

Gilbert & Sullivan - O P E R A - in Australia

*Being a short account of the stories of the operas and of their
production and revivals in Australia.*

1879-1935
Eleventh Edition

by
Vinia de Loitte
(Comtesse de Vilme Hautmont)

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"None shall part us"
Vinia de Loitte (Glanthe)
(de Tilmé - Hautmont)

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Sir W. S. Gilbert

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(Mrs. Howard Vernon)
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Sir Arthur Sullivan

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GILBERT & SULLIVAN OPERA IN AUSTRALIA



Howard Vernon, the inimitable Ko Ko of the Australian premiere of "The Mikado," Theatre Royal Sydney, 1885, and its revivals for 20 years following.
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GILBERT & SULLIVAN OPERA IN AUSTRALIA

Gilbert and Sullivan Opera in Australia

MUCH of the matter in this little book has already appeared in serial form in the Sydney "Daily Telegraph," and also in the Brisbane "Courier." The original casts of the operas in London are given, and also the premieres in Australia, and the casts of each revival. When revivals have begun in Melbourne, seasons in Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and New Zealand have followed with slight—if any—alteration in the casts. Space in this edition will not permit more detail. I trust this may find favour with a public which has been kind to me always.

V. de L. V.

Owing to the enormous wave of popularity that the Gilbert and Sullivan operas are enjoying, I have embraced a suggestion that there may be something of interest which I am able to write upon the subject.

My husband, the late Howard Vernon—who is remembered as one of the greatest exponents of Gilbertian characters ever seen on the Australian stage—and myself, who have had the privilege of appearing in more than one Gilbert and Sullivan revival, have enjoyed playing together in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas for some considerable period, which gives me confidence to relate certain facts and stories of these ever-fresh, incomparable comic operas, which emanated from the facile brain and pen of Sir W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan, thus forming a collaboration unique in musical history.

The collaboration in comic opera of Sir William Schwenck Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan was surely the happiest known to the English-speaking race. The two men were totally unlike in manner and disposition. Sir Arthur Sullivan was quiet and unassuming, and was loved by every one who knew him. I remember Howard Vernon once saying that Sir Arthur Sullivan was the most affable great man he had ever met. He was born in Lambeth, Walk, London, on May 13, 1842. At the age of 12 he entered the Chapel Royal, where he became a soloist, having a very pure high soprano voice. At a very early age he showed a remarkable talent for music,

and began to compose in 1855. He wrote much church music. His compositions were prolific, and followed in quick succession.

During his collaboration with Gilbert they practically produced an opera a year. For instance, "Trial by Jury" was performed in 1875, "The Sorcerer" in 1877, "H.M.S. Pinafore" in 1878, "The Pirates of Penzance" in 1880, "Patience" in 1881, "Iolanthe" in 1882, "Princess Ida" in 1884, "The Mikado" in 1885, "Ruddigore" in 1887, "Yeomen of the Guard" in 1888, "The Gondoliers" in 1889, "Utopia, Ltd." in 1893, and "The Grand Duke" in 1896. These operas which I have mentioned are those of the collaboration of Gilbert and Sullivan. But Sullivan during this year also wrote other operas; for instance, "Haddon Hall," to the libretto of Sydney Grundy, in 1892; "Ivanhoe" (a grand opera) in 1891, "The Chieftain" in 1896, "The Beauty Stone" in 1898, "The Rose of Persia" in 1899, and part of the "Emerald Isle" in 1900; besides incidental music, so you can understand that he was a very busy man, and a very great one, for much of his work was achieved under terrible stress, as he was a great sufferer.

A WONDERFUL SPIRIT.

In 1878, while he was writing "Pinafore," he had a very painful illness, and much of the delightful music was written while he was suffering great pain. Though for years these attacks recurred, he never lost his

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bright, happy spirit. But the strain of continued illness was too great, and he died in Victoria-street, London, on November 22, 1900. When he was dying he told his friends not to grieve. He said, "I am quite contented and happy, for I am going to see my dear mother." It was sad that so good and useful a life should be cut off so soon—he was only 53 when he died. There is a monument erected to his memory on the Thames Embankment, and these lines from the "Yeomen of the Guard" are inscribed upon it:—

"Is life a boon?
If so, it must befall.
That Death, whene'er he call,
Must call too soon."

Sir William Schwenck Gilbert was all of subtle humour and a caustic wit—most of his associates dreaded his biting remarks if they came under his displeasure.

Gilbert was born in Southampton-street, Strand, London, on November 18, 1836. He took a B.A. degree at the London University, prepared for a commission in the Royal Artillery, then had four years' work in the Education Department in the Privy Council Office, became a barrister-at-law, and joined the Northern Circuit in 1866. He loved the Law but it did not provide him with sufficient income, and his first two years at the Bar earned him only £75. In the meantime, journalism had attracted him, and when H. J. Byron started the weekly comic paper "Fun" Gilbert became a regular and much appreciated contributor. He afterwards became dramatic critic of the "Illustrated London Times," and no doubt during that period acquired much knowledge of the stage which was very useful to him later. He is, of course, famous for having written the never-to-be-forgotten "Bab Ballads." Gilbert had a very strong personality. I so well remember him coming on the stage on the occasion of the first night of the production of his last opera in London at the Savoy. It was "Fallen Fairies" (Edward German wrote the music and conducted the opera). The late Charles Workman and Claude Fleming were both in the cast, and the prima donna part was sung by Gilbert's adopted daughter, Nancy McIntosh. At the fall of the

last curtain, Sir William came on the stage, and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, the production of this opera is rather an experiment, but I hope you will agree with me that there is life in the old dog yet." At that time he lived in a fine house called "Grims Dyke," at Harrow Weald, about two miles out of Harrow, and, being an enthusiastic motorist, indulged in some wonderful "scorching." He felt safe in this indulgence, for he was a magistrate of the district, and knew that he couldn't come before himself for judgment. But woe betide the poor unfortunate who was caught by the local constable for exceeding the speed limit, and brought up before Sir William for sentence. He just revelled in ordering a drastic fine.

HOW GILBERT DIED.

Gilbert had a very fine swimming pool in the grounds at Grims Dyke, and one afternoon two lady friends were swimming there. One got into difficulties. Sir William went to her assistance, and was drowned, on May 29, 1911. It was a beautiful garden, and on that day when he lost his life the flowers met the eye in a blaze of colour in every direction.

Gilbert once said, "I should like to die upon a Summer day, in my own garden." The wish was fulfilled in a way he never dreamed.

Gilbert did not look his 74 years. Only a few nights before his death I saw him in the Coliseum Theatre, London, witnessing his one-act play, "The Hooligan" (with our own Australian Jimmy Welsh in the name part). This was the last thing he wrote, and his one contribution to the vaudeville stage. There is also a memorial to Gilbert on the London Embankment, with the dates of his birth and death—1836-1911—and the words, "His foe was folly, and his weapon wit."

Both Gilbert and Sullivan were well-known men before they met each other—Gilbert was 35 and Sullivan 29. Their first opera was "Thespis, or the Gods Grown Old," which was produced at the Gaiety Theatre on December 23, 1871, under the direction of John Hollingshead, with Nellie Farren and J. L. Toole in the cast. This was fairly successful, and con-

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J. C. Williamson as Sir Joseph Porter.



Maggie Moore as Josephine.

The original authorised production of "Pinafore," Theatre Royal, Sydney, 1879.

tained at least one delightful number, "Maid of Arcadée." It was nearly four years later that "Trial by Jury" was produced at the Royalty Theatre, on March 23, 1875, under the management of Miss Selina Dolaro. Much of the success of this production was due to the excellent performance of Fred Sullivan (Sir Arthur's brother) as the Judge, and to the quaint fooling of W. S. Penley as Foreman of the Jury. I may mention here that during one of the revivals of "Trial by Jury" here in Australia, Hugh Ward made the Foreman a very humorous part. "Trial by Jury" is the only Gilbert and Sullivan opera in which there is no spoken dialogue.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte was manager at the Royalty for Miss Selina Dolaro, and the success of "Trial by Jury" decided him to induce Gilbert and Sullivan to collaborate in a larger work, and in 1876 "The Comedy Opera Co." was formed. The directorate consisted of D'Oyly Carte, Frank Chappell, and George Metzler (both of well-known music publishing fame), John Collard (of pianoforte fame), and Bailey Generalli, who was

known as "Water-cart" Bailey—he owned a number of water carts, which were used for sprinkling the London streets. "The Sorcerer" was the first opera produced by the syndicate, at the Opera Comique, on November 17, 1877, with Richard Temple, George Bentham, Rutland Barrington, George Grossmith, Mrs. Howard Paul, Alice Mayne, and Giulia Warwick in the cast.

SUCCESS OF "PINAFORE."

Though "Thespis," "Trial by Jury," and "The Sorcerer" had been fairly successful, it was not until "H.M.S. Pinafore" was produced, on May 25, 1878, at the Opera Comique, that the fame of Gilbert and Sullivan reached an altitude far above that attained by any previous collaborators.

When I suggested that the success of "Pinafore" was assured from the beginning I am anticipating somewhat for in spite of eulogisms from some of the Press and public, the piece at first failed to attract, and business at the Opera Comique during the first weeks fell off to such an alarming extent that the management seriously

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contemplated its withdrawal. At the time, however, Sullivan was conducting a series of promenade concerts at Covent Garden, and he included in the programme a brilliant orchestral arrangement of all the principal melodies of the opera. This was a brilliant idea. Hundreds of people heard the music, and were so delighted that they flocked to see the opera, and so turned an apparent failure into a brilliant success. The first production ran into 700 performances. But the real success came in America. The Americans went crazy at its melodies, catchy songs, and choruses. Companies everywhere pirated it and in New York alone there were eight companies playing it at the same time, each presenting a different version.

I remember Howard Vernon telling me that he was in San Francisco at the time, and nearly every little suburban amateur show had its "Pinafore" company. This so disturbed Gilbert and Sullivan that they, accompanied by D'Oyly Carte, visited America in 1879 and had countless fights to prevent the pirating of their work. They then produced their own original version, and, in spite of all that had gone before, it was a huge success.

Almost simultaneously with the American "Pinafore" boom the success reached Australia, and several companies were playing it about the same time—notably Kelly and Leon's Co., the Stewart family, and Mrs. G. B. W. Lewis's Juveniles, in which was Flora Graupner, who afterwards became a great favourite with the Australian public. Another juvenile in the same company was Mary Weir, who afterwards became Mrs. J. C. Williamson. She danced a hornpipe and played the part of the Midshipmite.

Signor Riccardi and Miss Annie Leaf also had a "Pinafore" Co., in New Zealand. Then Mr. J. C. Williamson secured the rights from D'Oyly Carte, and produced the first authorised version in Australia at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, on November 15, 1879, with the following cast: J. C. Williamson as Sir Joseph Porter, J. A. South as Captain Corcoran, Vernon Reid as Ralph Rackstraw, Tom Rainford as Dick Deadeye, A. St. Clair as Bill Bobstay, Maggie Moore as Josephine, Marie St. Clair as Butter-

cup, Constance Deorwyn as Hebe, and Signor Giorza conducted the opera.

There have been many revivals of "Pinafore" from time to time—too numerous to mention them all—but I will give the dates and casts of some which may interest you.

There was a revival at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, in April, 1888, with Howard Vernon, Edwin Kelly, W. H. Woodfield, Duncan Young, Tom Rainford, Harry Benham, Leonora Braham, Maggie Moore (this time as Buttercup), and Aggie Kelton in the cast.

Another revival in October, 1895, with a cast including George Lauri, Wallace Brownlow, Joseph Tapley, Edward Farley, Sid Deane, Arthur Lissant. The Josephine in Act 1 was played by Juliet Wray, and in Act 2 by Florence Young. These two ladies both of whom I knew later, were not in the least alike, and it must have been difficult for poor Ralph Rackstraw to fall in love with the one in the first act and to almost succeed in eloping with her, and then finally in Act 2 to marry another lady bearing the same name, but quite different in voice and appearance. Rather puzzling for the audience also I should imagine. Oh! And in this "Pinafore" of two Josephines—which were supposed to be one and the same, and were not—there was Mrs. Henry Bracy as Buttercup, Nina Osborne as Hebe, and little Ivy Scott danced the hornpipe as the Midshipmite. There was another occasion when two Josephines played in the same "Pinafore" on the same night, but this time it was not advertised on the programme. Alexia Dassian was the Josephine at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, in January, 1905. I was her understudy. One night, shortly after the opening performance, I called at the theatre to ask if all was well with the prima donna, found she was perfectly well, and almost ready for the first act. So I decided to visit the Criterion Theatre for the rest of the evening. Luckily I mentioned my intention to the stage doorkeeper. During a tense moment, while my attention was rivetted on the stage, a voice whispered in my ear, "Miss de Loitte, please come at once; you are wanted at Her Majesty's Theatre immediately." I accompanied the mes-

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George Lauri, who for 30 years never missed a performance.



Celia Ghiloni, who excelled as "Katisha," and in many other G. & S. roles.

senger who resolutely refused to give me any information in reference to the sudden summons. We entered the stage door, just as that portion of the audience who like to inhale fresh air between acts was filing out at the termination of the first act.

A SECOND JOSEPHINE.

Behind the stage every one was excited. Henry Bracy—stage manager—particularly worried, continually snapping his fingers, which was a sure sign that his mind was unusually disturbed. "Oh!" he said "here you are at last; Miss Bassian has strained one of her vocal chords, and couldn't finish the first act. Do you know the part? Can you go on?"

"Yes," I replied. "How long will you give me?" Mr. Bracy said, "I'll keep the curtain down 10 minutes, and then I'll speak to the audience. You'll have 20 minutes; can you do it?" Saying "Yes," I rushed up the stairs to the prima donna's dressing-room—she was very sweet to me afterwards and presented me with a golden keepsake in honour of the occasion—but at that moment she was overcome at her own misfortune. My own make-up box was not unpacked, so I grasped what I could find, and was literally sewn into Josephine's second-act dress. Oh! that dress.

White satin, stiff as a board, with a huge train, covered with yards of frills, and when my mind suddenly flew to the unrehearsed mazy movements which accompany the trio, "Ring the Merry Bells"—to use Nick Vedder's expression in "Rip Van Winkle"—I felt groggy at "der knees." I have played the part on different occasions, but never in a dress like that. Josephine's first entrance in the second act opens with the recitative, "The hour creeps on apace," and the scena "A Simple Sailor." I shall never forget dear old Daddy Caron's face with its anxious expression, "I wonder if she knows it?" She did know it, and received what I am sure was an undeserved encore. "Ring the Merry Bells on Board Ship" was not such a nightmare upon intimate acquaintance, but it was a thankful heart that palpitated to the strains of "God Save the King" that night.

There was another revival of "Pinafore" in June 1900, at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, with George Lauri, Wallace Brownlow, Charles Kenningham, Hugh Ward (whose clever wit turned the usually small part of Bill Bobstay into one of importance), Harry Shine, Pat Bathurst, Carrie Moore, Dorothy Vane, Cecil Engle-

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hart, and Stella Tracey. Leon Caron conducted. A revival at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, in January, 1906, included in the cast Howard Vernon, Frank Wilson, Charles Kenningham, Ernest Fitts, Charles Danby, Fred England, John Ralston, Celia Ghiloni, Aggie Thorne, Vinia de Loitte, Dolly Castles, and Irma Caron.

Then there was "Pinafore" again in November, 1914, at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, with Charles Walenn, G. Villiers Arnold, Edward McKeown, Albert Kavanagh, Frank Wilson, Fred England, Gladys Moncrieff, Katie May, and Ethel Morrison.

A MELBOURNE REVIVAL.

A revival opened in Melbourne at His Majesty's Theatre in October, 1920, with Charles Walenn, John Ralston, James Hay, Frederick Hobbs, Albert Kavanagh, G. Villiers Arnold, J. Kinson, Ethel Morrison, Patti Russell and Strella Wilson. Gustave Slappofski conducted.

The next production of "Pinafore" happened at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, on June 19, 1926, with the following cast: Charles Walenn, Sydney Granville, James Hay, Bernard Manning, Lance Fairfax, Dallas Murton, Strella Wilson, Mabel Gibson and Winifred Williamson. The opera was produced by Minnie Everett, and the Musical Director, Harry Jacobs.

The 1931 revival began at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, on 11th July, with Ivan Menzies, Gregory Stroud, Leo Darnton, Bernard Manning, John Ralston, Dorothy Gill, Maisie Ramsay, Mary Hotham, and was produced by Minnie Everett, and under the musical direction of Gustave Slappofski. This performance was followed by "Cox and Box," with Leo Darnton, Clifford Cowley and Bernard Manning, and produced by Ivan Menzies.

Thousands of people know the plot of "Pinafore," but for those who do not, I will endeavour to give some idea of the whimsical characters of Gilbert's conception, and their doings on the good ship "Pinafore." The curtain rises on a scene of the quarter-deck, with the crew busily polishing the brass, mopping the deck, and singing:—

"We sail the ocean blue,
Our saucy ship's a beauty,
Manned by sober men and true,
Attentive to their duty."

There is one exception, however, in the person of Dick Deadeye, who is ugly and distorted: he is the villain of the piece and hates everything and every one. Captain Corcoran comes on deck, and the crew welcome him with,

"Three cheers, and one cheer more
more,

For the well-bred captain of the
Pinafore."

The captain then sings his song in which occurs the ever-remembered lines:—

"I'm never known to quail
At the fury of the gale,
And I'm never, never sick at sea."
The crew questions his statement:—
"What, never?"

The captain moderates his statement:—

"Well, hardly ever."

Then little Buttercup comes on board—to fill the requirements of the part she should weigh at least fifteen stone—she is a Portsmouth bumboat woman, who has come to sell her wares. Ralph Rackstraw, a member of the crew, confesses his hopeless love for the captain's daughter, Josephine. Josephine is sad also, because she loves Ralph, but says she is proud, and he shall "never, never know it." Her father, Captain Corcoran, tells her that Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., is expected on board that very day to claim her hand in marriage.

Sir Joseph arrives to the customary gun salute, accompanied by a bevy of admiring cousins, sisters, and aunts. He then relates how he came to be "the ruler of the Queen's Navee"—and he advises:—

"Landsmen all, whoever you may
be,
Stick close to your desks,
And never go to sea,
And you all may be rulers of the
Queen's Navee."

He insists that the captain must always accompany each order to the crew with a courteous "If you please." He then retires to the cabin to teach

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*John Ralston, as the Policeman, in
"Pirates of Penzance."*

the captain how to dance a hornpipe on the cabin table—and to have a word on a "tender subject." Josephine comes on deck, and meets Ralph, who confesses his love and is haughtily rejected by Josephine. Ralph, overcome by the disappointment, calls the crew together and tells them of his decision to blow out his brains. No one is anxious to restrain him—except Josephine, who has been listening in the shadow of the cabin unnoticed. She rushes on, dashes the pistol from his hand, and tells him that she loves him. They arrange to steal ashore that night to be married.

Dick Deadeye warns them of the wrong they are doing, but is silenced by being pushed down the companion-way to the lower deck. Act I. closes with singing and dancing. The next act opens with the captain serenading the moon to the effect that "Everything is at sixes and sevens."

Buttercup, after being admonished by the captain for "Remaining on board so late," tells him that she can read the future in the lines of his



*Vinia de Loitte, at seventeen, as "Mabel"
in "Pirates of Penzance."*

hand, and she sees a change in store for him.

A "BIG, BIG D——"

Sir Joseph enters, and tells the captain that he is disappointed in Josephine, and, in fact, "she will not do." The captain assures him that Josephine is overpowered by his exalted rank. Sir Joseph agrees that is quite possible, but that "love levels all ranks."

Dick Deadeye comes to warn the captain of the plan of Josephine and Ralph to elope, and just as the lovers and the crew are stealing away, the captain surprises them. Ralph boldly declares his love for Josephine. The crew sing his praises as an Englishman. Bill Bobstay sings:—

"In spite of all temptations
To belong to other nations,
He remains an Englishman."

This annoys the captain, who loses his temper, and uses a "big, big D——."

Sir Joseph overhears him, and he is horrified—will hear of no explanation—it is inexcusable.

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The captain is banished to his cabin in disgrace. Then Sir Joseph hears the story of the love of Ralph for Josephine, and Ralph is ordered to be handcuffed and taken to a dungeon. A tender farewell takes place between Ralph and Josephine; but at this moment Buttercup surprises every one by telling that many years ago she practised baby-farming, and of two babies who were entrusted to her care, "one was a patrician and one of low condition." In a luckless moment she "mixed those babies up." The poor one was the captain, and the rich one Ralph. Ralph then enters in a captain's uniform, and the captain "hoists his slacks" in the garb of an able seaman.

Sir Joseph decides that though love levels ranks in most cases, it does not level it sufficiently for his marriage with the daughter of an A.B. So he resigns himself to his cousin Hebe, who assures him that she will "soothe his declining days."

Ralph embraces Josephine, and Corcoran links his future with "Little Buttercup, the reddest, roundest, and the rosiest beauty in all Spithead."

The curtain falls on a scene of Sir Joseph's sisters, cousins, and aunts dancing with the sailors, all singing a cheerful chorus in praise of the British Tar.

"PIRATES OF PENZANCE."

The next opera produced by the syndicate at the Opera Comique was "The Pirates of Penzance." Gilbert, Sullivan and D'Oyley Carte had so much tribulation through the pirating of "Pinafore," that they determined to secure the copyright of their next opera, and with this object in view gave a presentation of the opera to a very small audience at the Bijou Theatre, Paignton. The residents of that little township have been particularly proud of the fact ever since.

A similar performance took place in New York to coincide as nearly as possible with the Paignton performance, and so secure the American "rights." This was on New Year's Eve, 1879. The real production for the Press and public happened four months later, at the Opera Comique, London, on April 30, 1880, with the following cast:—George Grossmith as

the Major-General, Richard Temple as the Pirate King, George Temple as Samuel, George Power as Frederick, Rutland Barrington as the Sergeant of Police, Marion Hood as Mabel, Julia Gwynne as Edith, Lilian La Rue as Kate, Neva Bond as Isabel, and Emily Cross as Ruth. Miss Everard had been cast for the part of Ruth, but the night before the performance she became very ill, and Miss Cross played the part at 24 hours' notice. Rather an undertaking, especially for the premiere performance.

"The Pirates" had a continuous run of 363 nights at the Opera Comique. Eleven months after the first production in London the opera reached Australia, and the first performance took place at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, on March 19, 1881, with J. A. South as the Major-General, Armes Beaumont as Frederick, Signor Verdi as the Pirate King, J. C. Williamson as the Sergeant of Police, Tom Bergin as Samuel, Josephine Deakin as Mabel, Cora Gwynne as Edith, Fanny Lyddiard as Kate, Nellie Playfair as Isabel, and Acton Blair as Ruth. Signor Giorza conducted the opera. The Melbourne season followed, but the cast was slightly altered. Maggie Moore played Ruth, Elsa May played Mabel, and Howard Vernon replaced J. A. South as the Major-General.

AUSTRALIAN REVIVALS.

A revival in October, 1885, at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, had Frank Boyle, Albert Brenner, Howard Vernon, John Forde, Harry Benham, Alice Rees, Aggie Kelton, Ida Osborne, Lillie Forde, and Alice Barnett—whom, I believe, made an excellent Ruth—though, like Pooh Bah in "Mikado," "I wasn't there!" Yet I am fortunate in being able to believe in many things I have never seen. This 1885 production was conducted by W. H. Harrison, and in mentioning his name, I must tell you that he was a unique and most useful member of the opera company, for he was able to step from the conductor's chair in the orchestra and play a leading part on the stage at a moment's notice, and, moreover, to make a success of it. But I will tell you of that particular happening later—at this period it is a digression.

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Emily Nathan (Mrs. Tom Grundy), supervisor of the wardrobe in innumerable J. C. Williamson productions.

A revival of "The Pirates" at the Lyceum Theatre, Sydney, in December, 1893, had in the cast: Joseph Tapley, Howard Vernon, Charles Ryley, Arthur Lissant, Tom Grundy, Nellie Stewart, Miss Kinnaird, Nina Osborne, M. McKay and Elsie Cameron.

Another revival at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, in June, 1900, had the following artists in the cast: George Lauri, Charles Kenningham, Wallace Brownlow, Hugh Ward, Pat. Bathurst, Ada Winstone-Weir, Dorothy Vane, Cecil Englehart, Miss Outtrim, Annie Cubitt, and Leon Caron conducted.

There was a revival at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, in 1905, with Howard Vernon, Frank Wilson, John Ralston, Walter Whyte, Ernest Fitts, Alexia Bassian, Viria de Loitte, Sara Hyman, Ruby Armfield, Celia Gilhoni, Leon Caron conducted.

Then again on November 21, 1914, the "Pirates" greeted the Sydney public at Her Majesty's Theatre with Charles Walenn, Frank Wilson, G. Villiers

Arnold, Edward McKeown, Albert Kavanagh, Ruth Lincoln, Katie May, Maud Miles, Mary Morris-Smith, and Ethel Morrison.

Then a revival opened at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, on November 6, 1920, with Charles Walenn, John Ralston, James Hay, G. Villiers Arnold, Frederick Hobbs, Albert Kavanagh, Strella Wilson, Ethel Morrison, Thelma Carter, Grace Crotty, Byrl Walkley, Gustave Slappowski was the conductor.

The next production was at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, on May 16, 1926, with Charles Walenn, James Hay, Strella Wilson, Bernard Manning, Lance Fairfax, Sydney Granville, Mabel Gibson, Winifred Williamson, Effie Armstrong and Patti Russell. Produced by Minnie Everett, with Harry Jacobs as musical director. The 1931 revival began at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, on May 2, with this cast: Ivan Menzies, Leo Darnton, Bernard Manning, John Ralston, Dorothy Gill, Mary Hotham, Maisie Ramsay, Clifford Cowley, Dawn Harding, Rona Wimpney. Produced by Minnie Everett under the musical direction of Gustave Slappowski.

The Sydney season began on August 29, with almost the same cast, Evelyn Gardiner playing Ruth.

English artists who have come to Australia have said, "You can't play Gilbert and Sullivan opera here—you can't know the Savoy traditions—and the operas were all produced in London under the personal supervision of Gilbert himself." I have known more than two people who have spoken similarly. But we have an answer to that. Savoy favourites, such as Leonora Braham, Alice Barnett, Charles Kenningham, Henry Bracy, etc., have played here with Australian companies without finding it necessary to alter their original business, or change the tempo of their music one iota. Also Mrs. D'Oyley Carte came out to Australia to witness the performances, and when asked by J. C. Williamson if she could make any alteration, or suggest an innovation or improvement, replied that she could not, as the performances were excellent. And, let it be whispered, there was one little bit of "business" invented in Australia which she, Mrs. D'Oyley Carte, who was as great a martinet for Savoy traditions as Gilbert himself, actually took back to London,

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and it is used in the "Mikado" to this very day. This was introduced by Howard Vernon, who was the only English actor at that time who had ever played in a Japanese theatre. He had made a study of Japanese ways and mannerisms, and consequently his "Ko Ko" was real. He told me more than once that every movement he made on the stage as Ko Ko, had its own Japanese interpretation.

In the "Pirates of Penzance," or "The Slave of Duty" (which is its other title), the curtain rises on a scene of the rocky coast of Cornwall, with the sea as a background, a sheltered beach with rocks, and a cave on the prompt side (the audience's right-hand side). This inlet is the hiding place of a band of pirates. As the curtain rises the pirates are singing and drinking the health of Frederick, an apprentice. He is 21 that day, and out of his indentures. He tells them that, though individually he loves them, yet collectively he hates them and their calling—that while he was indentured to piracy he felt it was his duty to assist them; now that he is free—or he will be when the clock strikes 12—his duty tells him that he must devote his life to an endeavour to exterminate them. Ruth, a buxom lass of 45, enters, and tells them that through an error Frederick was apprenticed to a pirate instead of a pilot. She was his nursery maid, and, being "hard of hearing," mistook the word, and, she asserts, "the two words were so much alike." Samuel, a pirate, suggests that there is little inducement for Frederick to remain with their band, as they "don't seem to make piracy pay." Frederick tells them the reason is that they are too tender-hearted; they "make a point of never attacking a weaker party than themselves." Also, they never molest an orphan, and the news has spread, and the last three ships they captured were "manned entirely by orphans." The pirate king tells Frederick that it is "the top of the tide," and they must be off, but begs him, when he begins his work of exterminating the pirates, to make their deaths as "painless as possible."

Frederick begs them to accompany him back to civilisation, and so make his work of extermination unnecessary. The pirate king refuses, and tells Frederick that "contrasted with respectability piracy is comparatively honest."

The pirates depart, leaving Ruth with Frederick. He has never seen any woman's face but hers. He tells her he thinks it is a "sweet face." She assures him it is, but, at that moment the voices of young girls are heard, and Ruth knows she is lost. Frederick sees them in the distance, and is enraptured at the sight of so much beauty. He hides in the cave for fear that his pirate dress may frighten them. They invade the beach and decide to "paddle." Each girl has removed one shoe, when Frederick reveals himself. He appeals for the affection of any one of them in a charming song, "Oh, is there not one maiden?" They all turn from him with the exception of Mabel, who answers his appeal in the famous waltz song, "Poor Wand'ring One."

Frederick warns the girls of their danger in such a place, and to escape while the way is clear. In the meantime the pirates have quietly surrounded them, and they capture the girls. The Major-General arrives over the rocks, and, after telling every one what a "glorious thing it is to be a major-general," he, too, is captured, but secures the release of himself and his daughters by telling the pirates that he is an orphan.

STAGE HAND'S SMART WORK

The scene of the next act is a ruined chapel by moonlight. General Stanley is seated on a stone, leaning against one of the Gothic columns. (To digress for a moment. I remember one night just as the curtain rose, this particular column became misfixed in some way, and began to topple and fall away. One of the stage hands, with great presence of mind, rushed on and held the piece of scenery in position, and had to remain in the same posture for the whole act. He could not move an inch, for he would have been seen by the audience. It was a feat of endurance.)

To return to General Stanley, who is surrounded by his daughters, who are anxious to know why he is so sad. He is overcome with remorse for having told the pirates that he was an orphan when he really is "no orphan." He has come to the chapel to humble himself before the tombs of his ancestors. He does not know whose ancestors they were—he only bought the property a year ago—but, he says, "I know whose

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Verdi as Grosvenor in the original production of "Patience," Theatre Royal, Sydney, 1881.

ancestors they are, and I shudder to think that their descendent by purchase—if I may so describe myself—should have brought disgrace upon what I have no doubt was an unstained escutcheon." Frederick tells the Major-General that he is about to start his expedition to exterminate the pirates. A body of police enters headed by the Sergeant on their way to assist Frederick, but delay their departure sufficiently for the Sergeant to give many reasons why "a policeman's lot is not a happy one."

They all depart, leaving Frederick to follow, but he is prevented by the sudden appearance of the Pirate King and Ruth, who cover him with pistols. They tell him that he was apprenticed to the pirates until he reached his 21st birthday, and as he was born on February 29, that birthday will not be reached until 1940. He is still a pirate and cannot exterminate his comrades. So, as he is a slave to duty, he and Mabel say farewell until 1940. A struggle ensues between the pirates and police—the police are overcome and the pirates stand over them with drawn

swords. The Sergeant charges the pirates to yield in Queen Victoria's name—the pirates obligingly yield. Ruth comes on the scene, and tells every one that the pirates "are not members of the common throng; they are all noblemen who have gone wrong."

The Major-General tells the ex-pirates to "resume your ranks and legislative duties, and take my daughters, all of whom are beauties." I have heard comedians moderate the last assertion by substituting the word "some" for "all."

Exactly a year after the first performance of "The Pirates of Penzance," which ran over 300 nights, "Patience" was produced at the Opera Comique, London. This was on April 23, 1881. The cast included George Grossmith as Bunthorne, Rutland Barrington as Archibald Grosvenor, Walter Brown as Colonel Claverley, Frank Thornton as Major Murgatroyd, Durward Lely as the Duke of Dunstable, Leonora Braham as Patience, Jessie Bond as Lady Angela, Julia Gwynne as Lady Saphir, Miss Fortesque as Lady Ella, Alice Barnett as Lady Jane. Frank Cellier (brother of Alfred) conducted the orchestra.

"Patience" was the last of the Gilbert and Sullivan series, to be produced at the Opera Comique, and it was transferred to the New Savoy Theatre on October 10, 1881, where it was played until November 22, 1882. Although the libretto deals with an age and a craze that is hardly understood as known by the present generation, yet Gilbert's wit and Sullivan's charming music must be always a delight whenever it is heard.

FIRST AUSTRALIAN PERFORMANCE.

The first performance of "Patience" in Australia took place at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, on November 26, 1881—exactly seven months after the first production in London. Riccardi played the colonel, Armes Beaumont the Duke, J. F. Forde the major, Howard Vernon Bunthorne, Signor Verdi Archibald Grosvenor, Alice Rees Patience, Fanny Lyddiard Lady Angela, Lillie Forde Lady Saphir, Bessie Royal Lady Ella, and Maggie Moore Lady Jane. Signor Giorza conducted a revival at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, in July, 1883, with a cast in-

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cluding the following artists: Riccardi, W. H. Woodfield, Howard Vernon, Edwin Kelly, Nellie Stewart, Fanny Lyddiard, Ida Osborne, Maggie Stewart, Lillie Forde, W. H. Harrison conducted. In October, 1885, "Patience" was again at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, with a slight alteration in the cast, and was principally notable for the inclusion of Alice Barnett, the original Lady Jane of the Opera Comique.

"Patience" was a particularly strong attraction in the Williamson, Garner and Musgrove repertoire, and often played. Think of the difference in the population of the theatre-going public then and now—yet there are few modern comic operas that would draw an audience so frequently.

SOME "PATIENCE" REVIVALS.

"Patience" was played in 1881, 1882, 1883, 1885, 1889, &c. In the 1889 revival at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, Clara Merivale played "Patience," Fanny Lyddiard Lady Jane, the Misses May Pollard Varley and Lewis as the Ladies Angela, Saphir, and Ella, Walter Marnock as Grosvenor, Howard Vernon Bunthorne, Tom Grundy, Leumane, and W. Johnstone as the three dragoons. Leon Caron conducted. With the exception of odd performances, the next big revival was in December, 1904, at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, with Frank Wilson, Charles Kenningham, H. H. Wallace, John Ralston, Howard Vernon, Dolly Castles, Celia Ghiloni, Aggie Thorne, Vinia de Loitte, and Sara Hyman in the cast. Leon Caron conducted. A revival at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, in December, 1914, had in the cast Albert Kavanagh, G. Villiers Arnold, Edward McKeown, Charles Walenn, Frank Wilson, Fred England, Pearl Ladd, Maud Miles, Katie May, Mary Morris-Smith, and Ethel Morrison.

Then a revival six years later at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, in October, 1920, with James Hay, Charles Walenn, Fred Hobbs, John Ralston, G. V. Arnold, Strella Wilson, Thelma Carter, Byrl Walkley, Patti Russell, and Ethel Morrison, Gustave Slappofski conducted.

The revival at the Theatre Royal on March 19, 1927, had in the cast

Charles Walenn, Strella Wilson, James Hay, Lance Rairfax, Bernard Manning, John Ralston, Winifred Williamson. The next revival opened at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, on July 25, 1931, with Ivan Menzies, Leo Darn-ton, Gregory Stroud, Bernard Manning, Phil Smith, Mary Hotham and Marie Bremner, Dawn Harding, Grace Crotty. The opera was produced by Minnie Everett, with Gustave Slappofski as Musical Director. Sydney season opened November 28th with Evelyn Gardiner as Lady Jane.

"Patience" is a satire on the "aesthetic craze" in which the public mind associated the personalities of Oscar Wilde, William Morris and Edward Burne Jones. Some of Sullivan's most delightful music was written in this opera, and Gilbert's clever satirical humour killed the aesthetic pose speedily and effectively.

There are thousands of people who know the stories of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas—yet there are others—and for those a few words on the subject may be of interest.

STORY OF "PATIENCE."

The curtain rises upon a scene of the exterior of Bunthorne's Castle. Bunthorne—a fleshly poet—is adored by 20 lovesick maidens, who follow him wherever he goes. His fancy has lighted upon Patience, the village milkmaid. But she does not even know what love is. The 35th Dragoon Guards arrive upon the scene, to find that the girls to whom they were engaged have deserted them in favour of Bunthorne. Then Archibald Grosvenor appears, and at once becomes a rival of Bunthorne in the affections of the ladies.

Patience realises what love means when she meets Grosvenor, but decides that they must part. For love to be pure must be unselfish, and there can be nothing unselfish in loving so perfect a being—so she promises to marry Bunthorne, as that would be an act entirely free from selfishness. In the second act the aesthetic maidens follow Grosvenor in adoration, just as they did Bunthorne in Act 1. He becomes weary of being followed, and appeals to them "You have been following me about ever since Monday, this is Saturday. I should like the usual half-holiday. I shall take it as a personal favour if you will allow me to close early to-

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Gustave Slappofski.



Minnie Everett.

Two well-known personalities in the theatrical world, on whose shoulders rests responsibility for the success of many J. C. Williamson productions.

day." Bunthorne decides that he cannot live without admiration. So he orders his rival Grosvenor to cut his hair, to discard aestheticism, and to become commonplace. He at first refuses, but eventually does so, on compulsion, at a threat of Bunthorne's curse. When Grosvenor appears dressed as an "everyday young man," Patience finds there is nothing to prevent her loving him. The aesthetic maidens on discovering that Grosvenor has discarded aestheticism, agree that it should be discarded. They return to their old loves, the Dragoons, and Bunthorne is left alone.

Lady Jane, with her "spreading" figure and fading hair, remarks "Cheer up, I've never left you and I never will."

A MEMORABLE NIGHT.

In September, 1904, there was a revival of "Patience" at Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne. It was, I believe, a brainwave of Mr. (now Sir George) Tallis and Mr. E. J. Tait. There was a general opinion—and a hope by two artistes, at least, who have since "passed on"—that G. and S. opera was as dead as the prover-

bial doornail, and the season would prove a frost. But they were wrong, and disappointed. I was a member of the company. We were playing an opera, delightful in its way, full of tuneful numbers, good vocal effects, and charming scenery. But, alas, it was local, and the box office returns were anything but satisfactory to the management. So G. and S. opera was suggested. This called for a smaller cast, which was distinctly disappointing to some of the artistes, as it would necessitate the placing of several on the "resting" list. The rehearsals for "Patience" began. I was not in the cast, but knew of most happenings. The baritone, who has to play Grosvenor, came under the displeasure of the producer, and there were rumours of trouble to come—though no one realised how, when, or where it might be. The only addition to the company was Howard Vernon (his first appearance after an absence of several years). He did not arrive until the last two rehearsals. The booking for the first night was very heavy, and at 7.30 there wasn't standing room in the theatre. I was determined to see the performance. So also was the

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Fanny Lyddiard, a stage favourite of the eighties, who distinguished herself in many leading Gilbert and Sullivan roles.

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wife of one of the performers, there was no chance in the front of the house, so we decided to take up our positions in the first entrance on the O.P. side of the stage—clear of the exits and entrances. The Saturday night audience was in a mood to enjoy everything.

I had never seen Howard Vernon though I had heard of him; but I was astonished at the ovation he received—it stopped the action of the opera—and thought how wonderful it would be to win such applause. All went well until the duet between Patience and Lady Angela, "Long Years Ago." Just then we noticed something was wrong. There was a distinct commotion behind the scenes. The two artists on the stage noticed it also. The duet over, Patience went on with her speech: "It's perfectly dreadful to think of the appalling state I must be in. I had no idea that love was a duty. No wonder they all look so unhappy. Upon my word, I hardly like to associate with myself. I don't think I'm respectable." The stage manager was beckoning her to come off the stage. She should have spoken one more line, which was the cue for the entrance of Grosvenor and the duet, "Prithee, Pretty Maiden," followed by a long scene between Patience and Grosvenor. Instead of which Patience left the stage, and the finale of the first act followed immediately.

It appears that only five minutes before the time of his entrance Grosvenor was not to be found in the theatre. The callboy rushed to the stage manager, the stage manager rushed to the producer—everything was at "sixes and sevens." The only person in the theatre who kept his head was Howard Vernon. He really knew every twist and turn of the opera, and said "Cut out the scene and go on to the finale, and where Grosvenor should come on, let the major read the part, in his second act dress"—which was a fascimile of Grosvenor's—with the exception of being made of grey, instead of wine-coloured velvet. It was a happy suggestion, and passed unnoticed by the audience, with the exception of the very few who were intimate with the opera.

THE LOST BARITONE.

The lost baritone found himself at the end of St. Kilda Pier at 2 a.m. He had been very worried over the part, which the pinpricks of the producer did not help to lighten, so he looked upon the wine when it was very red, and there were those who assisted the direction of his vision. I met him on his way to the theatre on Monday morning following the Saturday night contretemps, and thought "I would not like to be in your shoes." But J. C. Williamson was ever ready to accept a reasonable explanation—and the baritone remained with the company. The judgment was good, for though there were those—and many of them, too—who predicted disaster, he won through, and became one of the most popular and reliable men in the profession—applause to him and his wife, whose devotion and patience assisted his success in no small measure.

That particular production of "Patience" seemed fated, for on the Tuesday following that first night the prima donna's mother died. I had been to the theatre earlier in the evening, and was given a part in the next opera to be produced—"The Gondoliers"—and hurried home to run through the music. About 10 p.m. the stage manager and assistant stage manager came to see me—I lived in Collins-street, not far from the theatre—and they told me that Mr. Williamson wanted me to play the part of "Patience" at the matinee the following afternoon, as the prima donna would certainly not be able to play owing to the death of her mother. "But," I said, "I'm not the understudy for the part." "Never mind that," replied the stage manager, "Mr. Williamson wants you to play the part. Can you do it?" "Yes," I said, with the gaiety of youth and inexperience. I have often remarked since that I did not realise the enormity of my offence against a lenient public. I hope they forgave me!

A MEMORABLE NIGHT.

The struggle of my memory box between 11 o'clock that night and 2 p.m. next day was a sensation not easily forgotten. Howard Vernon was the only person playing in the cast who did not know that there was a

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Howard Vernon as the Lord Chancellor in "Iolanthe," Theatre Royal, Sydney, 1885.

strange "Patience" playing that afternoon. And when Bunthorne greeted Patience, "Ah, Patience—dear Patience!" he found that she was about four inches lower than she "used to be"—and he wondered why. There was no chance to inquire until later, but during the finale of the first act, when Patience and Bunthorne leave the stage, and the sextette, "I hear the soft note of an echoing voice," is sung in front of the footlights, we formally introduced ourselves to each other.

One of my reasons for telling this episode is that, some time ago I read in a Melbourne paper a little story in reference to my first meeting with Howard Vernon. The storyteller was "a storyteller," for he—or, perhaps, she—said it was when I was playing one of the "three little Geisha Girls" in "The Mikado." But let me hasten to proclaim their innocence; they are not "Geisha" girls, but giggling little school girls.

Quite recently an Englishman said to me, "How can you Australians appreciate, or understand, Gilbert's comedies? They are so essentially

local, and in each case deal with topical matters—their piquancy must be lost." Of course, I did not agree with him. How could I? The majority of Australians are great readers, and are fairly well informed in matters English, from the last Derby winner down to the correct cut of "Oxford bags."

The aesthetic craze was well understood in Australia during the 'eighties—so I'm told—but to-day it is understood in England, as it is here, by being "passed down." Personalities such as Gilbert obviously intended in "Utopia, Limited" were only whispered even in England. But place Gilbert's lines, even without an understanding of innuendo, before an audience endowed with an average amount of brain power, and they will be sufficiently entertained.

"IOLANTHE" PRODUCTIONS.

After "Patience" the next of the G. and S. series to be produced was "Iolanthe," that delightful fairy opera, with Gilbert's quaint conceit of the embodiment of the law—with its fairies, peers of the realm, its clever wit, which is as fresh and up-to-date now as when it was first introduced, nearly 50 years ago. The first performance took place at the Savoy Theatre, London, on November 25, 1882, with George Grossmith as the Lord Chancellor, Rutland Barrington as the Earl of Mountararat, Durward Lely as Earl Tolloller, Charles Manners as Private Willis, Richard Temple as Strephon, Alice Barnett as Queen of the Fairies, Jessie Bond as Iolanthe, Miss Fortescue as Celia, Julia Gwynne as Leila, Sybil Grey as Fleta, and Leonora Braham as Phyllis.

It was 2½ years after this first production in London that the opera reached Australia, and the first performance took place at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, on Saturday, May 9, 1885, with the following cast: The Lord Chancellor by Robert Brough, Earl of Mountararat by W. H. Woodfield, Earl Tolloller by Frank Boyle, Private Willis by Ernest St. Clair, Strephon by Signor Brocolini, Queen of the Fairies by Florence Trevelyan, (Mrs. Brough), Iolanthe by Emma Chambers, Celia by Emma Temple, Leila by Aggie Kelton, Fleta by Lillie

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E. J. Tait.

Forde, Phyllis by Nellie Stewart. The opera was conducted by W. H. Harrison, with John Wallace as stage manager. A season in Sydney followed in July of the same year. Then, again,

Two directors of J. C. Williamson Ltd. whose belief in Gilbert and Sullivan opera as a "mascot" for the Firm, has been fully justified.



four months later, with a slight change of cast, Ida Osborne as Iolanthe, Howard Vernon as the Lord Chancellor, and Alice Barnett as Queen of the Fairies (her original part).

To mention every revival and give an exhaustive account of each cast, would make a matter too lengthy, but I have chosen a few which may be of interest.

There was a revival, in February, 1888, with Howard Vernon, W. H. Woodfield, Duncan Young, H. Benham, Albert Brennir, Maggie Moore, Colbourne Baber, Katie Potter, Aggie Kelton, May Pollard, and Leonora Braham. Then, in September, 1891, "Iolanthe" was again at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, with Howard Vernon, Sydney Deane, Henry Bracy, Tom Grundy, Charles Ryley, Elsie Cameron, Violet Varley, Katie Potter, Maggie Melrose, May Pollard, and Flora Graupner; Leon Caron conducted.

A revival at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, in April, 1899, had in the cast Howard Vernon, Pat Bathurst, Charles Kenningham, Stannis Leslie, William Paull, Mrs. Henry Bracy, Dorothy Vane, Beatrice Perry, Nina Osborne, Minnie Everett, and Florence Perry. Then, in September, 1900, at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, with



Sir George Tallis.

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George Lauri, Charles Kenningham, Pat Bathurst, Stannis Leslie, Wallace Brownlow, Jennie Opie, Irene Outrim, Ruby Bowring, Cecil Englehart, Joey Casselis, and Carrie Moore.

At Her Majesty's Theatre in February, 1905, the cast included Howard Vernon, Charles Kenningham, Frank Wilson, Ernest Fitts, John Ralston, Celia Ghiloni, Vinia de Loitte, Sara Hyman, Belle Gross, Ruby Armfield, and Dolly Castles. Leon Caron conducted.

The next revival was nine years later, in October, 1914, at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, with Charles Walenn, Frank Wilson, Edward McKeown, Albert Kavanagh, Villiers Arnold, Dorothy Vane, Ethel Morrison, Pearl Ladd, Katie May, Mary Morris-Smith, and Ruth Lincoln. H. Burton conducted.

The 1920 revival at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, had in the cast: Charles Walenn, Frederick Hobbs, James Hay, Albert Kavanagh, John Ralston, Thelma Carter, Ethel Morrison, Stella Wilson, Patti Russell, Kitty Howard, Jessie Caffyn. The opera was produced by Minnie Everett, and conducted by Gustav Slappofski.

His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, was the scene of the next revival on July 3, 1926, with the following cast: Charles Walenn, Bernard Manning, James Hay, Sydney Granville, Lance Fairfax, Winifred Williamson, Patti Russell, Beryl Pratt, Merna Stewart, Alma O'Day, Effie Armstrong. Produced by Minnie Everett, with Gustave Slappofski as Musical Director. The next revival began at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, on May 16, 1931, with Ivan Menzies, Leo Darnton, Gregory Stroud, Bernard Manning, John Ralston, Dorothy Gill, Mary Hotham, Marie Bremner, Dawn Harding, Nancy Horne, Bonnie Roberts. Producer, Minnie Everett—Musical Director, Gustave Slappofski. The Sydney season opened on October 17th, Evelyn Gardiner replacing Dorothy Gill as The Fairy Queen.

STORY OF IOLANTHE.

The story of Iolanthe and her sister fairies is usually interesting enough to entertain grown-up humans, as well as those who are young enough to believe in such dainty phantasies. Though, if we credit all the we read

in the newspapers, there are people of mature and brilliant intellect who believe implicitly in fairies. The curtain of Act 1 rises upon an Arcadian landscape, a river with a bridge, over which many of the characters make their entrance.

A band of fairies lament the loss of Iolanthe, who was banished by the Fairy Queen as punishment for having married a mortal. She has been living at the bottom of the stream, so that she could be near her son, Strephon, who "is a fairy down to the waist, but his legs are mortal." The fairies beg the queen to forgive Iolanthe. She does so, and Iolanthe rises from the stream, and joins her sister fairies.

Strephon—an Arcadian shepherd—is in love with Phyllis—an Arcadian shepherdess—who is a ward in chancery, but the Lord Chancellor will not give his consent to their marriage. The members of the House of Lords appeal for the hand of Phyllis; even the Lord Chancellor himself admits that "My regard for her is slowly undermining my constitution." She refuses them all until she finds Strephon embracing Iolanthe. She will not believe that a mother who looks 17 could have a son 24. Overcome with jealousy, she gives her hand to one of the Lords. She does not care which.

Strephon calls upon the Fairy Queen for aid, and she helps him to become a member of Parliament, and with fairy assistance, "carries every Bill he chooses."

Strephon succeeds in convincing Phyllis that Iolanthe is his mother by confessing that she is a fairy. They then persuade Iolanthe to plead their cause with the Lord Chancellor, who is her husband and Strephon's father. She begs the Lord Chancellor on her knees, with her face veiled, but he announces that he has decided to award Phyllis to himself. This decided Iolanthe to reveal herself, and the punishment in fairy law is death. The Fairy Queen is about to execute Iolanthe when the fairies confess that they have all married mortals. The punishment is death, but she cannot "slaughter the whole crew." The Lord Chancellor sets matters right with the addition of one word to the law, which now reads: "The fairy who don't marry a mortal dies."

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Ivan Menzies as Jack Point in "The Yeomen of the Guard, 1931 season, Melbourne and Sydney.

Then they all go off to fairyland.

Though "The Sorcerer" was produced at the Opera Comique, London, as early as 1877, it was nine years later that the Williamson management produced it in Australia. But there had been a previous production by Mr. and Mrs. Lingard at the Bijou Theatre, Melbourne. This was the original cast at the Opera Comique, under the management of D'Oyly Carte:—Richard Temple as Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre, George Bentham as Alexis, Rutland Barrington as Dr. Daly, George Grossmith as John Wellington Wells, Mrs. Howard Paul as Lady Sangazure, Alice May as Aline, M. Everard as Mrs. Partlett, Giulia Warwick as Constance. The first production by J. C. Williamson took place at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, on May 22, 1886, with Howard Vernon as Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre, W. H. Woodfield as Alexis, Denbigh Newton as Dr. Daly, M. Francisco as the Notary, Frank Thornton as John Wellington Wells, Alice Barnett as Lady Sangazure, Nellie Stewart as Aline, Ida Osborne as

Mrs. Partlett, and Ada Walker as Constance.

The opera was produced by Frank Thornton, and conducted by Alfred Cellier. That production of "The Sorcerer" was followed the same evening by "Trial by Jury," with Frank Thornton as the Judge, Kate Lovell as the Plaintiff, Frank Boyle as the Defendant, Harry Benham as the Usher, F. Ridsdale as Counsel for the Plaintiff, J. Atkinson as Foreman of the Jury, W. Forde as Associate, and Lillie Ford as First Bridesmaid. "The Sorcerer" was produced in Sydney five months later at the Theatre Royal on October 23, 1886, with the same cast as in Melbourne, with one exception, William Elton replaced Frank Thornton as John Wellington Wells. And in the "Trial by Jury" which followed on the same night Howard Vernon played the Judge and Ida Osborne the Plaintiff. "The Sorcerer" has not been revived so frequently as some of the later works, such as "The Gondoliers," "Mikado," "Iolanthe," &c., but it has some charming music. Sullivan's gift for melody is so striking that judged by some of our modern musicians, it is too saccharine—but it is always delightful.

PLOT OF "THE SORCERER"

There was a revival of "The Sorcerer" at the Criterion Theatre, Sydney, in December, 1905, after an interval of 16 years, with a cast which included Arthur Crane, Charles Kenningham, Frank Wilson, J. O'Rourke, Howard Vernon, Celia Ghiloni, Dolly Castles, Vinia de Loitte, Ruby Armfield. The opera was produced by Henry Bracy and conducted by A. W. Juncker. "Trial by Jury" followed the same night, with H. H. Wallace as the Judge, Vinia de Loitte as the Plaintiff, Walter Whyte as the Defendant, Arthur Crane as Counsel for the Plaintiff, Ernest Fitts as Usher, Fred England as Foreman of the Jury, H. Campbell as Associate, Ruby Armfield as First Bridesmaid.

A revival of "Trial by Jury" at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne on June 19, 1926 (following "Pinafore" on the same night), had Charles Walenn. Patti Russell, Leo Darnton, Albert Tarrant, Bernard Manning, Gordon

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Ramsay, Eileen Pollard. Produced by Minnie Everett under the musical direction of Harry Jacobs. The next production was at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, on May 2, 1931, with Ivan Menzies, Marie Bremner, Gregory Stroud, Bernard Manning, Robert Molyneaux, Clifford Cowley, Leonard Gattin, Nancy Horne. Produced by Minnie Everett, under the musical direction of Gustave Slappofski.

The plot of "The Sorcerer" is rather frail, and is really a number of humorous ideas strung round John Wellington Wells, "A dealer in magic and spells, of blessings and curses, and ever filled purses, and prophecies, witches, and knells." It always reminds me of a Sunday school picnic. When the curtain rises in Act I it discloses a scene of the exterior of Sir Marmaduke's Elizabethan mansion. The villagers are discovered joyful at the betrothal of Sir Marmaduke's son Alexis to Aline, daughter of Lady Sangazure. Constance, the daughter of Mrs. Partlett (a pew opener), is secretly in love with the rector (Dr. Daly), who has no knowledge of the fact. Alexis is so happy in his love for Aline that he provides a scheme to make all the village as happy as he and Aline. So he engages the services of John Wellington Wells—a Sorcerer, of 70 St. Mary Axe—who undertakes to dose the whole village with his "patent oxygen love-at-first-sight philtre."

During an open-air banquet, given in honour of Aline and Alexis, the villagers get a liberal supply of the Philtre from the contents of a teapot brewed by J. W. Wells—the potion takes effect—as the curtain falls at the end of the first act, every one has succumbed to the effect of the drug, into a sleep that will last 12 hours. The curtain rises in Act II. on the same scene by moonlight, with the villagers still sleeping. Alexis, Aline and Mr. Wells enter to see if the potion has taken effect—which is that each person on waking will madly love the first person they gaze upon. It has so affected Constance that she transferred her affection for the vicar to the doddering old Notary, Sir Marmaduke falls in love with Mrs. Partlett, the pew opener—this does not please Alexis—Lady Sangazure is fascinated by John Wellington Wells,

much to his discomfiture, then Aline persuaded by Alexis to drink the potion—does so, but instead of meeting Alexis, she meets Dr. Daly, and loves him at sight. Everything has gone wrong, and the only thing left to do is for some one to sacrifice his life to Ahrimanes and so remove the spell. It is generally agreed that Mr. Wells is a fit and proper person to sacrifice. He cheerfully submits, and as the couples resort themselves, and return to the people they should have loved, John Wells, like Faust and Mephisto, disappears to the accompaniment of red fire.

"TRIAL BY JURY."

"Trial by Jury" is an operetta in one act, with no spoken dialogue. The scene is a court of justice—with barristers, attorneys, and jurymen ready to try a breach of promise case between Edwin, the defendant, and Angelina, the plaintiff. The usher petitions the jury "To listen to the plaintiff's case." But when the defendant speaks, "What he may say you needn't mind—from bias free of every kind this trial must be tried." The defendant arrives, and the jury refuse to hear him. Then the judge appears, and tells the court how he came to be a judge by marrying a "rich attorney's elderly, ugly daughter," who might "very well pass for forty-three in the dusk with a light behind her!" The plaintiff arrives with her bevy of bridesmaids. The judge and jury are in rapture, but when the case is argued and no conclusion arrived at, the judge cries, "All legal furies seize you, put your briefs upon the shelf, I will marry her myself."

The reason I have mentioned the production of "The Sorcerer" after "Iolanthe" is because that was the order of performance in Australia. And as this little work deals principally with the production of the operas here, I have placed them in such order.

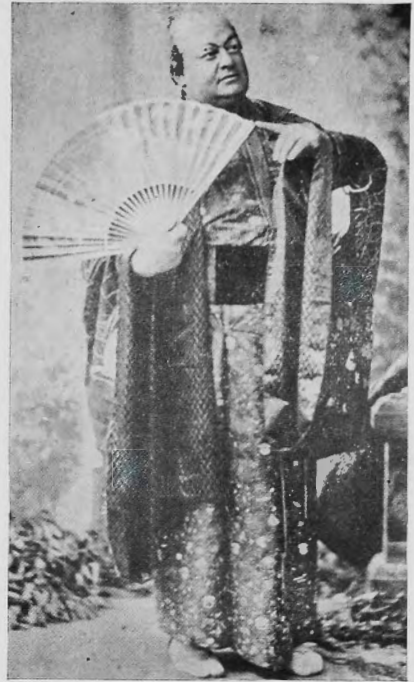
"PRINCESS IDA."

After "Iolanthe" the next opera to be produced at the Savoy was "Princess Ida"—or "Castle Adamant" (which is its second title). The first performance took place on January 5, 1884, with the following cast: Rutland Barrington as King Hilderbrand,

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Alice Barnett as Katisha and Ida Osborne as Pitti Sing.



Harry Benham as Pish Tush.

"The Mikado," Theatre Royal, Sydney, 1885.

Henry Bracy as Hilarion, Durward Lely as Cyril, Charles Ryley as Florian, George Grossmith as King Gama, Richard Temple as Arac, Warwick Gray as Guron, M. Lugg as Scynthus. Leonora Braham as Princess Ida, Rosina Brandram as Lady Blanche, Kate Chard as Lady Psyche, Jessie Bond as Melissa, Sybil Grey as Sacharissa, M. Heathcote as Chloe, Lillian Carr as Ada. Francois Cellier conducted. This is the only opera of the series containing three acts—and was the most expensive to produce, the silver gilt armour being specially made in Paris.

When Gilbert wrote, and produced his "Princess," in 1870, the public taste was not attuned to his particular style of humour, but rewritten and allied to Sullivan's music, fourteen years later, it delighted every one who became acquainted with it. The collaborators advertised it as "A Respectful Operatic Per-Version of Tennyson's 'Princess.'"

On the first night of the production of this opera at the Savoy, Sir Arthur Sullivan, while on his way to the theatre, heard the appalling news that

the bank in which was stored almost his "all" had stopped payment. In such a circumstance it must have been extremely difficult to assume a smiling countenance and meet the encores and plaudits of a first night audience.

"PRINCESS IDA" IN AUSTRALIA.

It was three and a half years after this first production in London that the opera reached Australia, and the first performance took place at the Princess Theatre—then called the New Princess Theatre—Melbourne, on Saturday, July 16, 1887, with this cast: King Hilderbrand by Howard Vernon, Hilarion by C. H. Leumane (his first appearance in Australia), Cyril by W. H. Woodfield, Florian by F. Frederici (his first appearance in Australia), King Gama by William Elton, Arac by H. Benham, Guron by Thomas Grundy, Scynthus by A. Brennir, Princess Ida by Colbourne Baber, Lady Blanche by Alice Barnett, Lady Psyche by Aggie Kelton, Melissa by Ida Osborne, Sacharissa, Chloe and Ada by L. Monmouth, Alice St. John, and K. Potter respectively. W. H. Harrison conducted the opera.

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The management announced that, owing to the enormous demand for seats, and as the dress circle was fully booked, they would reserve "A few rows of stalls at dress circle prices"; the prices were 5/-, 3/- and 1/-, and no tax—how times have changed!! The first production in Sydney happened exactly nine months later at the Theatre Royal on April 16 1888, with Edwin Kelly as King Hilderbrand, Duncan Young as Hilarion, W. H. Woodfield as Cyril, F. Ridsall as Florian, Howard Vernon as King Gama, H. Benham as Arac, Thomas Grundy as Guron, Fred England as Scynthus, Leonora Braham as Princess Ida, Alice Barnett as Lady Blanche, Aggie Kelton as Lady Psyche, and May Pollard as Melissa.

There was a revival at the Lyceum Theatre, Sydney, commencing on Saturday, December 16, 1893, with Howard Vernon, Henry Bracy, W. Rosevear, Charles Ryley, George Lauri, Thomas Grundy, Arthur Lissant, Stanis Leslie, Nellie Stewart, Elsie Cameron, Florence Young, May Pollard, A. Kinnaird, Nina Osborne, and M. McKay.

The next production of the "Princess" in Sydney was 12 years later, at the Criterion Theatre, opening on December 2, 1905, with a cast including Frank Wilson, Walter Whyte, Charles Kenningham, Arthur Crane, Howard Vernon, Fred England, Howard Hall, Ernest Fitts, Dolly Castles, Celia Ghiloni, Vinia de Loitte, Aggie Thorne, Ruby Armfield, Vera Buttell, and Blanche Farey. The opera was produced by Henry Bracy, and conducted by A. W. Juncker.

A season in Melbourne followed at the Princess Theatre in 1906, with the same cast. Then, after an interval of 15 years, it was revived at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, on February 5, 1921, with Frederick Hobbs as King Hilderbrand, James Hay as Hilarion, Charles Mettam as Cyril, John Ralston as Florian, Charles Walenn as King Gama, J. Kinson, T. Minogue, and F. England as Princess Ida's three warrior brothers—Arac, Guron, and Scynthus, Molly Tyrrell as Lady Blanche, Patti Russell as Lady Psyche, Byrl Walkley as Melissa, Jessie Caffyn, Grace Crotty, and Gladys Baker as the three girl graduates, and Strella Wilson as Princess Ida.

On the first night of this production rather an amusing incident happened.

During the first act the three warriors—Arac, Guron and Scynthus—encased in armour from head to foot, carrying huge broad bladed swords—entered the scene, Guron sang his solo, "We Are Warriors Three," in the second half of which the three brothers became excited, and flourishing their swords—which is a feat of strength—as they shout, "We are men of might, Ha! Ha! Fighting is our trade!" they then charge down the stage, bringing up in a straight line at the footlights, simultaneously banging their swords point downwards on the stage with tremendous force.

It is a fine climax and invariably secures an enthusiastic encore, but on this particular night, as the three brothers "struck the picture," Guron's mighty sword crumpled up and looked exactly like a huge butter curler.

It was a packed house, and the audience shrieked with delight. Arac's song had never received so many encores, in fact it nearly stopped the action of the opera. Every time Guron moved his curly, waggy sword, it was a signal for fresh merriment.

Sometimes a contretemps will upset a whole show, and ruin the effect of everything that comes afterwards. But in this case it was not so, for it put the audience into a happy mood, and they enjoyed every moment of the opera. I think the solution of the sword episode was that the properties of that opera had been stored for so long—15 years is a very long time to keep things intact—and even in theatres they sometimes "Rob Peter to pay Paul"—that particular sword was missing, and the property man, knowing that it was quite impossible to procure a facsimile of the originals—they were especially made in Paris—manufactured a wonderful substitute as far as appearance went, but he did not take into consideration the trial it would have to undergo.

"Princess Ida" was revived at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, on July 17, 1926, with Charles Walenn, Sydney Granville, James Hay, Leo Darnton, Bernard Manning, Strella Wilson, Winifred Williamson, Patti Russell. Produced by Minnie Everett and conducted by Gustave Slappofski.

The 1931 revival began at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, on Monday, December 7, with the following cast: John Ralston, Robert Molyneaux, Leo Darn-

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ton, Gregory Stroud, Ivan Menzies, Bernard Manning, Chester Harris, Harry Williams, Byrl Walkly, Evelyn Gardiner, Nell Taylor, Mary Hotham. Produced by Dick Shortland. Conducted by Andrew MacCunn.

WHY INFREQUENTLY PLAYED?

I have heard people remark, and have read in the Press, "Why don't they play 'Princess Ida' as frequently as the other Gilbert and Sullivan operas?" There are reasons, of course. In the first place, it is more trouble to produce than most of the other operas, and theatrical managements hate bother as much and even more than most people. But the principal reason is lack of comedy for the comedian.

King Gama, who is always played by the principal fun maker, is only on the stage in the first and third acts, and even then he has no real chance of comedy—only a hard, caustic wit, which, though it amuses, cannot gain that spontaneous mirth which is necessary from the audience of comic opera—they go to the theatre with a desire and intention to laugh, and if their design is frustrated by the author, or the people on the stage, they are disappointed, and "Oh, ho, ho, the box office doth show——"

I have been told, though unable to vouch for its authenticity, yet 'tis feasible, that Gilbert had a deep seated reason for "re-dishing" and producing "Princess Ida" when and where he did. This is the story. Someone remarked that the success of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas was entirely due to George Grossmith. This reached the knowledge of W. S. Gilbert, and he was very wroth, and decided to produce an opera in which the comedian's presence was negligible. Then he thought of his neglected "Princess," and with the aid of Sullivan produced it after "Iolanthe."

If Mr. Grossmith ever did feel the need to enlarge the dimensions of his hats, such a blow would be sufficient to cause a general shrinkage, and so end the necessity.

To play Gama after having played the Lord Chancellor! I once received a disappointment in connection with "Princess Ida," infinitesimal in comparison with that of Mr. Grossmith, of course. The Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Co., on tour, were travelling from Launceston to Hobart. It was a Sunday, unusual here in this side of



Nellie Stewart as Yum Yum in "The Mikado," Theatre Royal, Sydney, 1885.

the world, but a general day of exodus for theatricals in England. I am also sure of the day, for some "good" people afterwards remarked, "Ah, that's why it happened."

The company—in numbers something over 80—left Launceston about 11 a.m. by special train; there were no other trains that day—beautiful weather, but hot, about the end of February. About half way, while passing through some thickly bushed country, miles from a station, I, and those in the carriage with me, noticed a smell of burning, and in a few minutes the train came to a standstill.

WARDROBE DESTROYED.

Every one jumped from the carriages to the track, and we soon learned the reason for the stop. When we left Launceston, much of the scenery and all the luggage and wardrobe had been placed in a huge open truck, covered by a tarpaulin. This was not far behind the engine; a spark or two, fanned by the speeding train, soon became a blaze.

I well remember how we gasped as we watched the fire. Men worked with herculean strength, breaking down saplings and beating at the

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flames. The girls, too, did their share—but with no water there was not much hope of saving any quantity. One, little girl of the chorus was standing by crying quietly, and when asked about her particular trouble sobbed, "When we were paid last night, I put all my money in my box, and it's all gone." It was all gone, and everything else she possessed—but she didn't lose in the end! When we were packing in the theatre the night before Olive Godwin said, "I have some spare room in my theatre box. Do you want to put anything in?" I gladly accepted on behalf of a particularly beautiful underskirt. Ah! yes, it was burnt. My own luggage escaped with little harm; in fact, quite a lot of private luggage was saved, but nearly everything from the theatre—which had been stowed in the truck last—was destroyed.

As each burning basket of wardrobe fell from the truck, some one would cry out, "There's 'Mikado!'" or "There's 'Pirates!'"

Having discovered the destruction of my best underskirt—they were more important then, than now—I was bewailing the fact, when some one said, "Princess Ida's gone." "Ah!" thought I, "it's an ill fire that doesn't burn good for some one," and sang, "Hurrah, my unlucky green dress is gone forever." But it wasn't—it was one of the few things saved!

In fact, I think it still lives. Some willing, energetic soul walked to the nearest railway station and wired for help. The news—magnified a hundredfold—reached Hobart, and when we arrived in that delightful town, several hours late, most of the population came to greet us, as many thought "to view the remains." One overheard remarks such as "Thank God, you're safe," and "We heard that you were all burnt up," &c., &c.

Cables to Australia soon remedied the damage. It is wonderful what the staff of a theatrical wardrobe can achieve. If the general public sometimes knew they would sit up and gasp with astonishment.

As Princess Ida is labelled a perversion of Tennyson's immortal work, the

movements of the characters as they develop the story on the stage may be of interest.

STORY OF THE OPERA.

The curtain rises upon a scene of a pavilion attached to King Hilderbrand's palace. Courtiers and soldiers are discovered searching the landscape through opera glasses and telescopes for a sight of King Gama, who is pledged to arrive that day accompanied by his daughter, Princess Ida, whose vows were plighted to Hilarion, the son of King Hilderbrand, "at the early age of one."

King Hilderbrand enters and tells the court: "If Gama bring the Princess here, give him good cheer; but if he fail to keep his troth, upon our oath we'll trounce them both."

Hilarion enters, and sings that delightful tenor number which begins: "Ida was a twelve-month old twenty years ago!"

King Gama arrives, accompanied by his three warrior sons, Arac, Guron, and Scynthius—but no princess. When asked why she has not come to fulfil her marriage contract, Gama answers that she has retired to Castle Adamant, where she rules a Women's University of a hundred girls, and that no man enters within the walls; in fact, no male of any kind.

He also remarks that "the ladies rise at cockcrow every morn." Cyril (Hilarion's friend) quickly interposes: "Ah! then they have male poultry!" Gama answers: "Not at all; the crowing's done by an accomplished hen!" Hilarion, accompanied by his two friends, Cyril and Florian, leave for Castle Adamant in search of Princess Ida, while King Gama and his three sons are kept as hostage.

King Hilderbrand informs King Gama: "Should Hilarion disappear, we will hang you, never fear, most politely, most politely."

Act II. opens with a scene in the gardens of Castle Adamant, with a river and bridge, over which most of the entrances are made.

Lady Psyche is discovered teaching a class of girl graduates. The sum of

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her teaching is that "man is Nature's sole mistake."

Lady Blanche serves out the punishments. Sacharissa is expelled for daring to possess a set of chessmen. Chloe is punished for making a sketch of a perambulator in her drawing book.

Princess Ida delivers her great speech, which is always a feat of memory, in blank verse, to the effect of woman's superiority over man, and her hope of ultimate victory.

When the way is clear Hilarion, Florian, and Cyril scale the walls of the Castle garden, which is difficult owing to the collection of broken bottles on the wall.

They find three academic robes, and caps, and disguise themselves as girl graduates. They pass the test of the Princess, and swear upon their honour that they "will never marry any man." But when Lady Psyche (Florian's sister) appears, he is afraid of recognition, and confides in her. Melissa overhears, but there is nothing to fear from her. She is thrilled to meet a man, as she had never seen one. Psyche and Melissa entreat them to go at once, as it is death if they are discovered, but they decide to stay for lunch. Cyril takes too much wine, and causes them to be found out—the Princess denouncing them, rushes for the bridge, misses her step, falls into the river Hilarion saves her life, but she will not listen to the cry for mercy. The three men are arrested and marched off by the "daughters of the plough." Hilderbrand and his soldiers batter the castle gate, and enter, accompanied by Ida's three warrior brothers, fettered and chained.

Hilderbrand threatens that if she will not "release Hilarion, and be his bride" and, "as a special boon," he will give her "till to-morrow afternoon," "I'll storm your walls and level your halls." However, Princess Ida decides to fight.

The third act is a scene of the courtyard of Castle Adamant, with all the girls arrayed in armour, they sing "Death to the Invader," but really they are terrified, and when question-

ed as to their worth the Princess finds them all "wanting."

Hilderband, "loth to war with women," pits Hilarion, Cyril and Florian against Ida's three brothers—the warriors are beaten, the Princess finds that her women have deserted her, and when Hilarion suggests that as "woman has failed you utterly—try man," she takes his advice.

When the curtain falls Psyche has decided to risk the future with Cyril, and Melissa with that of Florian.

Lady Blanche finds that abstract Philosophy is not sufficiently strong to meet the need of the situation. When man entered Castle Adamant, the tenets of its teaching tottered and fell.

"THE MIKADO."

Fourteen months after the premiere of "Princess Ida" "The Mikado" was produced at the Savoy, London, on March 14, 1885, with Richard Temple as the Mikado, J. S. Robertson as Nanki Poo, George Grossmith as Ko Ko, Rutland Barrington as Pooh Bah, Frederick Bovill as Pish Tush, Geraldine Ulmar as Yum Yum, A. Cole as Pitti Sing, Sybil Grey as Peep Bo, Rosina Brandram as Katisha. Exactly eight months afterwards the opera was produced in Australia, and the premiere performance took place at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, on November 14, 1885, with the following cast: John Forde as the Mikado, Frank Boyle as Nanki Poo, Howard Vernon as Ko Ko, W. H. Woodfield as Pooh Bah, H. Benham as Pish Tush, Nellie Stewart as Yum Yum, Ida Osborne as Pitti Sing, Lillie Forde as Peep Bo, Alice Barnett as Katisha. W. H. Harrison conducted, and John Wallace was stage manager.

ALFRED CELLIER.

A season in Melbourne followed five months later at the Theatre Royal on February 20, 1886, which was notable as the first appearance in Australia of Alfred Cellier, the famous conductor and composer. The same cast as that of the first production in Sydney was advertised, but just before the curtain rose it was discovered that Frank Boyle, who was to play Nanki Poo, was too indisposed to appear.

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It was a difficult situation to face—a theatre packed to the doors, and no adequate understudy ready to play the part. J. C. Williamson was frantic with anxiety, John Wallace, the stage manager, most terribly worried. Members of the company were suggesting different remedies to restore the situation. When the excitement was at its height W. H. Harrison, the conductor, who that night had relinquished his seat in the orchestra to Alfred Cellier, said: "I know the part, Mr. Williamson." W. H. Harrison went on, and saved a catastrophe—and at the same time covered himself with glory. Boyle eventually played the part again on Saturday, April 24—two months later. There was a revival of "The Mikado" at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, in February 1905, with Frank Wilson, Charles Kenningham, Howard Vernon, Claude Bantock, J. Ralston, Dolly Castles, Aggie Thorne, Vinia de Loitte, and Celia Ghiloni; produced by Henry Bracy, and conducted by Leon Caron.

OTHER REVIVALS.

Then in December, 1914, "The Mikado" was again revived at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, with the following cast: Frank Wilson, Edward M'Keown, Charles Walenn, Albert Kavanagh, G. Villiers Arnold, Ruth Lincoln, Dorothy Vane, Maud Miles, and Ethel Morrison.

A revival opened in Melbourne at His Majesty's Theatre in August, 1920, with Charles Walenn, James Hay, G. Villiers Arnold, Albert Kavanagh, John Ralston, Patti Russell, Eileen Castles, Thelma Carter, and Ethel Morrison, produced by Minnie Everett, and conducted by Gustave Slappofski.

"The Mikado" of 1926 season began at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, on May 29, with Charles Walenn, Bernard Manning, Lance Fairfax, Sydney Granville, Winifred Williamson, Mabel Gibson, Effie Armstrong and Patti Russell. Produced by Minnie Everett, and conducted by Harry Jacobs. The next revival began at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, on May 30, 1931, with the following artists: Ivan Menzies, Leo Darnton, Bernard Manning, John Ralston, Gregory Stroud, Mary Hotham, Marie Bremner, Dorothy Gill, Nancy Horne.

Produced by Minnie Everett, and conducted by Gustave Slappofski.

The Sydney season of 1931 opened at Her Majesty's Theatre on September 26, Evelyn Gardiner playing Katisha.

THE MOST POPULAR OPERA.

I think I may venture to say that "The Mikado" is perhaps the most popular of the whole series of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Though the wit of Gilbert may not be as subtle as in some of his other works, there is a ripple of fun, which flows through the two acts without a break, and Sullivan's music has a happy strain, which appeals to a humour-loving audience. The only exceptions to the general gaiety are the music allotted to Katisha and the delightfully harmonised madrigal in the second act—parts of the opera which have a special attractiveness.

THE STORY.

The first act opens with a scene of the courtyard of Ko Ko's official residence. When the curtain rises there is a chorus of men, who explain that they "are gentlemen of Japan." Nanki Poo arrives and asks for information of the abode of Yum Yum, who is a ward of Ko Ko, the Lord High Executioner. He then sings "A Wand'ring Minstrel I, a thing of shreds and patches," which by the way, though only comic opera, is a trial for any tenor vocalist. Pish Tush asks Nanki Poo what is his business with Yum Yum. Nanki tells him that a year ago, while he was a member of the Titipu town band, he met Yum Yum and they loved each other at sight, but she was betrothed to her guardian, Ko Ko, a cheap tailor. He was in despair and quitted the town, but hearing that Ko Ko was condemned to death for flirting, he hurried back to find Yum Yum. Pish Tush answers that though it was quite true that Ko Ko was condemned to death for flirting, yet under remarkable circumstances he was reprieved and raised to the exalted rank of High Lord Executioner. Pooh Bah enters. He is a very pompous person, and informs you that he can trace his ancestry back to a "protoplasmal primordial atomic globule." He is first "Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice,"

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Winifred Williamson as the Duchess of Plaza Toro.



Charles Walenn as the Duke of Plaza Toro.

"The Gondoliers" revival, Theatre Royal, Adelaide, 1926.

Commander in Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Back Stairs, Archbishop of Titipu, and Lord Mayor, all rolled into one."

He tells Nanki Poo to despair as Yum Yum is to marry Ko Ko. Ko Ko the Lord High Executioner, arrives and sings that when a "Victim must be found" he has a little list of many people in the community who "never would be missed."

A procession of school girls arrives, and then the three little maids, Yum Yum, Pitti Sing and Peep Bo.

Ko Ko embraces Yum Yum, his bride that is to be, rather against her will. Then the three little maids see Nanki Poo, and they are so pleased and excited—Nanki Poo tells Ko Ko that he loves Yum Yum, and that he deserves his anger—Ko Ko says he is not a bit angry—only "pleased to have his opinion backed by a competent authority"—then tells Pish Tush to take Nanki Poo away.

There is some comedy between the three little maids and Pooh Bah, which ends in the quartet, "So, please you, sir, we much regret if we have failed in etiquette," after which Yum Yum is left alone on the stage, and she is joined by Nanki Poo. He tells her he is the son of the Mikado. His father ordered him to "marry Katisha an elderly lady of the court, within a week, or perish ignominiously on the scaffold." So he fled from the court, and assumed the disguise of a second trombone. A love scene ends in the duet, "Were you not to Ko Ko plighted"—known as the kissing duet. Yum Yum and Nanki Poo exit together.

Ko Ko enters soliloquising, but his thoughts are interrupted by Pooh Bah and Pish Tush, who is the bearer of a letter from the Mikado, which says that as there have been no executions in Titipu for a year, the post of Lord High Executioner will be abolished, and the city reduced to the rank of a village, unless somebody is beheaded within a month.

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Pooh Bah suggests that as Ko Ko is already under sentence of death, everything points to him, unless he can find a substitute. Nanki Poo enters the scene with a rope to hang himself. Ko Ko endeavours to persuade him to postpone his death for a month, and then "to be beheaded handsomely at the hands of the public executioner." Nanki Poo agrees to the arrangement on condition that he marries Yum Yum the next day.

After some hesitation, Ko Ko allows it to be so. The Japanese gentlemen, headed by Pooh Bah and Pish Tush, enter, and Ko Ko tells them that he has found a volunteer in Nanki Poo. He then gives Yum Yum to Nanki Poo to be married for a month.

There is much rejoicing, but it is suddenly interrupted by the entrance of Katisha, who has discovered Nanki Poo. She endeavours to proclaim the fact that he is the son of the Mikado, but is interrupted in her design; then in anger she departs to the Mikado to wreak her vengeance. That is the end of the first act.

In Act II. the curtain rises on a scene in Ko Ko's garden, with Yum Yum seated at her bridal toilet, assisted by Pitti Sing and Peep Bo. She then sings one of the most delightful songs in the opera, "The Sun Whose Rays." She is very happy, until she is reminded by Pitti Sing and Peep Bo that it is only for a month.

Nanki Poo arrives, and finds her in tears. Peep Bo and Pitti Sing tell him they have been reminding her that he is to be beheaded in a month.

Nanki Poo remarks that some bridegrooms would be depressed, but only by calling each second a minute, each minute and hour, each hour a day, and each day a year, they have about 30 years of married happiness before them.

This scene ends in the madrigal, "Brightly Dawns Our Wedding Day."

Ko Ko enters, to find Nanki Poo embracing Yum Yum. He tells Yum Yum that when a man is beheaded the law demands that his wife must be buried alive. This upsets Yum Yum.

While they are arguing the point Pooh Bah enters to tell Ko Ko that the Mikado and suite are approaching the city to find out if his orders have been carried out.

Ko Ko decided that an affidavit to the effect that the execution has taken place will be sufficient. The Mikado, Katisha, and his troops arrive, Ko Ko, Pooh Bah, and Pitti Sing give a graphic description of the execution.

The Mikado tells them he has come upon a different matter, and that is to find his son, the heir to the throne. He is masquerading under the name of Nanki Poo, and they must produce him.

Katisha discovers his name on the certificate of the execution. The Mikado is not sure of the punishment for "compassing the death of the heir apparent, but it is something lingering with boiling oil or melted lead." The three conspirators shake and shiver.

The Mikado assures them he is very sorry for them all, but "it is an unjust world, and Virtue is triumphant only in theatrical performances"—and he and Katisha exit. Ko Ko decides that Nanki Poo must come to life.

Nanki Poo has just married Yum Yum, and he is off on his honeymoon, but when he hears that his father and Katisha have arrived, he tells Ko Ko there is only one course, and that is to persuade Katisha to marry him.

Ko Ko is appalled at the idea, but is forced by circumstances to agree.

Katisha is difficult to persuade, but after singing "Tit-Willow" and telling her he will not live without her love, she yields.

The Mikado enters in readiness for the punishment of Ko Ko, Pooh Bah and Pitti Sing.

Katisha pleads mercy for the three conspirators, and tells the Mikado she has just married Ko Ko. Nanki Poo and Yum Yum enter, Katisha is very wrath, but the Mikado is appeased and forgives every one.

The final curtain drops upon a scene of cheerful song and dance.

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"YEOMEN OF THE GUARD."

Two years after the first production of "The Mikado" at the Savoy Theatre, London, "Ruddigore" was produced. I will pass on to "The Yeomen of the Guard" or "The Merryman and His Maid," which is its second title.

By the way, no writer ever dreams of giving a second title to a book or play in these days. Thirty, forty, and more years ago, no story was adequately named unless it had a second title. But now the shorter the title the greater the success, such as "Mary," "Sally," or perhaps even an unfinished sentence, such as "Aren't We All ——" Well, perhaps we are! Probably the next generation will call us worse names than that. Forgive this digression.

"The Yeomen of the Guard" does not contain the usual amount of satire with which Gilbert flavours most of his plays, but has more plot and continuity of story than any other of the series. Sullivan, too, has risen above the comic opera style, and in places the music approaches the expectation of grand opera—notably in the finale of the first act.

The first production of this opera took place at the Savoy Theatre, London, on October 3, 1888, with Wallace Brownlow as Sir Richard Cholomondley (Lieutenant of the Tower), Courtice Pounds as Colonel Fairfax, Richard Temple as Sergeant Meryll, W. R. Shirley as Leonard Meryll, George Grossmith as Jack Point, W. H. Denny as Wilfred Shadbolt, Geraldine Ulmar as Elsie Maynard, Jessie Bond as Phoebe Meryll, Rosina Brandram as Dame Carruthers, Rose Harvey as Kate.

PRODUCTIONS IN AUSTRALIA.

The first production in Australia happened six months later at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, on April 20, 1889, with the following cast: Tom Grundy as the Lieutenant of the Tower, C. Leumane as Fairfax, Walter Marnock as Sergeant Meryll, William Johnson as Leonard Meryll, William Elton as Jack Point, Howard Vernon as Wilfred Shadbolt, R. Fitzgerald,

Stannis, Leslie, Williams and Rigby as the principal yeomen, Nellie Stewart as Elsie Maynard, Ida Osborne as Phoebe Meryll, G. Ameris as Dame Carruthers, and May Pollard as Kate.

Leon Caron conducted. A season in Sydney followed at the Theatre Royal; the opening night was July 8, 1889, and the cast, just as in Melbourne, with one exception, Fannie Lyddiard replaced Ida Osborne as Phoebe Meryll. The casts of some of the revivals may interest you.

A season at the Lyceum Theatre, Sydney, beginning on February 17, 1896, had Courtice Pounds, Pat Bathurst, Arthur Lissant, William Rosevear, George Lauri, Howard Vernon, Flora Graupner, Nina Osborne, Mrs. Henry Bracy and Annie Kinnaird. The opera was produced by H. Bracy, and conducted by Leon Caron.

Then there was a revival at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, on August 20, 1898, with Charles Kenningham, Pat Bathurst, Sydney Bracy, Fred. England, George Lauri, Howard Vernon, Mabelle Darley, Dorothy Vane, Mrs. H. Bracy, and Frances Adler.

At His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, in October, 1904, there was a revival with the following artists in the cast: George Lauri, John Ralston, Haigh Jackson, Howard Vernon, Henry Bracy, Florence Young, Celia Ghiloni, Evelyn Scott, Vinia de Loitte,—conducted by Leon Caron and produced by Henry Bracy.

The revival at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, in November, 1914, had Charles Walenn, Edward McKeown, Edward Wynne, G. Villiers Arnold, Albert Kavanagh, Pearl Ladd, Dorothy Vane, Ethel Morrison, Lybus Caffyn. Produced by Richard Weathersby, and conducted by Harry Burton. The cast of the revival which began at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, on August 21, 1920, included Charles Walenn, James Hay, Frederick Hobbs, Albert Kavanagh, Thomas Minogue, John Ralston, Thelma Carter, Ethel Morrison, Stella Wilson, Patti Russell. The opera was produced by Minnie Everett and conducted by Gustave Slappofski.

GILBERT & SULLIVAN OPERA IN AUSTRALIA

Some one—a man, of course—recently remarked, not to me, but I believe it, though the Lord Chancellor says, "You musn't tell us what she told you: it isn't evidence." Anyway, this is what I believe he said, "Every one knows the stories of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas." I am quite sure he is wrong—every one doesn't. I, for one, did not know the story of any single one, nor had I seen any performance of one until I played in them. Here is the story of "The Yeomen of the Guard."

THE STORY.

The curtain rises upon a scene of Tower Green within the Tower of London. Phoebe Meryll (daughter of Sergeant Meryll, of the Yeomen of the Guard) is sitting at a spinning wheel, singing and sighing about love as she spins. Wilfred Shadbolt (the head gao'er and assistant tormentor) enters the scene, exhibits his affection for Phoebe and his jealousy for Colonel Fairfax, who is to be beheaded for sorcery. Phoebe, though she has never spoken to Colonel Fairfax, has seen him every day taking exercise on the Beauchamp Tower and, knowing him to be wrongly accused of sorcery by a relative who is anxious to succeed to his estates, is fascinated by his personality, and she has no time for the protestations of Wilfred Shadbolt, who is a grim and gruesome individual. So she flouts the gaoler, picks up her spinning wheel, and departs, leaving Wilfred to meditate upon his jealousy.

The Yeomen of the Guard enter, and then Dame Carruthers (the housekeeper of the tower). She tells the Corporal that Colonel Fairfax is to be removed from the Beauchamp to the Cold Harbour Tower, so that he may have his last hour alone with his confessor.

Phoebe tells them that he twice saved her father's life, and that "It is a barbarous thing that so gallant a gentleman should lose his head, for it's the handsomest head in England. But this wicked tower, like a cruel giant in a fairy tale, must be fed with blood." Dame Carruthers tells her not to be foolish—that every stone in the old tower is as dear to her as her own right hand.

Phoebe's brother Leonard is expected that day to join the Yeomen of the Guard, and as he is to come from Windsor, where the court is, Phoebe and her father, Sergeant Meryll, hope he may bring a reprieve for Colonel Fairfax. Leonard arrives, bringing a despatch for the Lieutenant of the Tower, but no reprieve. Sergeant Meryll takes the despatch and tells Leonard to go away at once, to lie hidden for a time—while he himself will convey a suit of Yeomen's uniform to the Colonel's cell, where the Colonel will shave his beard, and the Sergeant will welcome the Colonel as his son, the brave Leonard Meryll.

Phoebe undertakes to steal the key of the cell from Wilfred Shadbolt. After the departure of Leonard, Colonel Fairfax, under guard, on his way from one tower to the other, asks the Lieutenant to grant him the favour of finding him a wife, so that he may outwit his kinsman who cannot then succeed to his estate. He has but an hour to live—but the Lieutenant agrees to help him. Jack Point and Elsie Maynard, two strolling players, arrive on the green and sing the delightful duet, "I have a song to sing O."

While Elsie is collecting from the crowd, two of them try to kiss her; she screams for help, and the Lieutenant orders the soldiers to clear the rabble. He then offers Elsie 100 crowns if she will marry "a worthy but unhappy gentleman who is to be beheaded in an hour." She consents in order to gain the 100 crowns which may help to save her mother's life, for she is lying dangerously ill.

Jack Point loves Elsie, but the bribe is great. Elsie is to depart the moment the ceremony is at an end, and the bridegroom beheaded in an hour—and so he thinks there is no risk. Sergeant Meryll's scheme prospers. Colonel Fairfax, dressed as a yeoman, is welcomed as Leonard Meryll.

The hour for the execution approaches, the crowd assembles, the block is ready, so, too, is the masked executioner, shouldering the huge axe.

The supposed Leonard Meryll and Wilfred Shadbolt are told off to bring

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Vivia de Loitte, 1931.

the Colonel to his execution. All is consternation when they report the prisoner fled. The Yeomen and the people rush off to search for the prisoner. Elsie cried, "What have I done? Oh, woe is me! I am his wife, and he is free!"

Jack Point is almost demented that Elsie is not free—he rushes off madly. Elsie, overcome at the sight of the headsmen, faints in the arms of Fairfax—her husband, though neither he nor she is aware of the fact—she being blindfolded during the ceremony and the dark cell, and he, too, despondent and uninterested to notice.

The next act takes place two nights later—the tower scene by moonlight. Jack Point promises to make Wilfred Shadbolt a "Very Archbishop of Jesters"—which is Shadbolt's ambition—if he will swear to having shot Fairfax as he was escaping in the river, so that Elsie may think she is free, and so wed him, Jack Point. Shadbolt agrees to "lie heartily." Elsie Maynard, who has been ill for two days in the care of Dame Carruthers, gives away the secret of her marriage during her delirium. The Dame repeats the news to Colonel Fairfax and Sergeant Meryll. Fairfax then attempts to woo his own wife; she, believing him to be Leonard Meryll, tells him she may not listen, as she is the wife of Fairfax. But when

Shadbolt swears he shot Fairfax she agrees to marry Leonard.

Phoebe, in a fit of jealousy over the love of Elsie and Fairfax, gives away the secret of the plot to Shadbolt. Then agrees to marry him as the price of his silence. Leonard Meryll arrives with the reprieve for Colonel Fairfax. Dame Carruthers also learns the secret, and the price of her silence is Sergeant Meryll's hand—if not his heart. When Elsie is in her bridal dress the Lieutenant tells her that her husband, Colonel Fairfax, is alive and free and coming to claim her—she is in despair. But when she discovers that he is the man she loves, all is happiness once more. In the midst of their rejoicing, poor Jack Point, desperate and heartbroken, staggers on and falls insensible at their feet.

THE WARDROBE.

The whole of the original wardrobe for "The Yeomen of the Guard" came from London, Mr. George Musgrove had been in London arranging business for the firm of Williamson, Garner and Musgrove. And so these particular dresses were the best that could be purchased—George Musgrove believed in mounting a production with the best material that could be procured.

When the Yeomen of the Guard dresses arrived, he, too, had only recently returned from London; he took special pride in inviting his friends, and anyone interested, to view the dresses, which were displayed at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne.

A production of "The Yeomen of the Guard" took place at the Theatre Royal, Adelaide, on Saturday, April 10, 1926, with the following artists in the cast: Charles Walenn, James Hay, Lance Fairfax, Sydney Granville, Winifred Williamson, Betty Blackburn, Patti Russell, Bernard Manning, Stella Wilson. The opera was conducted by Harry Jacobs, and produced by Minnie Everett.

Then after five years and two months the revival at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, opened on June 27, 1931, with a cast including Ivan Men-

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zies, Leo Darnton, Gregory Stroud, Bernard Manning, John Ralston, Maisie Ramsay, Mary Hotham, Dorothy Gill. Musical Director, Gustave Slappofski; Producer, Minnie Everett.

The Sydney season followed on September 12, 1931, at Her Majesty's Theatre. Evelyn Gardiner playing Dame Carruthers.

"THE GONDOLIERS."

"The Gondoliers" was produced for the first time at the Savoy Theatre, London, on December 7, 1889, with Frank Wyatt as the Duke of Plaza-Toro, Wallace Brownlow as Luiz, W. H. Denny as Don Alhambra del Bolero (the Grand Inquisitor), Courtice Pounds as Marco, Rutland Barrington as Guiseppe, Rosina Brandram as the Duchess of Plaza-Toro, Decima Moore as Casilda, Geraldine Ulmar as Gianetta, and Jessie Bond as Tessa.

AUSTRALIAN PRODUCTIONS.

The first production in Australia took place ten months later, at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, on October 25, 1890, with the following cast: The Duke of Plaza-Toro, William Elton; Luiz, Knight Ashton; Don Alhambra del Bolero, Howard Vernon; Marco, C. H. Leumane; Guiseppe, Charles Ryley; Antonio, W. Rosevear; Giorgio, Stannis Leslie; Annibale, Thomas Grundy; The Duchess of Plaza-Toro, Maggie Moore; Casilda, Florence Young; Gianetta, Flora Graupner; Tessa, Ida Osborne; Fiametta, M. G. Lewis; Vittoria, K. Potter; Giulia, A. Kinnlard; Inez, Mabel M'Kay. The opera produced by Henry Bracy, conducted by Leon Caron, Dances arranged by Marie Reddall. The revival of "The Gondoliers" at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, on September 22, 1900, had Hugh Ward as the Duke of Plaza-Toro, George Lauri as Don Alhambra, Charles Kenningham as Marco, Wallace Brownlow as Guiseppe, Pat Bathurst as Luiz, William Beattie, Stannis Leslie, and Fred. England as Antonio, Anibale and Giorgio respectively. Carrie Moore as Gianetta, Maud Chetwynd as Tessa, Cecil Engleheart as Casilda, Jennie Opie as the Duchess of Plaza-Toro, Annie Cubitt, Irene Outtrim and Joey Cassilis as Fiametta, Guilela and Vittoria, Fyvie Dench as Inez. The opera was produced by Henry Bracy, and conducted by Leon Caron.

Five years later, on August 5, 1905, at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, the cast included H. H. Wallace, Frank Wilson, Charles Kenningham, Howard Vernon, John Ralston, Fred. England, Dolly Castles, Aggie Thorne, Vinia de Loitte, and Celia Ghiloni. The opera was produced by Henry Bracy and conducted by A. W. Junker.

"The Gondoliers" revival of 1914 began on June 27, at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, with a cast including Charles Walenn (his first appearance in Australia), Frank Wilson, G. Villiers Arnold (his first appearance in Australia), Albert Kavanagh, R. Rintel, P. Gordon, L. Sigel, Edward McKeown (his first appearance in Australia), Pearl Ladd (first appearance in Australia), Katie May, Lybus Caffyn, Mary Morris-Smith, Maud Miles, and Dorothy Vane. Richard Weathersby produced the opera and Harry Burton was the conductor.

The Sydney revival of 1914 began on October 17, with the same cast as that of Melbourne. The 1920 revival also began at His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, on September 4, with Charles Walenn, James Hay, Frederick Hobbs, Albert Kavanagh, John Ralston, Strella Wilson, Charles Mettram, Thelma Carter, Ethel Morrison, Patti Russell, Byrl Walkley. The opera was produced by Minnie Everett, and conducted by Gustave Slappofski. Adelaide witnessed the 1926 revival, which opened at the Theatre Royal on Saturday, April 3, with Charles Walenn, James Hay, Lance Fairfax, Sydney Granville, Winifred Williamson, Betty Blackburn, Patti Russell, Beatrice Kendrick, Leo Darnton, and Strella Wilson. Minnie Everett produced the opera, and it was conducted by Harry Jacobs.

The 1931 revival began at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, on April 11, with Ivan Menzies, Gregory Stroud, Leo Darnton, John Ralston, Alban Whitehead, Marie Bremner, Mary Hotham, Maisie Ramsay, Dorothy Gill. The producer was Minnie Everett, and the conductor Gustave Slappofski.

The Sydney season followed at Her Majesty's Theatre on August 8. Evelyn Gardiner replacing Dorothy Gill as the Duchess of Plaza-Toro.

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EVER POPULAR OPERA.

"The Gondoliers" is one of the most popular of all the Gilbert and Sullivan series. It contains some of Gilbert's brightest wit, and Sullivan's most fascinating music—in fact the whole opera sparkles. People seldom mention "The Gondoliers" without immediately thinking of that most sung of all light operatic tenor solos, "Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes." It is not often that this popular number—when it is really sung—misses the honour of a double encore.

The Venetian setting, and the bright dresses, induce an atmosphere of happiness. Also there are two dances, the Gavotte and the Cachucha, which help considerably in inducing an air of brightness. There is very little dancing in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, consequently they may seem tame to the lover of modern revue, but if the principals in Gilbert and Sullivan opera had to perform the acrobatic gyrations which seem necessary in the light musical show of to-day, they couldn't possibly sing the music.

THE STORY.

When the curtain rises upon a scene of the Piazzetta, Venice, a party of girls, headed by Fiammetta Giulia, and Vittoria are busily binding up posies of red and white roses, which they intend to use as a means of capturing the affections of two Gondoliers, Marco and Giuseppe Palmieri, who are coming to choose two brides from among them, but, as Fiammetta sings, "We, alas, are four and twenty, they, alas, are only two." When Marco and Giuseppe arrive, they decide to let "Fate select a mate" and so they are blindfolded, and as in "blind man's buff," they try to catch the girls—Gianetta and Tessa just then enter the scene, and the former is captured by Marco, Giuseppe secures Tessa and cries "Rapture," when he discovers her identity.

Marco, too, is satisfied with Gianetta, for he exclaims, "Just the very girl I wanted." They all go off to be married. A gondola arrives at the Piazzetta steps from which emerge the Duke and Duchess of Plaza-Toro, Casilda (their daughter), and Luiz (their

attendant). They are all dressed in what once were grand clothes, but now old and faded. They despatch Luiz into the Ducal Palace to demand an audience with the Grand Inquisitor. The Duke and Duchess then inform Casilda that she was married in babyhood to the infant son of the King of Barataria. She decides that they took a most "Unpardonable Liberty."

After the ceremony the baby Prince was stolen and conveyed to Venice by the Grand Inquisitor, that baby having now become a King—Casilda is "Her Majesty the reigning Queen of Barataria." As they are "practically penniless," the Duke decides to float himself into a limited liability company.

Casilda and Luiz, who secretly love each other, find that they will have to part, and say farewell by means of a delightful duet—one of the best numbers in the opera. When the Grand Inquisitor is questioned in reference to the whereabouts of the King—he tells them that he trusted the Royal Prince to the care of a Gondolier, "who promised the Royal Babe to rear, with his own beloved bratling." But as the children grew up the Gondolier, who was addicted to strong drink, could never declare "which of the two was his offspring dear, and which the royal stripling." However, the Grand Inquisitor promises to send for the nurse who cared for the royal infant—she happens to be the mother of Luiz. But before she can arrive, the bridal party enter, and the Grand Inquisitor, when he learns of the double wedding, assures them that though one couple can be legally married, the other is certainly not, for either Marco or Giuseppe is the King of Barataria, but no one knows which. It is finally arranged that Marco and Giuseppe will take up the reins of government at once, and reign jointly as one individual, so that, in the words of Don Alhambra, "No question can arise hereafter as to the validity of any of your Acts." There is some difficulty when the Grand Inquisitor informs them that they must leave their wives in Venice—even when it is "only for a time—a few months," Tessa sobs, "But we've only been married half an hour

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Gianetta's song "Kind sir, you cannot have the heart," which follows, is one of the gems of the opera. When the curtain falls at the conclusion of the first act, Marco and Giuseppe have embarked, and are hoisting the sail, as they depart for Barataria, their wives waving farewell.

Act II. takes place in the pavilion of the Court of Barataria, Marco and Giuseppe are seated on two thrones polishing the crown and sceptre. They have brought all their Gondolieri friends from Venice, dressed them in fine clothes, and placed them in the Court. Being a Republican Court, the King does the work while the courtiers, soldiers, and servants amuse themselves to their hearts content. Tessa, Gianetta, and the Contadini arrive at the Palace and are welcomed—they wish to know whether Marco or Giuseppe is king, and which of them is queen—Giuseppe answers, "That we shan't know until nurse turns up." In the meantime they have a banquet, and dance the Cachucha! Don Alhambra arrives unexpectedly, and upsets the festivity. The Democratic air of the Court is not what he expected. He gives an example in the well-known song, "There Lived a King" in which equality was tried and found wanting, for "When Every One is Somebody Then No One's Nobody." The real object of his visit is to tell them that the Duke, Duchess and Casilda have arrived in Barataria. He also breaks the news that Casilda is the wife of one of them, no one knows which. This is overheard by Tessa, and Gianetta, which rather complicates matters. The Duke, the Duchess and Casilda arrive with great pomp, and magnificence—the Duke having successfully floated himself into a "Limited Liability Company," they have brought Casilda to claim her position as the Queen of Barataria, when the identity of the King is settled satisfactorily. This is very distasteful to Casilda, who is in love with Luiz. However, when Inez (the old nurse) is brought from the torture chamber—where Don Alhambra said she was "alright" having "all the illustrated papers!" and speaks, it is discovered that Luiz is the real King, which is a satisfaction to every one.

"RUDDIGORE."

The reason for placing this opera almost at the end of the series is because — although produced in

the eighties in London — it was not presented in Australia until forty years later. The first production was at the Savoy, London, on Saturday, January 22, 1887, with this cast: Robin Oakapple by George Grossmith, Richard Dauntless by Durward Lely, Sir Desmond Murgatroyd by Rutland Barrington, Old Adam Goodheart by Rudolph Lewis, Rose Maybud by Leonora Braham, Mad Margaret by Jessie Bond, Dame Hannah by Rosina Brandram, Zorah by Josephine Findlay, Ruth by Miss Lindsay, Ghosts by Messrs. Price, Charles, Trevor, Burbank, Tuer, Wilbraham, Cox. Sir Roderick Murgatroyd by Richard Temple.

The Australian premiere happened at Theatre Royal, Adelaide, Thursday, June 23, 1927, with the following cast: Robin Oakapple (a young famer), Charles Walenn; Richard Dauntless (his foster brother. A Man-o'-Warsman), James Hay; Sir Despard Murgatroyd (of "Ruddigore"—a wicked Baronet), John Ralston; Old Adam Goodheart (Robin's Faithful Servant), John Byrne; Mad Margaret, Patti Russell; Dame Hannah (Rose's aunt), Winifred Williamson; Zorah (Professional Bridesmaid), Violet Jackson; Ruth (Professional Bridesmaid), Lillian Crisp; Rose Maybud (A Village Maiden), Strella Wilson.

The ghosts were as follows:—

Sir Rupert Murgatroyd (first baronet) Moran Hilford; Sir Jasper Murgatroyd (third baronet), William Neilson; Sir Lionel Murgatroyd (sixth baronet), Frank Manson; Sir Conrad Murgatroyd (twelfth baronet), Charles Mettam; Sir Desmond Murgatroyd (sixteenth baronet), Chester Harris; Sir Gilbert Murgatroyd (eighteenth baronet), William Watson; Sir Mervyn Murgatroyd (twentieth baronet), Gordon Ramsay; Sir Roderick Murgatroyd (twenty-first baronet), Bernard Manning.

The 1931 revival began at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, on November 14th, with Marie Bremner, Evelyn Gardiner, Mary Hotham, Rona Wimpney, Nancy Horne, Ivana Menzies, John Ralston, Leo Darnnton, Bernard Manning, Clifford Cowley, and the ghosts played by Chester Harris, Vic. Haine, Jock Thompson, Frank Manson, Len Gotting, Tom Broderick.

The first act of "Ruddigore" opens with a rustic scene in front of Rose

GILBERT & SULLIVAN OPERA IN AUSTRALIA

Maybud's cottage. Rose, a simple country lass governs all her movements by a book on etiquette, which she consults on every occasion. The fishing village of Rederring is endowed with a bevy of professional bridesmaids, who are wilting for want of occupation, and they wait upon Rose in the hope that she is ready to call upon their services. Robin Oakapple (disguised as a farmer, but really Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd) is in love with Rose, but is too shy to tell her so. He is the eldest son of the Murgatroyd family, which has been cursed by a witch, that each succeeding baronet must commit a crime every day or else die in awful agony. To escape this fate Robin hides his identity, and passes on the title and the family curse to his younger brother, Despard, who has caused his sweetheart Margaret to lose her reason through his infidelity. Robin's foster brother, Richard Dauntless, comes home from the sea, and wins the affection of Rose. Then Robin overcomes his bashfulness and gains her love. Richard retaliates by denouncing Robin as the real Murgatroyd who should inherit the curse.

Rose, whose affections are swayed like a leaf in the breeze, then turns to Despard—but his conscience urges him to return to his old love, "Mad Margaret." In act II., Robin is in his ancestral home and must commit a crime every day. His crimes are so weak that his ancestors step out of their frames in the picture gallery and condemn his amateurish methods. Robin sends his old servant Adam to abduct a girl, but old Adam returns with old Hannah (the aunt of Rose) who loved Sir Roderick Murgatroyd (who committed suicide ten years previously in order to escape the curse). Robin logically shows that suicide is a crime and so Sir Roderick has no reason to remain "dead." He comes to life, and weds his old love, Hannah. The curse is broken, Rose returns to Robin, and the professional bridesmaids find that all things come to those who wait—if they wait long enough—and all ends happily.

"UTOPIA, LTD."

"Utopia," the last of the series, was produced at "The Savoy," London, on October 7, 1893, with the following cast: — King, Paramount, Rutland Barrington; Scaphio, W. H. Denny;

Phantis, John Le Hay; Tarara, Walter Passmore; Calynx, Bowden Haswell; Lord Dramleigh, Scott Russell; Captain Fitzbattleaxe, Charles Kenningham; Captain Sir Ed. Corcoran, K.C.B., Lawrence Grindley; M. Goldbury, Scott Fische; Sir Bailey Barre, Q.C., M.P., Ernest Blackmore; Mr. Blushington, Herbert Ralland; Princess Zara, Nancy M'Intosh; Princess Nekaya, Emmie Owen; Princess Kalyba, Florence Perry; Lady Sophy, Rosina Brandram; Solata, Edith Johnstone; Mele, May Bell; Phylla, Florence Easton. The opera was conducted by Francois Cellier.

The first production in Australia was at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne, on Saturday, January 20, 1906 with this cast: King Paramount, Howard Vernon; Scaphio, Arthur Crane; Phantis, H. H. Wallace; Captain Fitzbattleaxe, Charles Kenningham; Captain Sir Ed. Corcoran, K.C.B., Howard Hall; Lord Dramleigh, Walter Whyte; Sir Bailey Barre, Q.C., M.P., James O'Rourke; Tarara, Ernest Fitts; Princess Zara, Dolly Castles; Princess Nekaya, Aggie Thorne; Princess Kalyba, Vinia de Loitte; Lady Sophy, Celia Ghiloni; Calynx, J. Whitfield; Mr. Blushington, M. Buchanan; Mr. Goldbury, Frank Wilson. Produced by Henry Bracy and Minnie Everett and conducted by George Hall.

As each opera was produced in London, there was intense curiosity as to where and at whom Gilbert would aim his mischievous shaft of wit. All knowledge of the coming opera was carefully preserved from every one outside the theatre until the last moment.

TOO PERSONAL FOR LONDON.

People knew there was to be a fresh production, but it was always spoken of and advertised as "A new unnamed Gilbert and Sullivan opera." There was a fresh burst of merriment as each British institution was in turn aimed at—the Navy, the Army, the Law, the Church, and the Stage. When "Utopia, Ltd.," arrived at the Savoy, there was great interest more mirth, and much success. But it became evident that this time the comedy had become rather too personal to people in high places, and they, and their followers, signified their displeasure by withdrawing their patronage from the theatre.

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SUCCESSFUL IN AUSTRALIA.

Mr. D'Oyley Carte and his partners were far too wise to "press the point," so revivals of this particular opera were discontinued. I often wondered why J. C. Williamson did not produce the opera long before—probably he was sceptical—but he should have remembered that the barbed wit would lose much of its point 16,000 miles away. "Utopia, Ltd.," is a delightful opera—the setting picturesque, the wit of Gilbert at his best, and Sullivan's graceful melodies a delight. I well remember the enthusiasm of the audience on the night of the first production at the Princess Theatre—after the first act, there were seven well applauded curtains, I, too, shall never forget how thrilled we younger members of the company felt at the honour of being in the first Australian cast of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera. I don't suppose the plot of "Utopia Ltd." is particularly well known. Here it is: In the first act, the scene is a grove in the tropical island of Utopia. This is the Kingdom of Paramount, whose principal aim in life is to mould and govern it upon purely British lines. He has secured Lady Sophy to teach his two younger daughters—the Princesses Nekaya and Kalyba—the deportment of an English lady, and they give exhibitions of her teaching from "10 till 4" each day, in the public square—one of the precepts of her teaching is that if they should both place their affection upon the same man, they must "toss" for possession, as "English girls do." The eldest daughter, Princess Zara, who has been educated at Girton, returns to Utopia, accompanied by six "Flowers of Progress," who are to transform Utopia into a land of perfection.

PLOT OF THE OPERA.

Captain Fitzbattleaxe, who is to perfect the army, and make nations tremble, Sir Bailey Barre, Q.C., M.P., who undertakes to show "That is but another yes, and a neater form of no." Mr. Blushington, a county councillor, who is to swell the rates, &c. Lord Dramleigh, who will purify the Court and the Stage, Captain Corcoran to teach Utopians how to rule the waves as he is the gentleman "who never, well hardly ever, ran a ship ashore." Mr. Goldbury is a company promoter, with a special aptitude for organising bogus concerns.

King Paramount contributes spicily

paragraphs to a publication called "The Palace Peeper," but as these may prejudice his subjects, he finds it necessary to buy up the whole publication. The second act opens upon a scene of the Throne room, the discarding of native dress—with its light garments, strings of beads, and garland of flowers—is one of the first acts of progress—so, a court presentation with its officials and attendants, ladies with their plumes, court dresses and trains—is held under the new order of things. The army becomes so powerful that other nations disarm, and war is impossible. Sanitary conditions are perfect, so the doctors dwindle and die.

Sir Bailey Barre has so re-modelled the law that there is no crime—so the lawyers have no means of support. In short, the affairs of Utopia reach such a state of perfection—the gaols are let as model lodging houses—that business is at a standstill. Princess Zara feels there is something wrong—then she remembers an important item, which she omitted when she imported the flowers of progress—"Government by Party," which is the foundation of England's might. She informs the king that by this introduction all will be well, for one party will assuredly undo all that the other party attempts—and while there are birds to be shot, and golf to be played, and hounds to hunt with, the Government of the country will be at a standstill. Then there will be crime in plenty, the gaols will be full, sickness will come again, and the medical profession will revive, lawsuits will reinstate the lawyers, disorder revive the army and navy—and prosperity with its numerous blessings will eventuate.

There are many amusing scenes in the opera—one in which Captain Fitzbattleaxe has a love scene with Princess Zara, and sings, "A Tenor Can't Do Himself Justice," and another, where King Paramount is interlocutor, his councillors as corner men and other ministers strumming banjos and guitars forming a minstrel show—an unexpected light of Gilbert's wit, and bright, enjoyable comedy.

A. GLANCE AT THE PAST.

"Utopia, Ltd.," being the last opera of this inimitable collaboration, there is little more that I can say. These "Récollections" have been a pleasant

GILBERT & SULLIVAN OPERA IN AUSTRALIA



HOWARD VERNON

As Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., in the revival of "Pinafore," Theatre Royal, Sydney, 1888.

work of research, and memory—not that I have personal recollections of all that I have written—that would be impossible, for much of that happened long before my being was thought of—but I married a man who played in them before I was born—yes, Howard Vernon was more than 30 years older than I. He loved the Gilbert and Sullivan operas—most people have an affection for the vehicle of their success—and he told me so much about them and the people with whom he played, that I have felt that

I knew all those Jack Points, Yum Yums, Pirate Kings, Iolanthies, &c., who have gone before.

Gone before alas, yes—so many of them—J. C. Williamson, Maggie Moore, Wallace Brownlow, Charles Kenningham, George Lauri, Florence Young, Flora Graupner, Violet Varley, Charles Ryley, William Elton, Howard Vernon, Nellie Stewart, Tom Grundy, Aggie Kelton, C. H. Workman, Villiers Arnold, Robert Brough, Mrs. Brough, Henry Bracy, Leon Caron, Alfred Cellier, Armes Beaumont, Arthur Crane, Leonora Braham, Aggie Thorne, John Ralston, &c., &c. They entertained an appreciative public year after year. George Lauri once told me that during 30 years with the firm of J. C. Williamson, he never missed a night through illness or other cause. I think that is a record.

Though many of the people whom I have mentioned have "taken their last call," we have yet among us others who are affectionately acclaimed whenever they make their too seldom appearance on the stage, Olive Godwin, Emma Temple, Carrie Moore, Hugh Ward, Frank Wilson, May Pollard, H. H. Wallace—the names for "this little list" are not so easy to find as those who have passed on.

Some, of course, have retired into private life—C. M. Leumane to South Australia, Celia Ghiloni to Westralia. Jennie Opie to South Australia, Maud Chetwynd, Dorothy Vane, Dolly Castles, to Melbourne, &c.

Though the two great men, Sir Arthur Sullivan and Sir William Schwenck Gilbert, are both dead—though the people who sing their songs, and speak their words, may "fret their little hour upon the stage," and then "pass on," yet so long as the English speaking race can "Hum a little," so will the works of Gilbert and Sullivan go on, and on, and on.

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