairy told off for the purpose

At "*Every heart & every hand*" *Perola* crosses to fairies R who form a circle round her, during which she is supplied with a wand. A[s] *Perola* leaves each circle, the fairies composing it resume their places in the semicircle. *Perola* then kneels to Queen (*Perola* RC, Queen LC.) who puts a diamond coronet on *Perola*'s head. *Perola* rises—Queen then kisses her affectionately.³⁷

So successful was Gilbert's envisioning and preparation of stage movement that, he told William Archer, he could sometimes perfect the stage-management of a piece in as few as four rehearsals. "I don't mean, of course, that it was ready for presentation to the public, but that the company were thoroughly at home in their actions and stage-business."³⁸ Only once did his staging come to real grief through lack of proper attention to detail. This was the fall and rescue of Princess *Ida*, which reviewers agreed was badly managed so that the mattress on which *Leonora Braham* fell and her landing upon it were visible to part of the audience. "The simple facts of the case," said one reviewer, "evidently being that the scene had not been studied from the theatrical Olympian heights."³⁹ Even so, the critic was sure that a more accurate representation of peril would be introduced; and Gilbert recouped this loss with a brilliant tableau "good enough even for grand opera. . . . The frightened crowd of huddled doves in the centre, the bristling steel ring of mailed knights and soldiers, and the despairingly white figure of the Princess standing under the shadow of the grove, make a splendid scene."

Some chorus actions, especially marches and mass movements of opposing male and female choruses, could be worked out in final form only after Gilbert knew what their music would be, since the promptbooks carefully specify the number of beats certain manoeuvres were to occupy. The promptbooks also show that Gilbert might change his mind during the actual rehearsals and reverse the direction of a concerted movement, rearrange groupings of principals, or shorten business. He allowed for first-night inspiration on the actor's part (but not much), as when *Grossmith* playing

John Wellington Wells conceived the comic notion of chugging round the stage like a locomotive with the teapot to furnish steam. But generally, rehearsals consisted of Gilbert's painstakingly teaching the company exactly how they were to move, how they were to stress, even to enunciate, their lines, and so on. Sometimes he held private coaching sessions as he did for Ilka von Palmay, whose accent was proving a problem in *The Grand Duke*. As much as possible, Gilbert preferred to recruit his companies from newcomers to the stage, whom he could treat like his model blocks of wood and whittle into the shape he chose. But although he could be a stern whittler, he rarely cut deeply. In the mid-Victorian theatre (or any theatre, for that matter), the pressures, as we have seen, were all against the dramatist, and only by the rigour of his stage-management was his conception of his play able to prevail. "The author who cannot be his own stage-manager is certainly at a serious disadvantage," Gilbert told Archer.⁴⁰ Gilbert needed to be an autocrat. Nor was he alone. Pinero, for one, had a formidable reputation as a martinet, while Dion Boucicault's habits of stage management included a delight in confusing the women of his company to tears.⁴¹ Gilbert's demands, like the Mikado's laws, were often inexorable, but they were usually made "in the language and tone of a thorough gentleman."⁴² And, while his wit might be exercised against a player, that wit made his instructions less easy to forget. Rolanda Ronald, a surviving member of the chorus of *Fallen Fairies*, remembers Gilbert as "a kind man, who always had time to make one feel at ease. Bernard Shaw was tremendously interesting, but not kind at all, as far as I remember him."⁴³

Several pictures of Gilbert as a director survive for us, one of the earliest and least known having been drawn by a *Philadelphia Times* reporter when Gilbert was rehearsing *The Pirates of Penzance* there. The reporter attended a rehearsal which lasted from ten a.m. into mid-afternoon, and during that time Gilbert was never quiet. "When he was not speaking he was acting; when he was not acting he was speaking; and he was nearly always doing both" as he put his cast through lines and business again and again. The reporter was impressed by Gilbert's happy tact for expressing the greatest desirable extent of criticism in the fewest possible words, and for instructing tersely, accurately, and directly to the point. He even pushed actors gently into position. To show the women's chorus how to receive Frederic's declaration that he is a pirate, Gilbert "by word and gesture showed the unprotected females how to express their horror, first by starting with hands partly uplifted, then retreating a yard or two by the use of only one foot,

and finally looking back affrighted to see what the terrible fellow was going to do to them." When the chorus did not pay close enough attention to the principal singers, Gilbert reminded them "that these ladies who are speaking are merely your mouthpiece and you are to express in action what they express in words." When some of the men of the cast were partly concealed by scenery, Gilbert told them, "Gentlemen, a full view of you would be more pleasing; besides, if you stand behind the rocks you'll simply be wasting your salaries, you know." To show the movement accompanying the patter song, Gilbert danced around, "holding his hands like the paws of a kangaroo."

"Nothing," wrote the reporter, "would satisfy him but perfection. . . ."

NOTES

1. In *Foggerty's Fairy and Other Tales* (London, 1890), p. 335.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 223.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
4. ALS dated 11 December 1889. D'Oyly Carte Archives.
- The use of copyright material herein is by kind permission of the Royal General Theatrical Fund Association as owner of the subsisting copyright in Sir W. S. Gilbert's unpublished works.
- I am also indebted to Miss Bridget D'Oyly Carte for generously making Gilbert's correspondence with Richard and Helen D'Oyly Carte available to me, as well as the promptbooks used by Gilbert at the Savoy Theatre.
5. *Foggerty's Fairy and Other Tales*, p. 223.
6. ALS dated 23 September 1898. D'Oyly Carte Archives.
7. ALS dated 25 December 1888. D'Oyly Carte Archives.
8. ALS. D'Oyly Carte Archives. I have here and *passim* reproduced Gilbert's original punctuation or lack thereof.
9. Typescript annotated by Helen D'Oyly Carte and W. S. Gilbert, c. 1907. D'Oyly Carte Archives.
10. William Archer, "With Mr. W. S. Gilbert," *Real Conversations* (London, 1904), p. 114.
11. January 7, 1884.
12. J. R. Planché, *The Recollections and Reflections of J. R. Planché, A Professional Autobiography* (London, 1872), I, 180.
13. January 29, 1887.
14. December 14, 1889.
15. *St. James's Gazette*, November 27, 1882.
16. *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, March 28, 1885.
17. Francois Cellier and Cunningham Bridgeman, however, emphasize the utter authenticity of costumes and makeup in their discussion of the first production of *The Mikado*. *Gilbert and Sullivan and Their Operas* (London, 1914), pp. 192-93.
18. Harry How, "Mr. W. S. Gilbert," *Illustrated Interviews* (London, 1893), p. 8.
19. ALS to Mrs. Carte, dated 15 April 1897. D'Oyly Carte Archives. The letter continued: "He is to have the model ready by Monday & I am to meet him at the Savoy Theatre on Monday at 11:30 to approve it. Perhaps you would like to be present." This letter is printed in Sidney Dark and Rowland Grey, *W. S. Gilbert: His Life and Letters* (London, 1923), p. 134.
20. ALS to Mrs. Carte, dated 8 December 1901. D'Oyly Carte Archives. This letter is reprinted in Dark and Grey, p. 135.
21. ALS to Mrs. Carte, dated 3 March 1899. D'Oyly Carte Archives.
22. ALS to D'Oyly Carte, dated 15 October 1887. D'Oyly Carte Archives.
23. ALS dated 10 October 1899. D'Oyly Carte Archives.
24. ALS dated 29 August 1893. D'Oyly Carte Archives.
25. ALS dated 29 August 1893. D'Oyly Carte Archives.
26. Reginald Allen, *W. S. Gilbert: An Anniversary Survey* (Charlottesville, 1963), p. 65. Original letter in the Pierpont Morgan Library.
27. ALS to D'Oyly Carte dated 6 October 1893. The Pierpont Morgan Library.
28. ALS dated 1 September 1893. D'Oyly Carte Archives.
29. D'Oyly Carte Archives.
30. Archer, p. 129.

31. In the D'Oyly Carte Archives, which contain promptbooks for original productions and revivals. These promptbooks generally consist of lined copybooks with galleys or page proofs of the libretto cut up and pasted in on the rectos; notes of action and stage position have been written in on the facing versos, on occasional blank rectos, and in the margins of the rectos on which the proofs have been pasted. The stage business for *Iolanthe*, however, was itself printed separately in galleys and pasted onto appropriate versos in the copybook. The annotations are usually in the hand of Richard Barker or W. H. Seymour, stage managers, with some, often substantial, annotations by Gilbert himself, especially when "creative" changes are made. Textual revisions have also been made in the promptbooks.

32. The promptbook from which these stage directions come evidently represents the third version of Gilbert's business for *Iolanthe*. The first pre-production promptbook does not specify that the peers keep handkerchiefs in their coronets nor that the Chancellor wipes Tolloller's coronet. Otherwise the stage directions for this passage are substantially the same.

33. First pre-production promptbook. This business does not appear in the other two early promptbooks of *Iolanthe*.

34. Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, transl. by Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (New York, 1911), p. 29.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

37. I have preserved the erratic punctuation of the original.

38. Archer, pp. 129-30.

39. *Sportsman*, January 7, 1884.

40. Archer, p. 130.

41. Kate Ryan, *Old Boston Museum Days* (Boston, 1915), p. 185.

42. "Gilbert as Stage Manager," undated clipping from the *Philadelphia Times* in the Goldberg Papers, Manuscript Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation.

43. Typed letter, signed, dated July 31, 1969, from Rolanda Ronald (Lady Bourne) to J. W. Stedman.

The Production of Gilbert & Sullivan Operas in Schools

By J. G. SUGDEN.

The School, Wellingborough, Northants

The title of this paper sounds dreadful; like the titles of those official circulars from government departments, printed on orange paper and despatched in long buff envelopes. But, unlike the official circulars, I will try not to "stuff it full of quibble and of quiddity," and I will come to the point "with all convenient rapidity."

If one is in the happy position of being able to contemplate producing an opera in a school, why choose the works of Gilbert & Sullivan in preference to other operas? There are several answers which I would give to this question; here are some of them.

First, because of their genuine, almost classical, simplicity. Here are libretti with stories so simple that any child can understand them. True, they are fantasies; but children are brought up—even to-day—to appreciate *fantasy*. All *fairy stories* are fantasy; Santa Claus, Peter Pan, Robin Hood, Snow White, indeed all the characters from our early story-books are fantastic; Walt Disney, A. A. Milne, Beatrix Potter, Charles Kingsley—all were masters of this medium, and so are the outstanding writers of modern science fiction. There is nothing strange to children (or shall we substitute the Gilbertian equivalent and call them "Young persons"?) in a fantastic plot; they can understand, probably better than the middle-aged, why the Lord Chancellor and his Peers were so ready to fly away to fairyland, and when Ko-Ko explains to the Mikado that to say a thing is virtually the same thing as to do it, most young people would whole-heartedly agree that "nothing could possibly be more satisfactory"!

It is not only the simplicity of the stories which is readily understood by the young, but also the simplicity of the characters. True, the characterisation is burlesque, but here again the medium is a natural one for young people to follow; "taking the mickey" out of the pompous, the pretentious, and the over-serious is something which boys and girls are used to doing from their earliest childhood. The "model of a modern major-general" or the "ruler of the Queen's Navee" are characters which nearly all children have played at, or played with, from their nursery days, and what boy is there who has not at some time in his life perched a pair of pince-nez on the end

of his nose and pretended to “embody the law”—if not as a Lord Chancellor, at least as a schoolmaster? The satire expressed by these characters is quite another matter; but a word about this later. Nor do I want to imply that children should be allowed, or encouraged, to treat these burlesques as caricatures. George Grossmith has described how Gilbert was one day rehearsing an actor playing a small part which he was determined to make the most of. After several false starts the actor protested to Gilbert, “I beg pardon sir, I thought you meant the part to be funny.” “Yes, so I do,” replied Gilbert, “but I don’t want you to tell the audience you’re the funny man. They’ll find out, if you are, soon enough.”

The third example of the simplicity of these operas, from the point of view of children, which I should like to mention is the melodic line of the music. It has never ceased to amaze me how quickly, and how accurately, young people who are not always what we would call “musical” pick up Sullivan’s tunes. I am thinking particularly of the choruses. To look at the score of some of the big double choruses in the 1st Act Finale of *The Gondoliers*, for example, is enough to daunt any director of music who is contemplating a school production of this opera. Yet he has only to go through it on the piano two or three times with the chorus and the next day he will hear them whistling their parts on their way to the classroom or while changing after a shower. I have experienced several occasions when practically the whole school has known most of the music of one of the operas several weeks before it was presented on the stage—simply by hearing it sung, whistled, or played on the gramophone by their friends who were taking part in the production. No shortage of understudies—from the musical point of view at any rate! Some of the solo music is, of course, much more difficult for children to learn, but even with this I have known boys and girls chosen for a principal part mainly for their acting ability (or even because of suitable physical stature), who have mastered the vocal part without too much difficulty. Sullivan’s music reminded Henry Lytton of a beautiful garden, and in characteristically sentimental vein he compared each melody to a lily or a daffodil—“just as unpretentious and just as charming, while the whole has the fragrance of the flowers that bloom in the spring.” I think perhaps this description implies a naïve quality in the music, which is largely unfair, but it certainly does capture the natural simplicity of melody and shape which makes it so easily understood by people with comparatively undeveloped musicianship and little training.

If the stories, characters, and music of these operas have a classical simplicity, what of their humour? Can this be fully understood and interpreted accurately by school-children? Gilbert himself is reported to have said, "I have no notion what Gilbertian humour may be. It seems to me that all humour, properly so called, is based upon a grave and quasi-respectful treatment of the ridiculous and absurd." This definition of humour—a logical, coherent, and almost serious treatment of the bizarre, eccentric, and grotesque—is certainly applicable to Gilbert's practice, and also, I think, to most humour—and exponents of humour—of a lasting kind. The traditional principle of burlesque—common on the British stage during the era before Gilbert—was to take some natural and accepted story or situation and torture it into wildly twisted and unnatural shapes. It is interesting that this process of inversion has now, unhappily in my opinion, returned to the theatre and to the television screen, with the added perversion and exploitation of sex. But of the two methods there is no doubt in my mind which has the most art and which is more easily understood by the relatively innocent minds of the young. Consider the funniest of funny men you know and apply the principle to him. To recall Bob Hope in any of his great films is to see the method applied to perfection: "the grave and quasi-respectful treatment of the ridiculous and absurd." The over-sophisticated and sensation-hungry adult audiences of to-day may find it hard to appreciate nonsense treated logically; their minds have reached a stage of over-development where no world of fantastic make-believe in the theatre has any relevance, because such a world is too near reality. But to every young mind, the grave treatment of situations found only in dreams and nightmares is intensely relevant and quite naturally understood. That is why I am certain that Gilbert's brand of humour is so aptly absorbed and interpreted by school children. They catch on to the basic principle without difficulty. It is true that the more subtle element in his humour—satire—usually escapes most children, but this element is quite secondary in the operas and even *Patience* is perfectly able to stand a performance in which none of the cast have more than the vaguest notion of who or what lay behind Gilbert's "high aesthetic line."

I hope I have said enough about the qualities of the Savoy Operas which make them particularly suitable for performance by young people, to show why they recommend themselves for school productions in preference to other operas. I have not mentioned many other obvious advantages which they offer for school productions: for example, their popularity with most

audiences, the opportunities they provide for imaginative scenery builders, and the large cast they employ. All these are very relevant matters to anyone contemplating an operatic production in a school.

But this is not to say they are easy, either for producers, actors, or for others involved. There are innumerable problems, many of them peculiar to schools and to youth productions. I am going to mention a few of these problems and suggest ways by which they may be overcome.

First, the problem of rehearsal time: if we assume a school term of approximately twelve weeks, with the last week taken up by performances, it leaves us eleven weeks to mount the production. The cast will presumably not be available every day, owing to the demands of work and other activities, so rehearsals must be planned carefully, starting with the dress rehearsal and working backwards. Mental and physical fatigue is an important factor to bear in mind with young actors, so it is best to have one complete day's rest between the dress rehearsal and the first performance. At least two complete run-throughs of the opera will be required before the dress rehearsal, so all these virtually take up another week and we are left with ten weeks available. Approximately half of these, the first five, will be required by the musical director for teaching the music, so five weeks are left for rehearsing on stage. It is obvious that by the time these rehearsals start the scenery must be built, the principals must have learnt their words, and all must be in readiness for the great moment when, "with aspect stern and gloomy stride," the producer marshals his forces for the Finale of Act I—the toughest nut to crack and therefore the best point to begin stage rehearsals.

This brings us at once to the heart of the school producer's task and the apex on which his production will balance—either on the good or the bad side, namely, the extent to which the Chorus is *involved* with what is happening on stage at each development of the story, and the quality of movement and vitality they can display. Moreover, these movements of the Chorus, and the principals, must have some relevance to the action and should be designed to enhance unobtrusively the dramatic effect. This is probably the greatest problem for a school producer. Professionals and experienced amateurs should be able to follow a producer's directions naturally and without awkwardness, according to their abilities; but not school children. At first they are self-conscious:

“Ah, yet!

He loves himself with passion tenderer still”

they sing, as they might sing the National Anthem—expressionless and, if they are British, slightly embarrassed.

Later, they become more confident but, alas!, with confidence comes carelessness, and:

“With joyous shout and ringing cheer,
Inaugurate our brief career!”

is sung as if the words were a dirge.

One producer of school presentations I knew always used to watch from the wings. When the Chorus showed signs of flagging interest he would creep round behind the back-cloth and the wings carrying a ladies hat-pin. The back row of the Chorus were seen, each in turn, to take a sudden leap into the air and alter their expression noticeably. It was a violent method, perhaps, but, watching rehearsals of Gilbert & Sullivan, I have often wished I could employ it!

I hope I have not given the impression that the Chorus should be encouraged to exaggerate their participation in the opera. A static and wooden Chorus is perhaps preferable to one which attempts to “steal the show” on every possible occasion. I once saw an amateur adult *Iolanthe* in North Wales in which the Ladies’ Chorus, particularly, were too intent on showing the audience how well they understood the import of what the principals were singing and talking about. One of the “fairies” in the front row, who would “easily have passed for forty-three in the dusk with the light behind her,” managed to twist her face into the most amazing contortions to indicate her superior understanding of the plot. Her efforts during the Finale of Act I contrived to divert attention from everyone else on the stage, and I certainly wouldn’t have exchanged places with the unfortunate Peer whom she threatened with her wand as the curtain fell!

A final word about the Chorus: woe betide a school producer of Gilbert & Sullivan who fails to do his homework with scrupulous attention to detail before the stage rehearsals start. Not only must he be ready to indicate clearly who is to enter by which entrance, and where they are to go when they have entered, but he must demonstrate, without hesitation, which foot they should start to dance with and how many steps will be required to bring each member to his or her allotted place for the ensemble. With young children this is especially important, though if the cast are all boys the producer’s efforts to persuade the “female” Chorus to comport themselves with feminine grace are probably a waste of time, and it is perhaps better to let

them trip “hither and thither” without anybody knowing “why or whither”; their natural exuberance will take them a long way and the shock to their parents in the audience of seeing their sons transformed by wig and make-up into the spitting image of their daughters will do the rest.

You may well ask what boys think about playing female roles. In my experience, they have very few prejudices or inhibitions about this. The good humour which pervades these operas, and the wholesomeness of it, drives away much of the embarrassment which one might expect. They regard the experience as part of the fun, and being told repeatedly not to make the entry of Sir Joseph’s female relatives look like a pack of football forwards in full cry, they gradually assume attitudes and postures more in keeping with the opposite sex. I must confess that I prefer to have girls in the principal parts, although some boys—if they are very talented—can achieve the impossible.

To turn now to the principals for a moment: the main problems here for the school producers are, in my view, “timing” and “business.” Assuming that the musical director is able not only to teach the notes but also the expression of the songs, the principals will have a fairly good idea of characterisation by the time they start rehearsing with the producer. He now has the task of teaching them how to put over the songs and the dialogue with that subtle blend of “business” and “timing”—nothing vulgar or too extravagant—which adds point and polish to the whole production. Unfortunately, he is faced at once with the old controversy, still very much alive now that the copyright has ended—how much “business” should be traditional and how much original? If our producer studies the D’Oyly Carte Company’s version (of which “prompt” copies are procurable) he may find it difficult to escape from the traditional; if he creates an entirely original set of dances and “business” of his own, he may expect criticism from those who were brought up on the old version. It is a nice dilemma—indeed it could become quite a “how-de-do”! But I believe the best solution is a discreet mixture of old and new, with a *very* few cuts and alterations here and there.

To return to the task of training the principals in a school production—it seems to me that no amount of “business,” however skilfully contrived, will be really effective unless it is well timed. And can good timing be taught to young people who have little experience? It seems to me that it can, up to a point; but a stage is reached, sooner or later, when no further teaching can help and natural ability must do the rest. For example, Robin’s

song in the first Act of *Ruddigore*, "My boy you may take it from me," is one which depends a great deal for its effectiveness on the actor being able to point the words with suitable gestures and a perfect sense of timing. Done with great skill and polish it is a delightful number; performed statically or with indifferent timing, it can fall rather flat. A great deal of time and energy will have to be expended rehearsing the famous second Act trios: "I once was a very abandoned person," "Never mind the why and wherefore," "Faint heart never won fair lady," "Here's a how-de-do," etc. The encores for these are a special problem; the "business," which must be different for each encore, should be apt, amusing, and sufficiently subtle not to be obvious but clear enough for its dénouement to be understood. If no encores are allowed, many of the audience will be disappointed, but it is better to have too little than too much. Just as many of the traditional encores were introduced by the great Savoyards of the past—Grossmith, Lytton, Greene—so the school producer should encourage his principals to work out their own "business," and he may be pleasantly surprised—as the audience will be—by the ingenious ideas they present.

In a school production it is easy to forget, sometimes, that the actors are so young and inexperienced. After many hours of careful rehearsal, they often acquire that essential spirit of Gilbert & Sullivan, the "Je-ne-sais-quoi" spirit of Bunthorne, which is part of the professional's trade, while retaining the freshness and infectious exuberance of youth. This is really the ideal to aim for and if all goes well it should be achieved naturally, without much forcing from the producer. On one occasion I was rehearsing *H.M.S. Pinafore* with a cast of boys aged between 13 and 18. We had reached one of the final run-throughs of the opera, just before the dress rehearsal, and I was trying hard not to interrupt. When Ralph Rackstraw made his first entry to sing "The nightingale sighed for the moon's bright ray" as if he was hurrying to catch a train up to Town, I could keep silent no longer. I explained to him again that his "faltering feet with difficulty bore him on his course" because he was in love and, though one of the ship's crew, his mind was on other things; would he please try it again? The second time he came on looking steadfastly at the floor, as if searching for a lost coin. Would he please try again, with his head up? At the third attempt he held his head more or less parallel to the ceiling and narrowly avoided falling into the orchestra pit. By this time the Chorus were mildly amused but my patience was beginning to ebb. I searched desperately for an idea. "Don't you understand," I pleaded, "you're supposed to be in love—"

madly in love!” Now the young man playing this part was well known to his colleagues among the sailors for the prodigious number of his girlfriends and the frequency of their meetings—a regular Lothario. I was unaware of this, though I should have guessed it because he was a very good-looking youth of about 17, so when I finally exploded, “surely—haven’t you ever *been* in love?” the effect on the Chorus, and on Ralph Rackstraw, may be imagined. It was some time before the rehearsal could be resumed, but with that particular entry we had no further trouble.

I hope these few remarks will have conveyed just a little of the pleasure, as well as the pains, of producing Gilbert & Sullivan in schools. The rewards for all concerned are considerable and not to be measured only in terms of enjoyment; the practical benefit, both to voices and to confidence in acting, is very noticeable after one of these productions,

“And the culminating pleasure
That we treasure beyond measure
Is the gratifying feeling that our duty has been done!”

The Significance of *The Grand Duke*

By MAX KEITH SUTTON

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It takes a certain perversity to defend a work so often maligned (or ignored) as the last Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Gilbert himself called it an “ugly misshapen little brat,”¹ and the only word which seems obviously unjustified is “little.” *The Grand Duke* is not little: it is one of Gilbert’s longest libretti in its uncut version, and it calls for one of the largest casts. He was more nearly accurate concerning its ugliness, however. The main characters display ugly moral flaws—avarice in Duke Rudolph and the Baroness von Krakenfeld, hypocrisy, selfish ambition, and pride in Julia Jellicoe, Machiavelian dishonesty in Ludwig, who also exhibits the minor vices of gluttony, drunkenness, and gambling. Just as conspicuous are the characters’ mental and physical flaws. The Grand Duke’s feeble body and Ludwig’s obesity are recurrent jokes in Act I; later, Julia Jellicoe offers a frenzied imitation of madness. We are apt to wonder if Gilbert thought that scenes from the hospital ward and the insane asylum could rival Wilfred Shadbolt’s “anecdotes of the torture-chamber” for delicate humor. Elsewhere, we are invited to smile at divorce, indigestion, clogged sewers, and death by dynamite (“it mixes one up, awfully”).² More than once, the imagery and the music evoke the modern sensation of nausea—a “feeling of warm oil” at the bottom of our throats. The feeling can be caused by eating too many sausage-rolls, but it may also come from seeing characters behave like “moral idiots,”³ scheming for status and shifting their identities until everything seems as unstable as the Grand Duke’s throne. The opera is a decadent work, as Professor Jones has suggested—perhaps a deliberate parody of literary trends near the time of Wilde’s *Salome*, when perverse attitudes (necrophilia, for one) and violence were being seriously depicted on the European stage.⁴ Certainly *The Grand Duke* is decadent in the literal sense of representing physical and mental, moral and political decay.

This brings me to my possibly decadent reasons for considering it a significant work (or at least a significant libretto: the music has been scorned by modern critics, though the reviewers who heard it done professionally were more favorably impressed. One even said, “Sullivan is splendid. . .”).⁵ The libretto is significant, first of all, in dealing with a theme which concerned the most sensitive Victorian writers and which has become as important in our century as “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” The theme

is the way that social roles can obscure a person's sense of identity, especially as the individual shapes his personality to fit his role and lets himself be defined by forces outside himself. In *The Grand Duke*, "law" is the name for the external forces—law in the form of a dramatic contract or a provision whereby a man can undergo "social death" ("his identity disappears")⁶ through losing a Statutory Duel, fought with a pack of cards. To exist in the opera means to have a legally defined part, a professional role, and the role can become radically split from one's needs and desires as a human being. Matthew Arnold formulated this self-estrangement in "The Buried Life" when he spoke of the "mass of men" who "lived and moved/Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest/Of men, and alien to themselves. . . ." To exist in this way is to have no private life, no Walworth for a Wemmick to come home to. For Julia Jellicoe, private life can only be imagined as another set of roles: playing the loving wife and mother would be, as she says, "a mere pretence." For her, there is no such thing as an "unrehearsed emotion." She is a tougher, more selfishly realistic version of the romantic young lady in an anecdote at the start of *The Brothers Karamazov*,

who after some years of an enigmatic passion for a gentleman, whom she might quite easily have married at any time, invented insuperable obstacles to their union, and ended by throwing herself one stormy night into a rather deep and rapid river from a high bank, almost a precipice, and so perished, entirely to satisfy her own caprice, and to be like Shakespeare's Ophelia. Indeed, if this precipice, a chosen and favourite spot of hers, had been less picturesque, if there had been a prosaic flat bank in its place, most likely the suicide would never have taken place.⁷

Dostoyevsky's romantic lady introduces the theme of alienation from self that pervades his novel. For our purposes, she can serve to illustrate the passion for role-playing and the self-destructiveness of this passion. If we take her or Julia Jellicoe at all seriously, we shall realize that Gilbert's "satire of theatricality"⁸ is not simply an act of revenge against the profession, but a way of exposing one threat to genuine personal and social existence.

My second reason for valuing the opera concerns its forms as much as its theme. I remember Gilbert's words—the brat was "misshapen": some speeches are too long, some songs may be unnecessary—but I still find the work well-conceived. Why? Mainly because the action enforces the satire upon theatricality and role-playing. The plot extends the satire in two di-

rections by dramatizing an equation between the theatre and politics, the point of Ernest's first song: "The man who can rule a theatrical crew . . . Can govern this tuppenny state!" In the main movement of the plot, the actors take over the Grand Duchy, while in lesser movements politics and theatricals keep trading places. The actors first appear as political conspirators, after the wedding breakfast; the Grand Duke enters making remarks like a stage manager. To the audience, he commends the ceremony of the snuff box and handkerchief as if it were an effective piece of stage business (which it is),⁹ and he then plans his wedding as if it were a theatrical performance. Even his courtship has been a staged event, carried on in the market-place to increase the value of his surrounding real estate. The showmanship of political figures is heightened in Act II when the Prince of Monte Carlo enters with his court of "supernumeraries," all vulgarly got up for their new roles by the "well-known costumier," a person whom the nobility could hardly do without. While the rulers behave like actors, the shrewdest political move in the whole opera is made by Ludwig, the comedian, when he revives the provision for Statutory Duels. Though his scheme is spoiled by a technicality, he still manages briefly to unite the two most prestigious roles: he replaces both the stage manager and the Grand Duke. Such juxtapositions are typical of Gilbert, but here his skill in constructing a plot which reveals actors politicking and politicians acting keeps the satire dynamic, moving continually in two directions. Perhaps it reminds us of how showmanship has become a requirement for political success, whether for the demagogue in the stadium or the persona in make-up who projects his rehearsed humanity into a TV camera. In this country, at least, it may remind us of how actors really do become governors or senators, if not grand dukes.

Underlying the satiric implications, the action of the opera has a deeper strength that is rooted in the primitive basis of comedy. The Grecian costumes in Act II signal the kinship of Gilbert's art with that of Aristophanes, especially when Ludwig comes downstage to chat with the audience. His song ("At the Outset I May Mention") is in effect a *parabasis* by the English Aristophanes. The Act I finale opens with another piece in Aristophanic style—the comic *agon* of Ludwig against Rudolph, brilliantly set by Sullivan, with the chorus chattering excitedly like the Attic chorus during the combat between Cleon and the Sausage Seller in *The Knights* (11.360ff.). Northrop Frye has found more explicit parallels with fertility ritual in *The Mikado* than in any play by Aristophanes; the parallels are still more obvious

in *The Grand Duke*. The decrepit Rudolph has the role of the Old King whose death signifies the end of the year, the defeat of Winter in the ceremonial contest with Spring.¹¹ “Broken-down critter” that he is, he makes a perfect monarch for a comic wasteland. His own chamberlains jibe at him, reminding me of accounts of ceremonial mockery in African societies, where abusing the king is supposed to help clear the air and cleanse the land.¹⁷ Rudolph undergoes legal death in the mock duel—the moment of ritual sacrifice—and the plump, sausage-devouring comedian takes over as duke for a day and Lord of Misrule.¹³ In Ludwig’s brief reign, debauchery breaks out where there had been miserly restraint: wine replaces water, there is “reckless” dancing in the ducal palace, and after the dancing comes gambling. The marriage code, meanwhile, is riddled by Ludwig’s multiple weddings, until finally Rudolph comes back to life and expels the intruders. The ritualistic action of intrusion, usurpation, and expulsion follows the pattern of *Thespis*, the first of the operas, where actors also interfere in politics—on a cosmic scale. But in neither case does restoration of the old order mean renewal. Duke Rudolph exhausts most of his energy in his maddening final patter song; he will reign with all his old ailments and fears of assassination. If combating the usurpers brings any life back into the gods of *Thespis* or into the Grand Duke, the new life is only outrage; it is not the change of heart which by literary magic could renew their lands. We return to the status quo and the old problems, unless the rash of weddings at the end of *The Grand Duke* can create new concerns and make the old problems seem less important. Even so, the last word before the finale should be spoken as a most laconic, Brechtian, “hurrah.”

The moral decadence within the world of the opera is clearly focused in one dominant character. This is Julia Jellicoe, the most compulsive role-player and the most articulate denier of human individuality. Bent on the one goal of winning the highest possible status, she seems to have no other personal concerns. She belongs to that long roster of Gilbertian characters who live by rules: Captain Reece, the two shipwrecked Englishmen in “Etiquette,” Mabel and Frederic, Patience, the Fairy Queen, Rose Maybud. Julia’s rule is “never to allow private feeling to interfere with my professional duties.”¹⁵ From her viewpoint, marriage is a professional move, only to be undertaken when it can strengthen her status. She apparently cares little whether her husband is Ernest, the handsome tenor, or Ludwig, the gross comedian. When Julia does show feelings, we can almost automatically distrust them, especially in her prolonged fit of chromatic agonizing during

the Act I finale. Sullivan understood that her lament means nothing: in the flattest of musical phrases, the chorus keeps breaking in with "What's the matter?" Her subsequent "dears" and "darlings" in the duet with Lisa fail to hide her contempt and her ruthless ambition:

So don't be mulish, dear—
 Although I say it, darling,
 It's not your line, my pet—
 I play that part, you bet!

Julia's only convincing feelings are anger and frustration. When faced with ill-luck, she acts like a volcano of smouldering fury, restrained only by the language barrier: "I know some good, strong energetic English remarks that would shrivel your trusting nature into raisins. . . ." ¹⁶ It is no surprise that her greatest delight is in acting out scenes of murder and hysterical madness.

Yet for all her fury, Julia becomes curiously passive when faced with the Law. "These legal technicalities cannot be defied," ¹⁷ she says, perhaps because she lacks any motive to defy them once she has lost her chance to become grand duchess. In refusing to defy the law, however, she reveals her central absurdity. She is inflexible, unready to adapt to the new situation and marry Ernest. She has the rigidity which Bergson considered the hallmark of a comic character. Wasting all her energies on her roles and her struggle for prestige, she has nothing else to live for: Bergson would say that she has slackened "in the attention that is due to life." ¹⁸ Specifically, she belongs to Bergson's class of comic characters who seem particularly reflective of modern experience. These are the "professionals" who sink their identities in their public roles and become, in a comic sense, hollow men. The professional man abounds in Gilbert's work—how often his characters define themselves by their roles: as Judge, as Lord Chancellor, as Major General. But Julia is the most extreme case of all. Unlike the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe*, she has no private self with whom she can carry on debates, unless the stagey conflicts expressed in her last scene, "So ends my dream," are supposed to be acted seriously. ²⁰ Unless her depression is genuine in this number, she never has any personal feelings to trample underfoot, as the Fairy Queen does in trying to live up to her official duties. Julia simply is her role, whatever it happens to be at the moment.

Her hollowness makes her a fitting emblem of life in *The Grand Duke*. Her identity is unstable, like the ducal government; her volcanic temper

parallels the explosive political situation, with its anachronistic threat of dynamite for a ruler in 1750. Julia's hypocrisy matches the pretensions of the ducal court, and her penchant for feigning madness and murder suggests the potential disorder in lives ruled by roles and in states governed by a rigid autocracy. I do not know how often neurotic women appear in serious drama near the end of the century, but my impression is that such women represent the "soul" of the drama, the "anima." A mentally disturbed, alienated heroine such as Nina in Chekov's *Sea-Gull* (1896) may serve as an emblem of the author's sense of life—of the life in his play if not also in his *fin de siècle* world. (It is curious that Chekov's bitter drama of theatrical vanity and irresponsible relationships appeared in the same year as *The Grand Duke*.) In earlier works we can see clearly how such women reflect the world of the play. Ophelia's madness focuses our sense of the radical disorder in the rotten state of Denmark; and in Shakespeare's most cynical play, a fickle woman emblemizes the pervasive chaos in morals and politics. Through Gilbert's frequent allusions, *Troilus and Cressida* provides a sinister backdrop for the farcical disorder of *The Grand Duke*, and Cressida's pretenses and disloyalty set a pattern for Julia Jellicoe. On Julia and her unstable world, falls the shadow of Shakespeare's "dragon wing of night," of personal ambition and pride eclipsing loyalty and integrity. Dressed in the second act for their roles in Shakespeare's play, Gilbert's characters manifest some of the flaws of their counterparts. The worst of these flaws is falseness—not simply through lying but through denying any responsibility for the chaos that snowballs around them. This trait is the essential link between Julia and that tantalizing, fickle, irresponsible woman who emblemizes the breakdown of loyalty, reason, and civilized order in *Troilus and Cressida*.

What keeps *The Grand Duke* from being grim, like *Troilus and Cressida*? Of the many answers—the music, the versification, the avoidance of real catastrophe—I would like to discuss one: the constant attention to games. Figuratively, the characters play games with each other. They have no close relationships, and the possibility of any genuine intimacy is only suggested by the one-sided affection of Lisa for Ludwig and of Ernest for Julia. Literally, games affect the action. A pack of cards determines the winner of a Statutory Duel; a roulette wheel earns the dowry for the Princess of Monte Carlo. In the first-night version of Act II, the "Roulette Song" crystallizes the motif of games. But Gilbert must have felt guilty because his misshapen brat was not a well-made play, and in a desperate effort to

give it shape he deleted the number. *Punch* said it should be cut, and *Punch* almost invariably offered Gilbert unfriendly and unhelpful advice.²¹ The mood of carousal and license in this act demands that the song be restored. Sullivan gives it both verve and hearty vulgarity in mimicking the style of the *café chantant*;²² and Gilbert's words supply apt images for the world of the opera. With the actors crowding about the roulette wheel, staking their fortunes on a game of chance, the scene acquires symbolic dimensions: we glimpse the world as a "cosmic game." By seeing the world as a game, the players can believe in the possibility of winning and thereby justify exhausting themselves in the effort. If they lose, they can escape responsibility by blaming the outcome on rules and luck. Their opportunism finds its clearest image in the roulette ball, personified as a coquette. Flirting with the number that will "pay the best," it acts precisely like Julia Jellicoe.

Gilbert sacrificed the gambling scene because it must have looked untidy once he began second-guessing, but he should have realized that the loose and playful form of Aristophanic comic opera had room for it. For the whole opera resembles an elaborate game. Real actors imitate actors on the stage; the fictional actors in turn play at dueling, and at running a grand duchy. The importance of costumes and ceremony—as in the arrival of the Prince of Monte Carlo—makes the opera seem almost like a series of charades. Ludwig invites the audience to participate in the game when he outlines the ground rules for them at the start of Act II, and the constant allusions to artifice allow no one to forget that each event is a staged spectacle. There is even a fictitious set of spectators on the stage—or just behind it—whose assumed presence launches the Act I finale on a perfect note of comic self-consciousness. Having arranged the great duel, Ludwig asks, "How shall we summon the people?" Rudolph answers, "Oh, there's no difficulty about that. Bless your heart, they've been staring at us through those windows for the last half hour!"

This calling attention to its own artifice is a final strong point of *The Grand Duke*. However ugly it may be in theme and characterization, it is very much a "play"—a playful exposure of man's foolishness. Man can pretend that his professional role is everything, that he has no personal freedom, that life is a cosmic game of roulette. He can pretend, as Julia does, that laws are invincible, that "social death" by law means loss of identity, and that "legal technicalities cannot be defied." Her attitude creates the nightmare—the "legal ghost"—haunting the opera, which is the same ghost that destroys Joseph K— in Kafka's *Trial* and that bothers Alice in Wonder-

land until she asserts her freedom by calling her persecutors "nothing but a pack of cards." Cards, laws, and dramatic contracts rule the characters in *The Grand Duke*. Characters, like them, who become dwarfed by their roles and laws might arouse pity or fearful uneasiness. But the element of conscious play in the opera helps us to see the dwarfing as unnecessary and artificial, and hence comic. Role-playing, deceit, and the loss of a sense of freedom appear as an aspect of man's foolishness, not of his essential destiny. For this reason we can respond to the opera with amusement—and with an increased resolution to avoid the trap that would have held everyone, had not that over-confident legal expert, the Notary, been mistaken about the Law.

NOTES

1. Letter to Mrs. Bram Stoker, 9 March 1896, quoted by Reginald Allen in *The First Night Gilbert and Sullivan* (New York, 1958), p. 420. References to the uncut version of *The Grand Duke* will use the page numbers of this edition.
2. Act I, p. 435.
3. John Bush Jones, "Gilbert and Sullivan's Serious Satire: More Fact than Fancy," *Western Humanities Review*, XXI (Summer, 1967), 219.
4. Barbara Tuchman offers an intriguing survey of themes of necrophilia and violence in European drama at this time: see her chapter on Richard Strauss in *The Proud Tower; A Portrait of the World before the War, 1890-1914* (New York, 1966).
5. *Fun*, LXIII (17 March, 1896) 102. Another musical opinion that conflicts with the accepted one is voiced by Edmond W. Rickett and Benjamin T. Hoogland, who call *The Grand Duke* "Sullivan at his best." See *Let's Do Some Gilbert and Sullivan* (New York, 1940), p. 123. The complete recording by the amateur Lyric Theater Company of Washington, D.C. in 1965 contains flaws that hinder any critical judgment of the music. I assume that it is wiser to withhold final judgment than to accept Thomas Dunhill's opinion that the music is a disgrace to Sullivan's memory. An interesting analysis of both the music and the libretto is offered by Nan C. Scott in her master's thesis, "Five Little Known Operas of Gilbert and Sullivan," University of Kansas, 1965. She looks rather pessimistically at the opera from a director's point of view.
6. Act I, 429.
7. Translation by Constance Garnett, Modern Library Edition, p. 4.
8. Jonathan Strong, Jr., "Readers in Council," *Gilbert and Sullivan Journal*, VIII (January, 1964).
9. *The Times* reported that Walter Passmore struggled to "keep back a sneeze" while the ducal handkerchief was being passed his way: 9 March, 1896, p. 7.
10. See *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), p. 46.
11. See F. M. Cornford, *The Origins of Attic Comedy* (London, 1914), p. 55ff.
12. See Robert C. Elliott, *The Power of Satire* (Princeton, 1960), p. 79ff.
13. See Wylie Sypher, *Comedy* (New York, 1956), p. 271.
14. The "invasion motif" has been perceptively discussed by Jane Stedman in her dissertation, "W. S. Gilbert: His Comic Techniques and Their Development," Chicago, 1956, Chapter V.
15. Act I, p. 427.
16. Act I, p. 428.
17. Act II, p. 445.
18. "Laughter," in *Comedy*, ed. Wylie Sypher (New York, 1956), p. 187.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
20. I assume that they are not serious, and the *Times* reviewer said that the number was "written in evident imitation and derision of the conventional operatic aria of the last generation": 9 March, 1896, p. 7. The number might properly be done in the exaggerated manner of "Glitter and be gay" in Bernstein's *Candide*, where the singer recovers from depression to deck herself with jewels in a frenzied parody of Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust*.
21. See the review of 17 March 1896 and the impudent suggestion that Gilbert liven up *The Yeomen of the Guard* by never letting the Beefeaters "go off without a dance": *Punch* XCV (13 October 1888), 169.
22. See *The First Night Gilbert and Sullivan*, p. 418.
23. *Gilbert and Sullivan Journal*, VIII (January, 1964). Strong discusses the use of a small stage upon the main stage to emphasize Gilbert's satire of theatricality.

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37. *Gilbert and Sullivan: Papers presented at the International Conference held at the University of Kansas in May 1970.* 1971. \$6.00

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